

# RED WEEKLY

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## Britain out of Ireland!

All out for  
February 1st demo!

### Steelmen take action as

# LABOUR HAMMERS JOBS

THE ANGER sweeping through the steel industry shows the disgust of the working class with the policies of the Wilson Government.

British Steel Corporation's Sunday working ban means a wage cut of £15 for the workers affected. Even more drastic wage reductions are threatened if the guaranteed working week is scrapped. But the lack of leadership in opposing the cuts threatens to sell steel workers short like their fellow workers at Chrysler.

Acceptance 'in principle' of the Government-Chrysler deal could lead to the loss of all 25,000 jobs in the Chrysler combine by 1978.

Now the chief executive of the British Steel Corporation, Robert Scholey, is demanding 44,000 sackings in the steel industry — 'just for starters'. The real intention of the Government is a massive reduction of manning levels in what Scholey promises will be 'a short war not a long one'.

BSC's objectives in this 'war' include:

- \* 44,000 redundancies over the next two years
- \* Suspension of the guaranteed working week, which gives about half BSC's workers at least 80 per cent pay.
- \* 'Temporarily' closing some of the plants
- \* Waiving of the cost-of-living pay rise due from 1 January.

The temporary occupations of the steel plants that have occurred are to resist the first stages of the attack on the guaranteed working week. The ac-



BSC chief Scholey: self-styled 'hammer of the workers'

tions of workers in plants like Port Talbot went beyond what their local leaders had intended. There 100 reported for work and when their shift was cut 300 others, officially in work, went on strike and the afternoon shift did not report for duty.

Actions like this prompted the sec-

retary of the rank and file National Steel Workers Action Committee to call on the leadership of the Iron & Steel Trades Confederation to decide on concerted action against the Corporation's breach of agreement. National strike action is vital to unify steel workers in preparation for the fight ahead.

The Labour Government have won the first round of the battle to impose their Chequers strategy of profit first, jobs last: at least 8,300 Chrysler workers will be out of a job within a few months. Now Wilson is going for the throats of steel workers. His plan, supported by the TUC and CBI, is for a massive productivity drive throughout British industry, and the imposition of an incomes policy based on this principle, later in the year.

### WORKERS CONTROL

The attack on steel workers shows that capitalist nationalisation is no solution to redundancy. The way forward for workers throughout industry is to impose workers control over production.

For a start, every worker needs to be aware of the exact nature of the plans of his employers. This means demanding access to all the financial records of the company, forward planning documents and the like, for the inspection of committees responsible to the workforce.

If redundancies are threatened, schemes for work-sharing without loss of pay and a guaranteed week's earnings, can be fought for on the basis of this information. Those firms unable to meet the basic right of the workforce to a job and a decent standard of living should be nationalised on the basis of a workers plan drawn up to defend jobs.

Within the nationalised industries themselves, work-sharing schemes with no loss of pay are the way to unite the whole workforce and link it up with the fight for jobs in the private sector.

Do not be fooled by the trade union 'leaders' who say there is no alternative to



Industry Minister Eric 'little by little' Varley — after Chrysler now for steel!

massive redundancies. The alternative exists — but they are not prepared to fight Wilson and his cronies for it! That is the lesson of the Chrysler defeat.



## CHRYSLER:

### Learning the Lessons

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# RECALL THE TUC



# CHRYSLER: Learning the Lessons

'Acceptance of the Chrysler-Government deal in principle'. This recommendation passed by mass meetings of Chrysler workers in Coventry, carried by a majority of stewards at Linwood, and cemented by the stewards combine meeting last Saturday, marks a big setback in the struggle for the right to work in Britain.

The gauntlet was thrown down by the Labour Government: 'Approve the deal by 3 January or all Chrysler workers will lose their jobs'. And the shop stewards and convenors of the major plants were not prepared to throw this blackmail back into Wilson's face.

On these pages *Red Weekly* explains the developments over the last fortnight which led to this defeat. We also try to draw out the lessons of this experience which, if understood, can lay the basis for a renewed fight against the implementation of the deal by Chrysler workers and point the way forward against this anti-working class Government.

## Lesson Number One

Opposition to the policies of the Labour Government has to be placed at the centre of any fight for jobs. Wilson, Healey and the other Labour leaders are committed both at home and abroad to continue their policies of mass unemployment.

At home, the pact agreed by the TUC, the bosses and the Government at Chequers in November puts profitability first and jobs last. Abroad, the top statesmen of all the major capitalist countries at the Rambouillet conference agreed to try to put the cost of meeting the international economic crisis on the backs of the working class by continuing mass unemployment internationally.

Only the Linwood stewards initially made a clear call for the fight for jobs at Chrysler to be turned into a fight by the whole labour movement against the policies of the Government.

## Lesson Number Two

No real alternative was ever put forward to the Government proposals. Even the Linwood stewards

combined the demand for nationalisation with a call for import controls.

But the campaign for import controls now being conducted by the 'lefts' merely turns the fight away from the ruling class in this country in order to try to impose unemployment on workers abroad.

## DIVISIVE

Nevertheless, the demand for nationalisation placed the responsibility for jobs at the door of the Government — even though the nationalisation measures carried out by the Wilson Government have meant thousands of redundancies at British Leyland and Alfred Herbert. However, the policies of the Stoke and Ryton convenors — of work-sharing, voluntary redundancies, and natural wastage — laid the basis for splitting the united opposition that could have been forged against the Government's plan.

Voluntary redundancy schemes destroy jobs. They also split and divide a workforce and pave the way

for massive speed-up. Work-sharing, unless coupled with the demand for no loss of pay, means that workers take a wage cut. Many workers would rather leave the plant than be condemned to continued financial insecurity.

## OPEN BOOKS

The alternative to the Government's plan had to start from the need to defend all jobs at Chrysler. This meant the opening of the company's books to determine what work was available and the drawing up of a scheme for work-sharing *without loss of pay*. The report produced by workers at the Whitley research and administration centre showed clearly that Chrysler would not meet this basic demand and that the company should therefore be nationalised without compensation.

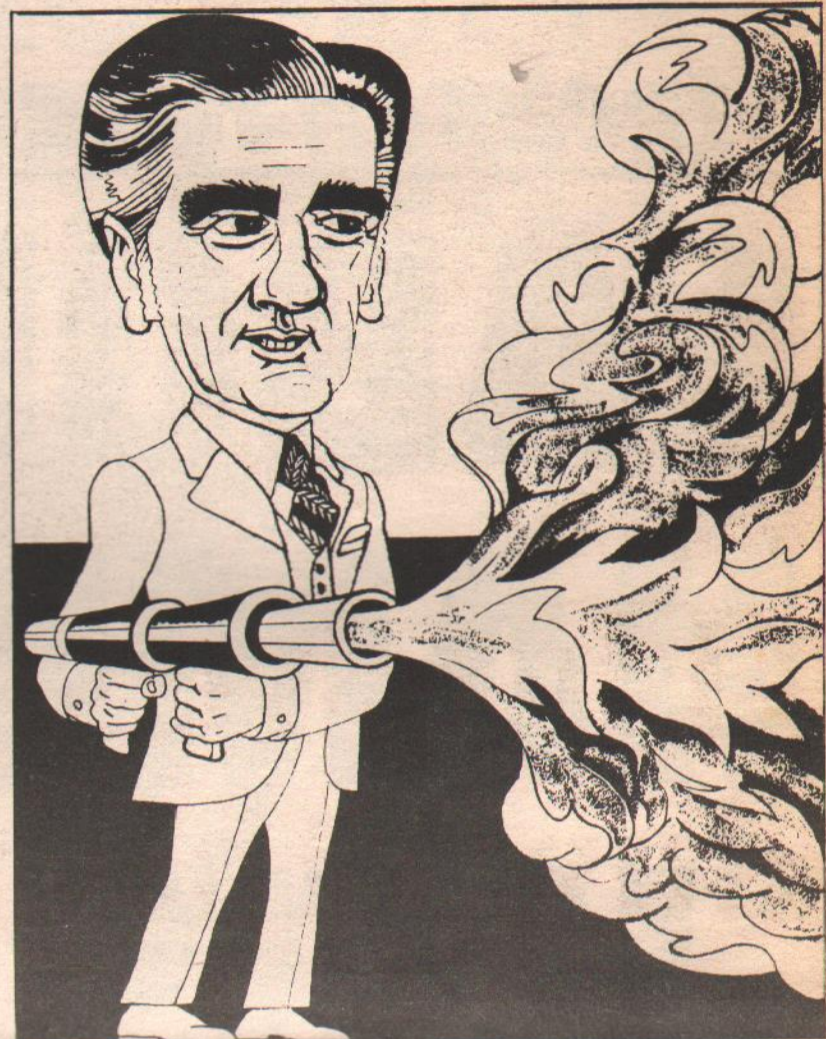
On such a basis, workers could have drawn up a plan for nationalisation and production under workers control, as part of one nationalised automotive industry.

## Lesson Number Three

Without such a policy, and without a clear position of opposition to the Labour Government's policies of unemployment, the senior stewards and convenors were whipped into line by the national trade union officials and forced to accept the deal.

The 'left' MPs who had sworn to defend the Chrysler jobs to the last man couldn't be seen for dust. Those who did stay around, like Coventry MP William Wilson, urged workers to accept the deal and stated that the time was not right for nationalisation.

These MPs and trade union leaders have given Riccardo and



Chrysler boss John Riccardo—known as 'The Flamethrower'

Wilson the green light to sack 8,300 workers. The strategy of the plant leadership, to negotiate voluntary redundancies within the framework of the deal, must be rejected by Chrysler workers on their return to work.

A campaign in the rest of the labour movement for work-sharing

without loss of pay, for occupation of plants facing redundancy, and for the bringing to account of the trade union leaders through the recall of the TUC is the best way in which all workers can stop the rot and assist their brothers and sisters in Chrysler who have been sold down the river.

## The villains of the piece

The showdown over the Government-Chrysler deal came at a meeting of the Chrysler stewards combine committee on 29 December in Coventry. Under pressure from the trade union full-timers — particularly Bob Wright of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers — a motion was carried by just one vote (43 to 42) to demand negotiations on the manner and timing of the 8,300 redundancies.

It was then the stewards heard of the decision not to allow any such negotiations to take place. The Government was insisting that the deal had to be agreed on in principle by the next Saturday.

As Duncan Simpson, AUEW convenor at Stoke, put it: 'The company are holding a pistol at our heads'. The bullets were provided courtesy of H. Wilson & Co. via a letter to Chrysler. The gist of this was: 'Tell the union representatives to accept 8,300 redundancies now, or they will be facing 24,000 redundancies next Saturday.'

## GOVERNMENT INTENTIONS

The intentions of the Government in launching the 'rescue' scheme for Chrysler were laid bare by the *Observer* (21

December) which commented on the position taken by Harold Lever, millionaire right winger in the cabinet and architect of the scheme:



HAROLD LEVER

'Mr Lever... would not have recommended it to the Cabinet if he had not also had in mind the need to provide a fall-back position: a phasing out over a couple of years.... This had a number of advantages. Workers would not become redundant at once, but in 1977 or 1978.... It would also reduce the loss to the Government in unemployment pay and tax payments. And it would be possible to continue the company's Iranian contract and avoid offence to the Shah.'

The *Observer* went on to attribute to another Minister the remark: 'It would give the other three companies time to prepare for a Chrysler collapse'.

Finally, the honest *Observer* scribes pointed out that the decision to throw large numbers of workers in the Midlands and Scotland out of work could in this way be deferred until after the next election.

## WHAT THE PLANS MEAN

Don Lander, managing director of Chrysler UK, also spelled out his policies to union officials on 29 December. These include:

- \* Termination of the Imp in January.
- \* Termination of the Hunter range by June.
- \* Transfer of the Avenger from the Ryton plant in Coventry to Linwood.
- \* Termination of the Avenger in March/April 1977.
- \* Total closure of the Maidstone plant.
- \* The new Alpine model — now being manufactured in France — to be shipped to Ryton in break-down form for assembly.
- \* 8,300 redundancies.

The only real commitment to continue production beyond 1977/78 is the



DON LANDER

preparation of a new model, the 'C42', to replace the Avenger at Linwood. But this will only go ahead if all aspects of the plan till then are fulfilled.

The redundancies, if carried out, will mean a reduction of the workforce by 35 per cent, against a reduction of only 25 per cent in the number of cars produced. You don't need to be a mathematical genius to work out what this means: a massive increase in productivity. Management hope to break the resistance of the workforce to this scheme through a revamped participation scheme which will mop up a divided and demoralised shop stewards organisation.



BOB WRIGHT

## LEFTS COLLABORATE

None of these schemes could have come to fruition without the scabbing of the union 'lefts' and the Labour MPs.

The principal obstacle towards developing a fight against the deal was provided by the official leading the union side in the negotiations. At a meeting called by Ryton convenors and senior stewards in Coventry in early December, involving stewards from all the Chrysler plants, Bob Wright of the AUEW refused to call for the nationalisation of Chrysler and urged stewards to be sympathetic to

the position in which the Government found itself.

On the publication of the Government proposals, Wright urged stewards to 'play it cool', and neither accept or reject the basis of the proposals for 8,300 redundancies. His alternative was to challenge the figures and Chrysler's presentation of them. What was in fact being proposed by this bureaucrat — the Communist Party-backed 'Broad Left' candidate in the recent AUEW elections — was that the stewards should limit themselves to arguing about how many redundancies should take place and the management's impoliteness in presenting them!

## Betrayal

When the crunch came at that Monday meeting, Wright predictably ran a mile. He stated: 'We have got to make a decision on the plan'. By consistently presenting no alternatives to the workforce, he ensured that approval of the Government's plan was the only road left open.

The 'left' MPs followed the same course of betrayal. Every single Tribune MP present went into the lobby of the House of Commons and voted for 8,300 redundancies. Their only 'alternative' was for the Government to buy up equity stock in the company — the exact opposite of the policy of nationalisation without compensation which some of them had sheepishly tail-ended at the public meeting called by the Ryton stewards. And the Government didn't even call this equity amendment to be debated!

The final word, however, must go to Bob Wright after the final meeting at Whitley. 'We think', he said, 'that the company is now more aware of our concern that our members should be protected.'



# 'They've sold us down the river again'

STEVE POTTER reports on the Coventry mass meetings

Only nine shop stewards opposed the acceptance of the Chrysler deal by the combine committee on Saturday 3 January. This agreement was a foregone conclusion after the mass meetings that had been held in Coventry the previous week and the meeting of stewards at the Linwood plant.

Only a meeting of the 700 white-collar ASTMS workers in Coventry rejected the deal. The pattern at the rest of the mass meetings in Coventry was the same. All were preceded by stewards meetings which were split down the middle on whether to accept the deal or not. All finally carried the proposal to accept.

## Ryton

At the Ryton mass meeting on 30 December, workers heard their plant leadership doing their utmost to persuade the membership to take no action. Frank McCarney, AUEW convenor at Ryton attacked the idea of an occupation in a speech widely publicised by the media. He said: 'If you sit in or occupy the plant what do we do next? We are living in cloud cuckoo land if we think we can run the Ryton plant'.

The Ryton workers refused to allow their shop stewards to decide whether or not to accept the deal without holding a further meeting of the workforce. Workers shouted, 'You must be joking', in response to this request from Pat Molloy. Afterwards *Red Weekly* spoke to some of the hecklers. They asked us not to print their names otherwise they would be the first out of the gate.

*What's the reason for this turn-around by the stewards?*

It's obvious isn't it. At yesterday's meeting they really put the frighteners on them. Last week there were 3-4000 cars in the plant. Everybody wanted a sit-in last week, the stewards included. Now they are just looking for some little thing to save their faces.

*What do you think of the Linwood stewards' policy of nationalisation without compensation?*

I think it's right. Chrysler are the biggest fly-boy company out. There's no security with them in control. That's also the reason why they treated Linwood the best in this deal. At Linwood they were really prepared to have a go and put up a show at the start. But I'm not sure what they will do now.

*What about the future - the mass meetings they have got to call now?*

These meetings are so badly publicised that not many people turn up. So I'm not hopeful. I think we will be sold out.

The figure that was given last week was that by the end of July there would be 800 left at Ryton - that's manual workers. There are 400 office workers there now and there would be 270 left of them. It's just a way of phasing Ryton out. Ryton is finished. In two years there won't be any Chrysler in Coventry.

At the subsequent mass meeting only three days later, the stewards recommended acceptance while admitting that they had gained nothing from negotiations with the company.

## Stoke

Shouts of 'Rubbish' and 'You've sold us down the river again' also greeted the Stoke convenors when they put the recommendation to accept the deal in principle. After the recommendation was passed, *Red Weekly* spoke to Gerry Jones, a steward at the plant.

*When Duncan Simpson says there is a pistol pointed at your heads and you have no alternative, do you agree?*

Of course there is an alternative. There was the Whitley document taken down by the convenors when they saw Varley. It tabled out in detail the amount of money that would be needed to keep us all in jobs, and in the long term it meant nationalisation. I don't agree with

everything it said, but at least it was an alternative.

The convenors have now dissociated themselves from it. And it wasn't even



Gerry Jones

discussed at the joint shop stewards committee. The workers report has been treated as an academic exercise - something to be read for 10 minutes at night, not as the basis for a fight.

The convenors are not prepared to tell the truth. There is an alternative, and one of the reasons we don't hear it is because of the lack of democracy at these meetings.

*What do you think of the policies that the convenors have presented?*

Their alternatives have been work-sharing, voluntary redundancies and natural wastage. This is no alternative. Fifty per cent of this plant has to go, and 75 per cent of Ryton.

This Government is using Chrysler to cut down manning levels and jack up productivity. They are doing everything they want to do at British Leyland. If they get away with it here, they will get away with it at British Leyland.

*What about the future?*

This meeting is a big blow. They got it through today's stewards meeting on the basis of it being a public relations exercise for Chrysler and the Government. But next week, when it will have been accepted in principle, they will use it against those stewards who wanted to take action. I am not too despondent though. The fight is still on.

# IN FOCUS

## The 'lefts' and the crisis

The Wilson Government had a good year in 1975. The social contract became the £6 limit, living standards fell, social service cuts were stepped up, and unemployment reached the staggering total of 1,211,464 - 5.2 per cent of the total working population.

As the year came to an end, Dennis Healey introduced an anaemic package of measures against unemployment on 17 December. Since Cabinet agreement on another £3,000 million worth of public expenditure cuts in 1976 was hardly a well-kept secret, even the *Financial Times* (18 December) concluded: 'In the deepest recession since the war his actions are probably deflationary .... The chances are that it will prove to be comatose for some time to come'.

Not only will the Wilson Government do nothing significant against unemployment, but in cahoots with the TUC and the Confederation of British Industry it is consciously planning to increase it. The fear of unemployment will now be used to carry out a massive productivity offensive on the railways and in steel, cars and many other industries. That was the decision of the November summit at Chequers attended by the TUC and the CBI. The follow-up to the £6 limit will enforce it.

## MORE UNEMPLOYED

According to the *Daily Mirror* this 'son of £6' will be even more stunted - £3 for all plus £2 more where there is an appropriate increase in productivity. Not only will this mean a further enforced drop in living standards, but there will be another deliberate increase in unemployment, with the 1½ million mark almost certainly being breached.

These 'leaders' of the working class must be brought to book before their disastrous policies are allowed to return the working class to the conditions of the 1930s - and bring about a disastrous Labour defeat at the next general election. Emergency conferences of both the TUC and the Labour Party are needed to put them on the spot. The unemployment policies of the Labour Government must be rejected, and a programme drawn up which defends jobs, living standards and the social services.

But what is the response of the 'lefts'? After the Tribune group of MPs had abjectly capitulated to the Government's Chrysler deal - and presented the subsequent fight over sackings as an argument between management and the unions - *Tribune* has finally stirred itself to call for a special Labour Party conference on Government policy. It's a polite request with a deferential question mark at the end, of course: 'So why not a special Labour Party conference to discuss the issue which is so basic to our socialist beliefs?' (*Tribune*, 2 January 1976).

## RECALL THE TUC

The working class needs to fight to defend its living standards, not defer to those who are busy attacking them. The demand for a special Labour Party conference must go up in every Constituency Labour Party. The 'left' MPs must be forced to fight Wilson and vote and campaign against the policies which are leading the labour movement to disaster. They must fight to remove Wilson and Co. or be exposed as useless babblers.

The 'lefts' in the trade union bureaucracy deserve the same treatment. They must support the call for a recall TUC and fight at it for support for every struggle against redundancies.

The commitment to support the Government's economic policies by the last TUC conference has given these lefts a get-out clause for failing to wage a fight. They plead that to do so would be to risk isolation from the trade union movement - as do their co-thinkers in the Labour Party. The demand for a recall TUC to break with the Government's policies brings these leaders before the eyes of the whole labour movement: either they are shown by their passivity actually to support the Government's attacks on the working class, or they mobilise opposition to these attacks.

# IWC Conference

One of the biggest weaknesses revealed by the Chrysler fiasco is the lack of an alternative workers' programme for the motor industry, developing a plan which can defend jobs and suggest alternative uses for resources.

The Institute of Workers Control has organised a conference for Saturday 31 January which aims to discuss these questions. The chairperson is Audrey Wise MP, and among the speakers will be Brian Sedgemore MP, Linwood convenor John Carty, Ford Dagenham convenor Sid Harroway, Rover Solihull AUEW convenor Peter Nicholas, and Leyland Longbridge AUEW convenor Derek Robinson.

Of course the vital thing is to organise a fight around an alternative workers' programme, and none of the invited speakers has actually done this. Nevertheless the opportunity for militants from all the major car plants to come together is important and *Red Weekly* will be carrying articles on what it sees as the tasks of this conference in the

light of the Chrysler setback.

The conference starts at 10.15 am at the AUEW Hall, Smallbrook Ringway, Birmingham. Details of registration from Ken Fleet, IWC, Bertrand Russell House, 45 Gamble Street, Nottingham.

## NEW 'MODERATE'

Last week Alan Thornett, a leading member of the Workers Socialist League, was elected as Chairman of the Transport & General Workers Union 5/293 branch at Cowley. His opponent, described in *The Times*, *Telegraph*, and *Express* as a 'moderate', and supported by Reg parson's right-wing leadership of the plant and Communist Party supporters at Cowley, was Tom White.

Tom White is certainly a 'moderate', having stood in elections for Ryder's class collaborationist participation committees. He is also a member of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

We have yet to see Gerry Healy's 'dialectical' explanation of this.

# Fighting unemployment lessons of the 20s and 30s



In his final article on the unemployed struggles of the 1920s and '30s, BOB PENNINGTON draws some of the lessons of the failures of that movement — lessons which have a particular importance for revolutionaries and militants today.

The debacle of the second Labour Government in 1929-31, following the crushing defeat of the General Strike in 1926, left the workers' movement in a bad position to fight back against the effects of the capitalist world slump and the offensive of the National Government.

The trade union bureaucrats, firmly wedded to a policy of peaceful cooperation in industry, were in a much stronger position to resist the demands and pressure of the more militant workers. When the TUC met in Bristol in September 1931, Walter Citrine, general secretary of the TUC, curtly announced that a deputisation of Welsh hunger marchers would not be allowed to put their case to Congress.

## LEADERSHIP

The National Unemployed Workers Movement, however, had also begun to change its policies. Most of the leadership of the NUWM had come from the members of the British Communist Party. In the early days of the movement the CP had favoured building an alliance of the unemployed with the employed workers. Despite the tremendous obstacles put in their way by the right-wing union and Labour

Party leaders, this policy had begun to pay off.

By 1924, however, the Stalin group in Moscow had begun to favour the policy of an alliance with the 'progressives' in the TUC. This meant a subtle change in emphasis — but it was a change that was to have important consequences.

In return for an alliance with the TUC 'lefts' such as Purcell, Hicks and Swales, and the establishment of a joint TUC-NUWM action committee on unemployment, the CP began to drop their criticisms of the reformist policies of the official leaders — a policy which caused disquiet even inside the CP executive itself. Unity with the official leaders became the overriding concern, and was increasingly placed above the needs of the class struggle.

The militancy, courage and self-sacrifice of the NUWM were never in doubt. But what was lacking was a strategy to build a united front of the unemployed, the organised employed workers, and the militant leaders like A. J. Cook and Herbert Smith. The initiative remained completely in the hands of the 'left' reformists, who capitulated to the right wing in the General Strike.

In the late 1920s Moscow changed its line

again. The Comintern announced the arrival of the 'Third Period' of the imminent collapse of capitalism. The friends of yesterday became the main enemy of today, and social democracy was described as the real obstacle to the working class taking power — indeed, the social democrats were now described as social fascists.

## UNITED FRONT

The about turn was complete. The right and the left were simply put in the same bag. At a time when the need for the broadest possible united front of the workers was needed against the ruling class offensive — an essential prerequisite for preparing a new counter-offensive — the CP dismantled and broke up all its alliances with the trade union and Labour left.

There was unfortunately a fertile soil for the acceptance of such a policy. Vanguard

militants had been dismayed and enraged by the capitulation of the official leaders during the General Strike, and disgusted by the failure of the 'lefts' to fight these betrayals. The policy of building 'Red Unions' and organising workers separately, away from the infections of social democracy, contained a certain appeal. Thus the movement set a course for isolating the struggles of the most advanced workers and the unemployed from the wide labour movement, and in doing so let the official leaders off the hook completely. This was seen in the character of the unemployed struggles in the early 1930s.

## HUNGER MARCHES

The hunger marches continued. In 1932 in Belfast and Birkenhead the barricades went up as workers opposed the Means Test and cuts in unemployment benefits. On 13 September 1932, 10,000 unemployed in Birkenhead demonstrated to the Public Assistance Committee. Hundreds of police were drafted in from across the water in Liverpool, and skirmishes took place between police and demonstrators and some arrests were made.

Two days later, at another peaceful demonstration, the police drew their batons and charged the crowds. That night the town rallied to a protest demonstration which was again set on by the police. A fierce pitched battle took place as the workers fought back. The police went on a campaign of terror. Leaders of the unemployed were arrested. In the early hours of the morning the police broke into the workers' homes, beating up workers and their families.

The next night the police again returned and were met by fierce resistance when they smashed and clubbed their way into the tenements that lined the dock roads. Three days after the Birkenhead 'battles' had ended, Liverpool also erupted — but by then it was too late to save the Birkenhead workers.

Despite such tough resistance of the unemployed to vicious police repression, however, the movement was left uncoordinated and the NUWM took on the form of a protest movement. Its ties to the trade union movement had been weakened — when its members were lucky enough to get a job they almost invariably dropped out of activity. In the early 1920s its ranks had been stiffened by the arrival of experienced shop stewards and political militants. By the 1930s many of these people had become almost permanently unemployed, and their links with the organised movement were less strong and less influential.

## LESSONS

For the working class of today, once again facing the threat of massive unemployment and a ruling class offensive spearheaded by the Labour leaders aided by the TUC, the experiences of the 1920s and '30s contain many fruitful lessons. They demonstrate the potential of mass working class action. But they also expose the lunacy of ultra-leftism and the dangers of accommodation to reformism.

Most importantly they show that unless revolutionaries can break the grip of reformist ideology over the working class, and build a united front of the workers' movement on a clear anti-capitalist programme, then it will be impossible to defeat the capitalist offensive and open the way towards a socialist Britain.

# Cross workers get no joy from Jack Jones

The £6 limit was sold to workers by the TUC on the basis that it would prevent 'further unemployment and ensure a better deal for the low paid. Well, we all know what's happened to the unemployment figures since then; and the experience of workers at a small engineering firm in Basingstoke is just one example of the trade union bureaucrats' equal lack of concern for the low paid.

The struggle at the R.E. Cross factory in Basingstoke first blew up in September when the owner sacked two workers for attempting to unionise the place. Although 12 of the 40-strong workforce refused to join the union and scabbed, a strike by the remaining workers for union rights and no victimisations was completely successful. This left Cross thirsting for

revenge, and last month there was a new confrontation over wages. The shop stewards demanded the full £6 back-dated to July (when the previous agreement ran out).

Cross refused any money till January, and then began to victimise individuals when a work-to-rule started. The response of the workers was to occupy the factory. But a week later Cross returned with a High Court order to evict them.

Morale among the strikers was still high. But although the occupation was their trump-card, the Transport & General Workers Union officials insisted that they call it off. Senior steward Bob Baldock told *Red Weekly*:

'The way we see it, the union officials have sold us down the river on two accounts: by getting us to stop the occupation, and

then not making the strike official. We know that the advice to end the occupation came from pressure from above, which is why we say that we have to rely on ourselves rather than the union bureaucracy.'

Since the end of the occupation the case has gone to arbitration. The T&GWU was hoping to resolve matters by Tuesday, but Cross still insists he won't negotiate with the union.

Meanwhile the strikers are organising support through the local Joint Shop Stewards Committee (sub-committee of the Trades Council). They'll probably need it — certainly Jack Jones, their union boss and architect of the £6 limit, doesn't look as though he's going to lend them a hand.

## —WHAT'S ON—

PHILIP AGEE (former CIA agent) speaks on 'The CIA in World Politics', Tuesday 13 January, 7.30pm, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square (Holborn tube). A London Socialist Forum.

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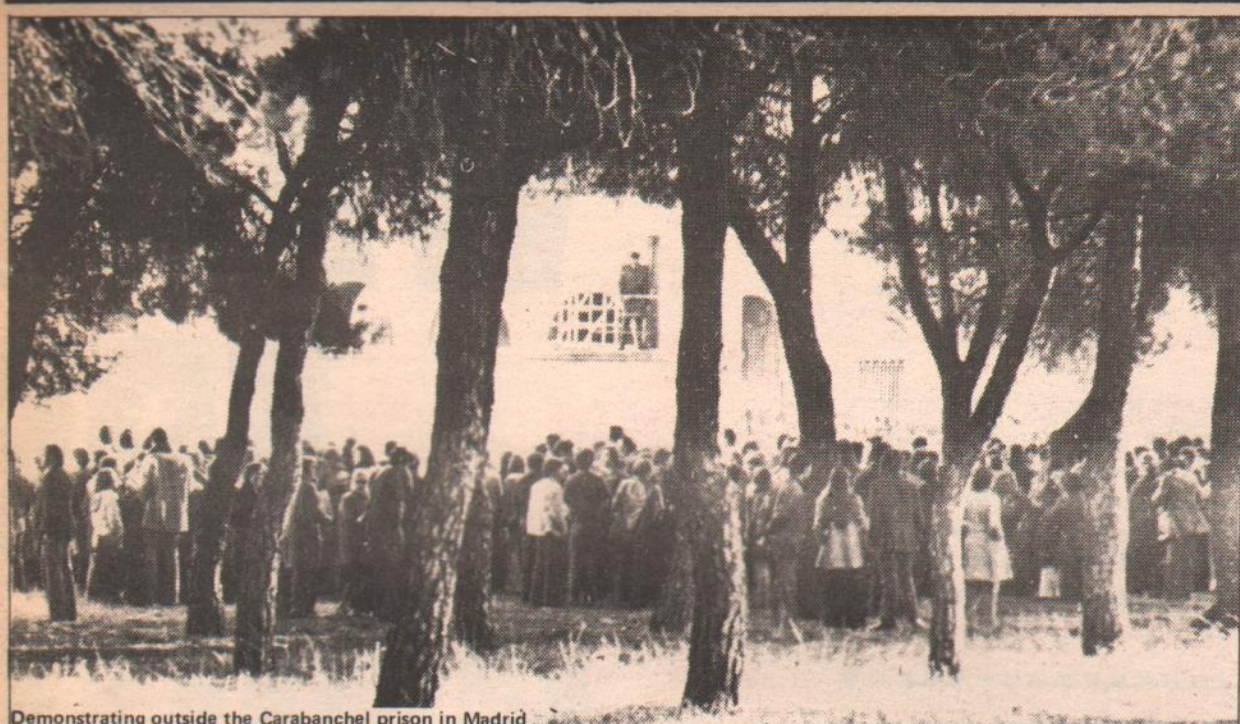
UNEMPLOYED TEACHERS in London meet every Wednesday at 7pm in Room 61, Northern Poly, Holloway Road, N.7.

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

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 (01-263 1053).

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

PUBLIC RALLY to launch the International Communist League 'For a Workers' Answer to the Crisis', Tues 13 Jan, 8pm, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1.



Demonstrating outside the Carabanchel prison in Madrid

# Spanish workers give their answer

The present half-hearted gestures towards liberalisation by the Juan Carlos regime cannot hide one thing: that it is firmly committed to the continuation of the fundamental policies of Francoism. The working class in Spain has already given its answer to these manoeuvres through its actions of 11 and 16 December. Since the significance of these was carefully played down in the British press, we print below a report from our French sister paper *Rouge* which gives a better idea of the real scope of these mobilisations.

## 11 December

In Barcelona there were strikes in all the schools and mass meetings in all the universities. At Pedralbes, a meeting of 2,000 people issued a call for a demonstration assembling at the Clinical Hospital. About 4,000 people gathered there, only to be brutally attacked by the police.

In the factories the call for action was generally followed. In the building industry, officially on strike since the previous day, there were numerous stoppages and mass meetings; at the

Leps ship-yard, a thousand workers walked out and marched as a contingent to the centre of the town, carrying iron bars and hammers. In the health sector the San Pablo Hospital and the Clinical Hospital joined the strike.

In the engineering industry there were mass meetings in most of the factories, notably at SEAT and in the Sabadell and Baix Llobregat zones. Several demonstrations took place despite the police clamp-down. One of about 800 people, called by trade union delegates and the workers commissions, was forced

to seek refuge in the church of Santa Maria del Mar after a brutal charge by the police; others of 500 and 1,500 people marched respectively to Santa Coloma and Cornala. More than 6,000 converged on the neighbourhood of the main prison without being able to form up in a contingent.

The total of those involved was estimated as 150,000 workers on strike and 250,000 people taking part in the mobilisations in the Barcelona region.

In Madrid tens of thousands of workers also went on strike. Fifty thousand walked out in the building industry, and 1,500 of them joined a street demonstration. In engineering most of the big factories were affected: Intelsa, Casa, Robert Bosch, Camps Siemens, Kelvinator, Marconi, Boetticher, and the three Chrysler factories.

At Kelvinator, Casa and Chrysler the police forcibly evicted the workers, who

were meeting inside the factories. More than 60,000 engineering workers were involved in some sort of action.

Mass meetings were also held in most of the universities, including one of 3,000 at the independent university which culminated in a demonstration complete with self-defence pickets. In the neighbourhood, meetings often called by the workers commissions set about preparing a further mobilisation on 16 December.

In Euskadi (the Basque country), the scope of the strike was comparable to that of the general strikes in September against the death penalties, with particularly militant mobilisations in Bilbao and Pamplona.

## 16 December

In the Asturias preparations had begun at the beginning of the month. On 5 December there was a demonstration of 1,000 on the question of political prisoners. On 10 December stoppages began at Ensidesa, Estardillas, and in the mines of San Victor, Nicolasa, Tres Amigos, Maria Louisa and Escar; a thousand people also managed to demonstrate outside the offices of the State-run trade union.

## Massive

On 11 December a further demonstration took place in Oviedo, and there were mass meetings in the universities. Finally, 16 December saw one of the most massive mobilisations of the last ten years. The strike was particularly solid in the mining zone of La Cuenca, in the Giron arsenals, in the engineering industry, and in the banks. The general hospital of Giron was occupied to protest against the arrest of a doctor.

The schools were also involved in the struggle, with the university practically closed.

In Valladolid, the workers commission at the Fasa-Renault factory together with those in the building industry organised widespread action on 16 December.

In Valencia, a 'forum for amnesty' on the university campus on 11 December was violently broken up by the police. On 12 December the Labour Party (PT - a split from the Communist Party) called by itself for a general strike, a sectarian and unprepared initiative which met with little response.

On 15 December, following a call from most of the organisations of the left, 1,200 people took part in a demonstration; the staff of the psychiatric hospital also demonstrated at their place of work against the sacking of four doctors. Also on the same day, a delegation of trade union delegates and engineering workers from Macosa (a factory employing 2,000 workers) met outside the offices of the State-run trade union to call for amnesty

for political prisoners and put forward demands around the renewal of their wage agreement.

On 16 December there was a further meeting of engineering workers, and also a demonstration of women and children in the Oriol neighbourhood to demand the opening of the schools (closed by the regime to avoid possible trouble).

## Dispersed

In total, therefore, several hundred thousand workers took part in the mobilisations of 11 and 16 December. This is a clear sign of the present militancy of the working class. Furthermore, most of the stoppages, demonstrations, and meetings coupled with the call for an immediate general amnesty with demands concerning wages and jobs.

But this powerful mobilisation nevertheless remained too dispersed - not only because of the repression, but apparently as a result of a conscious decision by the reformist organisations. Thus while there was a certain co-ordination of the workers commissions in particular industries in Madrid (building and engineering), there was no real co-ordination at the level of the city. In the same way, while most of the workers' organisations linked their appeals to those issued by the Democratic Junta, the Democratic Convergence (Socialist Party-dominated bloc), and the workers commissions, this was done without any previous agreement or common platform.

If the initiative for the mobilisations mostly came from the Junta or the Convergence, however, it was the workers commissions and often the revolutionary left which played the most active role in the concrete preparation of the struggle in the factories. In fact this breathed new life into the workers commissions, not only in Euskadi but above all in the Asturias and Madrid.

## Perspective

These mobilisations show that the time is more than ripe for concerted action on a national scale. Conditions are especially favourable because the battle for a general amnesty and the demands around the renewal of the labour contracts provide the concrete possibility of unifying the movement and giving it a common perspective: the overthrow of the dictatorship.

But instead of that, the reformists merely repeat hollow formulas about 'the peaceful break with the dictatorship', squandering the tremendous militancy of the workers in dispersed clashes. The balance sheet of the actions of 11 and 16 December must lead to another conclusion altogether.

# End Council Slums - Housing For All!

On 19 December the Labour-controlled London Borough of Camden was granted possession orders in the High Court against Camden Court flats in Hampstead and several houses in Prince of Wales Crescent, N.W.1.

Camden can now legally throw the 80 occupants and their personal effects out onto the street at any time in the next few weeks. These tenants are council 'licensees' (often known as 'official squatters'), and are members of the single largest organisation of council licensees, the 800-strong Camden-based SCH (Short-life Community Housing).

Built on the strength of the 'unofficial' squatting wave of the late sixties and establishing, as they do, a certain elementary right of security of tenure for their members, the 'licensed squatting' schemes represent a partial gain for the housing movement. On the other hand, they embody an attempt by the State to contain spontaneous squatting and sweep under the carpet the worst of the spectacle of homelessness.

## On-the-cheap

It is this latter aspect which explains the Environment Minister's call last year for the extension of such schemes. The Labour Government's policy of housing expenditure cuts can only mean more homelessness and bad housing. Yet because there is a widespread gut sympathy

for the homeless, the most acceptable political solution to this problem appears to Crosland to be housing-on-the-cheap schemes - on the SCH model.

In this way Camden's young homeless are permitted short-life use of temporarily empty council property in exchange for rendering it minimally habitable at their own expense (Camden Court has but one bath between 40 flats).

## Re-housing

The probable increase in short-life schemes in the near future makes it absolutely essential that council 'licensees' threatened with eviction can enforce a right to re-housing. The SCH members, learning from the struggle of the Elgin Avenue squatters, are insisting on re-housing for all: in proper council flats for the households with children, and in more short-life accommodation of a decent standard for the single people and couples without kids.

They have refused to comply with the possession orders and leave their homes unless everyone threatened with eviction is granted re-housing. Continued possession of the buildings is their main material leverage in negotiations. The licensees have made it absolutely clear from the start that they are not wilfully holding up public sector redevelopment, but point out that 'redevelopment that makes us homeless is no development at all'.

Camden Council initially claimed that short-life re-housing for the single people and childless couples was impossible. This proved to be a lie: empty publicly-owned blocks in the borough have been identified.

But the lie demonstrates that the Council's basic interest is to ensure that re-housing is not won as a right by licensees. They need to deny such a right now because it is true that re-housing 'licensees' will become a practical impossibility in the future if Camden Council continues to acquiesce in the Labour Government's present cuts.

But the answer to these problems is not to evict 'licensees' without re-housing them.

The policies needed to begin to resolve the housing crisis in the interests of the working class are:

1. Refuse to implement the cuts.
2. Municipal requisitioning of empty private property.
3. A crash programme of public building and repairs which can help to end unemployment in the building industry as well as homelessness.

This is what 'licensees' must fight for, along with the local labour movement, to press on Camden's Labour Councillors. They must be urged to defy the Government's cuts and if necessary do a Clay Cross.

Contact: SCH, 18A Camden Road, London NW1. (01-267 4622); or Jane or Paul, Flat 9, Camden Court, NW3.



“The capitalist world will not be able to pass from its present phase of general social crisis and generalised economic recession to a new phase of lasting and prolonged expansion except by first inflicting a crushing defeat on the working class and by inflicting disasters in the form of appalling famines, new bloody dictatorships, and new murderous wars on all humanity. To grasp the current crisis of the imperialist system as the point of departure for an assault on the power of capital is not only to take advantage of an exceptionally favourable opening for the international extension of the socialist revolution, but is also and above all to work to spare the human race a new era of free fall toward barbarism.”

Writing in June 1975, Ernest Mandel, Marxist theoretician and a leading militant of the Fourth International, described the significance of the first generalised recession of the international capitalist economy since the end of the Second World War. At the end of 1975 world capitalism is still dominated by recession conditions — but with the major capitalist powers ‘waiting for the upturn’. As we go into 1976 *Red Weekly* assesses the prospects for the international economy by publishing an adapted version of a recent lengthy article on the world economy by Ernest Mandel. The complete article is published in the latest issue of *Inprecor*, the fortnightly information bulletin of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

# I. Marx beats Keynes!

1975 was a wicked year for the world capitalist economy. Right through the spring and summer industrial production continued to drop in all the major capitalist countries compared with the corresponding period in 1974. But now the United States, Japan and Germany, the three economies that led the way into the slump at the end of 1973, have started to pull out of their nose-dive.

Japan's industrial production increased by between three and four per cent (an annual rate of 12 to 16 per cent) in both the second and third quarters of 1975. In West Germany, industrial production increased slightly; it was two per cent higher in September 1975 than August 1975. In the United States, production turned sharply upwards, with talk of an 11 per cent growth rate in the Gross National Product between July and September 1975.

But at the end of 1975 the international capitalist economy is still dominated by recession conditions. As of November 1975, forecasts on the gross national products (in real terms) for the whole of the year 1975 were as follows:

	%
United States	-4.0
West Germany	-3.5
Japan	+1.5
France	-2.0
Italy	-3.0
Britain	-0.7

(Source: *The Economist*, 15 November 1975).

The persistence of very high unemployment rates (see graph) and,

most important, the stagnation of productive investment in all the imperialist countries has put the brakes on any genuine upturn so far. In the United States, for example, half the July-September growth is attributable to the consolidation of stocks, not to an increase in sales to the ‘final consumers’. A temporary boost to demand was also given by tax cuts in the US, Germany and Japan. But these are only short term palliatives, requiring repeated doses to maintain an increase in growth rate.

## Pump-priming

At the same time such ‘pump-priming’ helps create massive private and public sector debts — the latter no less than \$ 70,000 million in the US in 1975 — and accelerates inflation. The main cause of inflation is without doubt the inflation of credit: the sea of debts on which the Western economy sailed to expansion after the Second World War.

In general, capitalist governments have acted as if increasing the money supply would automatically bring about a more or less immediately proportional increase in demand, thus acting as a favourable multiplying factor on overall economic activity. But a considerable portion of the expected growth in national income through the simple inflation of the money supply can escape without producing any significant effects on the level of economic activity:

● 1. People may decide to save a portion of the extra monetary income placed at their disposal. In

nearly all the imperialist countries savings of the lower income layers have increased rather than diminished since the recession began.

● 2. Upturns in domestic consumption may not be accompanied by proportional increases in economic activity if they are accompanied by a decline in exports. In a period of recession all imperialist countries cannot increase their exports simultaneously.

According to a report of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), the volume of world trade declined by 10 per cent during the first half of 1975 compared with the volume for the corresponding period for 1974. Although this differential is narrowing, and the US market is expanding slightly, the markets of capitalist Europe and Japan are continuing to stagnate. It is this factor in particular that has prevented a real upturn in West Germany during the second half of 1975.

● 3. Priming of domestic consumption leads to an upturn in productive investment by capitalist enterprises only if it is accompanied by the prospect of an expanded market and a rise in the rate of profit. The present existence of high excess production capacity constitutes an obstacle that is less easily overcome than the bourgeois and reformist economists generally imagine (see below).

● 4. Finally, even when investment is primed under the impetus of state aid, this priming may not contribute to a cumulative move towards upturn if it simply involves rationalisation investments that eliminate more jobs than they create in the sectors of machine construction and production of raw materials. In Britain, for example, the largest state hand-outs have gone towards financing massive redundancies in British Leyland (20,000 over the last year), Chrysler (8,300) and the British Steel Corporation (44,000 being demanded). In this event, the persistence of high unemployment levels can lead to a rapid ceiling on the growth of domestic consumption.

It is significant that all these truths, which had long since been developed in the Marxist critique of Keynesian and neo-Keynesian conceptions, have suddenly been discovered by bourgeois economists in the midst of a generalised recession. The inflationary ‘pump-priming’ measures of most the imperialist governments have not had the desired effects within the time lapses counted on. A real general upturn of the international capitalist economy will probably not take place until well into the first half of 1976, perhaps not until the third quarter of 1976.

Even in the US most capitalists remain sceptical about short-term prospects for an upturn. ‘Only a rise in investment can sustain a lasting recovery. And nowhere has the present mini-recovery been due to such a rise’, write the editors of *The Economist* (3 January 1976). The question is, ‘will they get it?’.



# 2. You can't always get what you want

It is clear that the existence of exceptionally high excess capacity — quite simply unused production capacity — in most industries in the major capitalist countries is now the main obstacle to an upturn in capitalist productive investment.

In the United States, investigators for McGraw-Hill expect that expenditure on private investment in 1976 will grow by only 9 per cent compared with 1975, which represents a stagnant volume of investment if the expected rate of inflation for capital goods (machines and raw materials) is taken into account. In West Germany the volume of private investment still stands 6 per cent lower than the quarterly average in 1970. And for Japan, the Structural Industry Council (which conducted an enquiry of 1,866 leading firms) forecasts a 3.8 per cent decline in total private investment for the period April 1975–March 1976.

## Desolate

As for Britain, the situation is even more desolate. During the third quarter of 1975 capital spending fell by 6 per cent in manufacturing industry; this came on top of successive declines of 8 per cent and 7 per cent in the first two quarters of 1975 — an annual decline of around 11 per cent.

Under these conditions the absolutely vital machine tools industry is experiencing a dangerous recession. One of the directors of British Leyland expressed himself with brutal frankness: ‘Unless the present downward trend of the British machine tool industry is arrested, there could be a very real danger that British

machine tools will no longer be available’ (*The Times*, 2 December 1975).

The scope of the excess capacity which causes a decline in investment, often goes beyond anything ever seen in the past. In the United States, excess capacity for the whole of manufacturing industry reached 35 per cent in the middle of 1975; it was still 28 per cent during October.

## Overproduction

*Time* magazine (17 November) affirms that Italian industry as a whole is working at less than 70 per cent of capacity. The 28 November issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* cites the same percentage for Japan. The two major Japanese steel companies, Nippon Steel and Nippon Kokan, have respectively reduced their production to 30–40 per cent and 28 per cent beneath maximum capacity. (*Newsweek*, 17 November).

These vast amounts of unused capacity demonstrate that the present crisis is a classic capitalist crisis of overproduction. Overproduction always means that there is too much capital to rake in the average rate of profit. There is no shortage of capital, but little investment because the capitalist class believe there is little to be gained from investing their money in industry.

In other words, there is a shortage of profits. In Britain the share of profits in the economy approximately halved in the period from the early 1950s to the early 1970s, and the rate of profit before tax fell by approximately a half.

There will be no serious upturn



# ING THE PTURN



## 4. Results and prospects

International capitalism remembers only too well that it was the simultaneous acceleration of inflation in *all* the imperialist countries which detonated the present recession by provoking a very serious crisis in the international monetary system. In 1971 this led to the collapse of the dollar and the Bretton Woods agreements of 1944, on which the relatively fixed currency exchange rates of the post-war period – allowing a stable expansion of world trade – were based.

With currencies floating, and without recourse to sharp devaluation to boost exports, all capitalist countries were forced to apply anti-inflationary policies at the same time to keep their exports competitive. Hence the generalisation of the recession. This is why all capitalist governments – social democratic ones as well – have proclaimed ‘the struggle against inflation’ as the number one goal, tacitly abandoning the myth of the priority of full employment.

Even now the relatively modest priming of internal consumption and the bailing out of firms in difficulty means priming through inflation. Inflation has continued, if at a slightly lower rate, in a situation where material production has fallen 5–10 per cent in most major capitalist economies.

### Deficits

Increased public expenditure has caused enormous budget deficits to appear: some \$ 70,000 million in the US, \$ 35,000 million in West Germany, and \$ 20,000 million in Britain. The total for all the imperialist countries is somewhere around \$ 160,000 million. Covering these deficits demands more borrowing on the capital markets, driving up long-term interest rates even before the industrial upturn has taken hold.

But somebody has got to reflate some time. The whole world cannot break out of recession with export-led growth, because one country's exports are another imports. One of the biggest fears of big business is that if the present ‘upturn’ fades out in early 1976, if all countries first bring their inflation rates lower and then feel the need to expand capacity at the same time, then the

pressure on resources is bound to push up the rate of inflation again.

It was the last roaring boom which pushed world capitalism into generalised recession. Another one could push it still nearer the abyss.

It is these same attempted ‘beggar-my-neighbour’ anti-inflation policies that caused the dramatic 10 per cent drop in the volume of world trade in the first half of 1975. Generally speaking, the atmosphere of recession and sharpened inter-imperialist competition has stimulated a rise of nationalism and economic protectionism in all the imperialist countries.

In the United States unfair competition suits have been issued against importers of automobiles and of European and Japanese steel products, while manufacturers are attacking importers of digital and electronic watches. Britain itself has already made the first moves to introduce controls (and thereby limitations) of imports.

In the longer term it is highly unlikely that the capitalist economies will again achieve the unprecedentedly high growth rates of the 1950s and '60s. On the whole all the characteristics of a ‘long wave of reduced growth’, and even of predominant stagnation, are taking shape.

What lies ahead, therefore, is an increasingly determined struggle over the rate of exploitation of the working class, the only means capital commands to reverse definitively the long-term tendency of the rate of profit to decline, given the irreversible advance of automation.

Thus, all proportions guarded, the ‘economic atmosphere’ is coming close to that which prevailed in the early 1920s. The end of this long cycle of class struggle will either be the victory of the socialist revolution or real catastrophes for the human race: socialism or barbarism.

in capital accumulation (that is, a new boom) unless the conditions for *valorising* capital – the process through which labour-power produces additional value over and above its own value (surplus value) – improve dramatically. The international capitalist class desperately requires a savage increase in the rate of exploitation to restore profitability. And there can be no question of this in the short or medium term.

Cautiously, *The Economist*, which had predicted a new boom for 1976, has already pushed its prediction back to 1977. Since the rise in productive investment has yet to occur, even this 1977 boom becomes increasingly open to question.

## 3. Crisis and classes

Any serious overproduction crisis manifests itself as a massive aggression by the capitalist class against the jobs and living standards of the working class. They do this to jack up the rate of exploitation. The intensified competition brought about by the recession impels companies to step up their efforts in the realm of *rationalisation investments*. Investment, far from creating new jobs, is aimed at reducing the labour force. The Labour Government's Leyland and Chrysler ‘rescues’ are a graphic demonstration of this.

Although the recession in most major capitalist countries is no longer worsening, and the first signs of upturn are appearing, unemployment is nonetheless getting worse in all the imperialist countries. Here are the estimates for winter 1975–76, compared with the situation during winter 1974–75:

Number of Total Unemployed (in millions)

	winter 74–75	winter 75–76
United States	7.5	8.2
Britain	0.8	1.5
Japan	1.0	1.5
Italy	1.5	1.5
France	0.8	1.3
West Germany	1.0	1.2

It is certain that the delay in the reabsorption of unemployment will powerfully retard the industrial upturn, and that this will in turn slow down a return to a boom.

### Dilemma

And here we hit upon the real dilemma of the capitalist governments, which reflects a real contradiction in the capitalist mode of production. ‘To turn the cycle up again, the rate of profit must be improved’, some say. And they are not wrong. From this they conclude, a bit too

hastily, that austerity must take hold in the hearts (and the stomachs) of the working class.

‘No’, respond the reformists of the workers’ movement and the bourgeois reformers of all stripes, ‘to reabsorb excess productive capacity, consumption by the “final consumers” must be jacked up and not held down’. And they are not wrong either.

The trouble is that both sides are half right, which means that they are both wrong. A genuine capitalist boom requires *both* a serious upturn in the rate of profit and a serious expansion of sales to ‘final consumers’. It is not easy to bring about these two conditions simultaneously, especially when the capital markets are weighed down by excess capacity and by a militant working class that is not demoralised.

### No guarantee

And nothing guarantees the success of the worldwide offensive of capital against the living and working conditions of the working class. The working class will not stand by with folded arms as the bourgeoisie attempts to eliminate the gains of three decades of successful struggle in order to save its crumbling system. Despite temporary ebbs and setbacks in countries like West Germany and Britain, the rising cycle of workers struggles is still in its initial phase. The biggest battles are yet to come and these could wreck the most carefully laid plans of the international bourgeoisie.

Alongside any increase in the rate of exploitation, the second objective function of a crisis of overproduction is the *devalorisation of capital*. First, as a result of the decline in value (price of production) of commodities, the capital invested in these commodities loses value. Secondly, as a result of commercial

bankruptcies and firms going out of business as a result of intensified competition, much of the value of their capital is destroyed.

This capital was part of total social capital, which therefore loses part of its aggregate value. The total mass of surplus value remains unchanged, increases in the rate of exploitation compensating for the reduction caused by unemployment, in relation to a shrinking total social capital. Result: the desired increase in the rate of profit.

In the current recession the number of bankruptcies has increased, by more than 30 per cent in the United States and by more than 60 per cent in Britain. There were 7,500 bankruptcies in West Germany in 1974 and 8,600 in Japan in 1975. There were also a few spectacular banking and big trust failures.

Nevertheless, what is striking is precisely the relatively small dimensions of this process of devalorisation of capital in light of the considerable scope of the fall of production and profits. It is not difficult to discover the explanation of this apparent paradox.

### Inflation

Inflation (see graph), which is continuing full force during the height of the recession, contributes to limiting the effects of increased competition on the less solid trusts. The banking system continues to extend credit. The state and the central banks are continuing to bail out firms in danger of going under.

The consequences of this are two-fold. First, there is more and more indebtedness among the great trusts, which obviously slows down the rise of the rate of profit. In the year 1974, the 700 largest Italian companies, for example, had to borrow

a sum equivalent to 57 per cent of all they had borrowed in the entire period 1968–73.

Second, there is even greater pressure on the banking system each time a big client can no longer pay its debts. In the United States the bankruptcy of W.T. Grant cost the system dearly, for this trust had borrowed \$ 640 million from the banks.

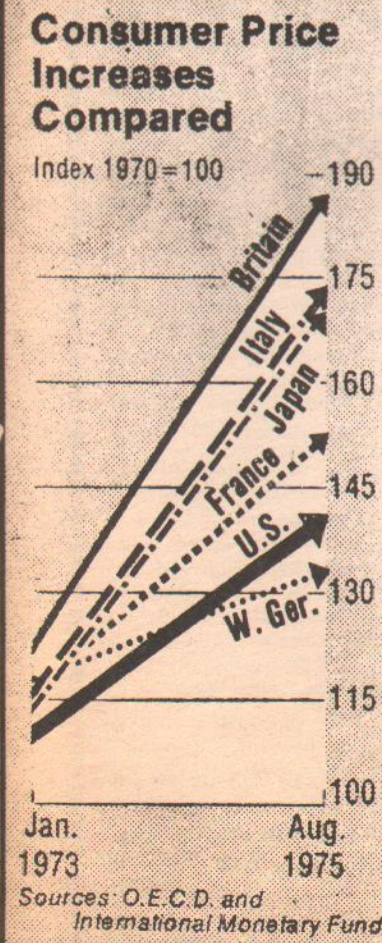
### Failures

If President Ford had allowed New York city, with its \$ 2,000 million worth of loans from the banks, to go bankrupt last autumn it could well have brought down several of New York's major banks with it – this real risk of a collapse of the credit system is why Ford eventually had to step in. British banking is scarcely better off. The collapse of the property market caught the banks at the end of 1974 with loans of £5 billion extended to the property and construction industries – more than half the banks' commitment to all of British manufacturing, compared with one-fifth in 1970.

This time the banks managed to squeak by. The reserves of the capitalist system in the richest imperialist countries have not yet been exhausted by inflation. They still enable the merry-go-round of ‘indebtedness-inflation-greater indebtedness’ to make a few more turns.

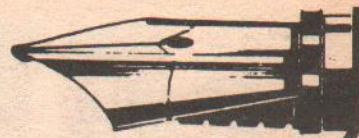
### New recession

But by the same token, the recession cannot play the objective role it is supposed to play. The devalorisation of capital remains marginal. The increase in the rate of profit will be mediocre. The conclusion is clear. This recession will not lead to a powerful boom, but instead to a limited upturn leading rapidly to a new recession.





# PORTUGAL FORUM



## Winning the masses

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

In the course of their relations with the PRP the International Socialists have put forward a number of criticisms of that organisation. In *Portugal - The Way Ahead*, partially reprinted as an 'Open Letter' in *Socialist Worker* of 11 October, Tony Cliff warned of the dangers of a premature insurrection. In an analysis of the defeat of 25 November, printed in *Socialist Worker* on 6 December, Cliff and Harman stressed the need for the PRP to win over the masses.

Unfortunately both these criticisms, which are undoubtedly correct, give the impression that it is simply a question of merely changing certain points within a generally correct line. In the last issue of *Red Weekly* however, we showed that the short term insurrectionist line of the PRP was an inevitable product of its disastrous confusion of social democratic reaction with fascism. The PRP's 'under-estimation' of the need to win over the masses was not that it didn't produce a regular enough newspaper or pay enough attention to recruiting, but that it had a political line which would prevent it from winning over the masses and achieving the real conditions for insurrection.

### Councils

The first major example of this was the orientation given by the PRP to the CRTSMs (Councils of Revolutionary Workers, Soldiers and Sailors). On this issue the IS leadership has written more nonsense than on practically anything else - both absurdly exaggerating their influence, and suggesting that in Portugal the PRP was the only organisation to campaign for workers councils. What has not been so reported, however, is either the wrong line of the CRTSMs, or flowing from this, the collapse of the 'movement' even where initial successes were gained.

The classic case is the Lisnave shipyard. Here there was a meeting of 4,000 workers, called under the influence of the PRP, which supported the CRTSMs demonstration of 17 June and elected its own council.

This was undoubtedly a major success, which could have been a springboard to great things. But the line which the PRP got adopted was for action for 'a non-party revolutionary government and socialist revolution'. Cliff implicitly attempts to justify this line in his pamphlet, writing: 'During the general elections to the Constituent Assembly there is no doubt that many militants got fed up with the different and numerous political organisations competing for working class votes. Apartidism (non-partyism)

corresponded to the feelings of much of the advanced section of the class' (p19).

Poor advanced workers, you see fed up with all this political argument and wanting to get on, with the aid of the PRP, to the serious job (evidently not involving political parties) of making the revolution.

However the PRP actually went still further. In the PRP's scheme of things the one place where political parties were represented was on the National Secretariat of the committees. The first congress of the 'pro-council committees', however, decided to exclude the Socialist Party even from the National Secretariat - not exactly a small thing as the SP, despite Cliff and Harman's claims, has the support of the majority of the workers in the North and a substantial minority indeed in the South.

This decision to exclude the Socialist Party was by itself absolutely sufficient to ensure that the CRTSMs could never develop to create real workers councils. The 'non-partyism' ensured they could never go beyond being the front of a sect. Both because politics very much involves parties and because those workers most committed to building workers councils were not prepared to abandon their political organisations, the PRP's 'councils', far from rising above parties, merely became the periphery of one party the PRP.

### Strength

This is exactly how they are seen in Portugal. Instead of 'its' rank and file movement, the PRP had 'its' workers councils. And the strength of the CRTSMs developed in inverse ratio to the real emergence of workers councils. Today, in Lisnave as everywhere else, there is not one single meaningful organisation of the CRTSM type in existence.

While, to be fair, it is necessary to point out that the PRP's practice in some areas was considerably better than its theory, and it did contribute to the establishment of some real workers organs, nevertheless its line on non-partyism and on the SP is an insuperable barrier to winning the masses.

If the line of the PRP on the CRTSMs was an obstacle to the building of organisations of the masses inside the working class, its political line was also disastrously incapable of winning over the masses in a still broader sense - of winning the 'intermediate strata' of society to the side of the working class.

This latter point is of course one of the classic conditions which must be

achieved to create a revolution. It is not sufficient to seize power that even the majority of the working class is won. It is also necessary, as Lenin and Trotsky continually pointed out, both that the ruling class power itself be in deep crisis and that all significant intermediate strata be either won over or neutralised.

### Bolsheviks

The exact combination in which these conditions are satisfied in any revolution of course differs. In Russia for example, the Bolsheviks in October 1917, while they had a majority in the working class, were very far from having a majority of the population. But they could take power because of the extreme weakness of the ruling class and the particular situation of the peasants who comprised the mass of society - i.e., while the mass of the peasants voted for the Social Revolutionaries, they were extremely disillusioned with them, were absolutely unwilling to mobilise in support of them or the Constituent Assembly, and under these conditions were at worst neutralised and at best could rapidly be won to the Bolsheviks.

In Portugal, however, despite the very deep crisis of the ruling class power, the task of winning over the working class and winning or neutralising the other layers of the masses has absolutely not been achieved. Nothing like the majority of the working class has been won by the revolutionaries, and the winning over or neutralising of intermediate strata has not been achieved.

The latter might seem relatively unimportant in a massively proletarianised country like Britain, but in Portugal a quarter of the population are directly employed in agriculture - with a large number in the north being land-owning peasants; the vast majority even of the workers are employed in small enterprises; and as in every under-developed economy, there is a very high proportion both of classic petit-bourgeois and of many intermediate strata.

### Reformists

Outside Lisbon and the south, where an important shift in the relation of forces has occurred, the masses are not merely not won over but are not even neutralised. The majority of workers follow the reformists, and in the north large masses have been actively mobilised against the forces of revolution. To break the majority of the workers from reform-



Banner of Amadora popular assembly—CRTSMs declined as real organs of workers' power began to emerge

ism and at least neutralise the huge peasant and petit-bourgeois layers is absolutely indispensable before there can be any serious talk of insurrection.

In fighting to win over or neutralise the massive intermediate strata in Portugal the PRP had one element of a correct line - economic demands on agriculture. A second decisive element, councils, it had only in an extraordinarily distorted form which had no chance of success.

### Unfortunate

Unfortunately, however, a correct line even on these two things would not by itself have been at all sufficient to deal with the tasks to be accomplished. The mass mobilisations against the forces of revolution during the summer - and it was these and not the manoeuvres of the army which were the real element in strengthening bourgeois power in Portugal - were carried out not for or against workers councils or economic demands, but under cover of 'defending democracy'.

The reasons for this are obvious. Forty years of fascist rule does not decrease illusions in bourgeois democracy but on the contrary vastly increases them. Anyone in Portugal who convinces the masses that they intend to install a dictatorship over them will never make a revolution - particularly under conditions where both the international nature of Stalinism and its practice in the trade unions and towns of the north convince people that one self-proclaimed supporter of socialism, the CP, doesn't care about even bourgeois, let alone proletarian, democracy.

Of course, during the summer large numbers of workers in the south found out that many of these demonstrations were not about defending democracy at all, but were about attacking the development of working class power - which is why the SP's demonstrations in Lisbon shrank dramatically. But for a vital period in the summer even large numbers of workers were confused on this question, and even today very large layers of the petit-bourgeoisie, peasants, workers in small enterprises, etc. continue to support the SP and can be still mobilised under the banner of 'defending democracy'. No mere programme of economic demands will overcome this.

### Dual task

Under these circumstances revolutionaries were and are faced with a very difficult dual task. First, they have to advance centrally a line for building soviet type organisations - organs of workers' as opposed to bourgeois democracy. Secondly, they have to understand the very deep illusions which already exist in bourgeois democracy.

The link between the two tasks is of course showing both that only councils can meet the social needs of the masses, and that these councils create a greater democracy of the masses than any bour-

geois system. Without combining these tasks no revolution can be made in Portugal.

How did the PRP deal with this crucial task in winning over the masses? In its usual ultra-left fashion. This line began to take concrete form with the election, which the PRP boycotted, declaring that those who 'play the electoral game' are 'objectively turning themselves also into counter-revolutionaries' (Manifesto of the PRP, 10 March 1975).

The reason for this was apparently that: 'The attitude adopted by these organisations (which claim to be anti-reformist and anti-revisionist, and thus anti-electoralist) in participating in these "elections" can only be understood if we realise that many of them completely lack any concrete analysis of the situation in Portugal. Because of this, and by pretending to have scientific analyses, they also support the strengthening of bourgeois democracy' (Ibid).

### Highest

Unfortunately, as was only to be expected, the masses paid no attention to this. Ninety two per cent of the electorate participated in the Constituent Assembly poll - probably the highest poll ever recorded in Europe. From this anyone with sense would have concluded that no matter what the state of the revolutionaries, even the mass of the workers had definitely not broken with bourgeois electoralist illusions.

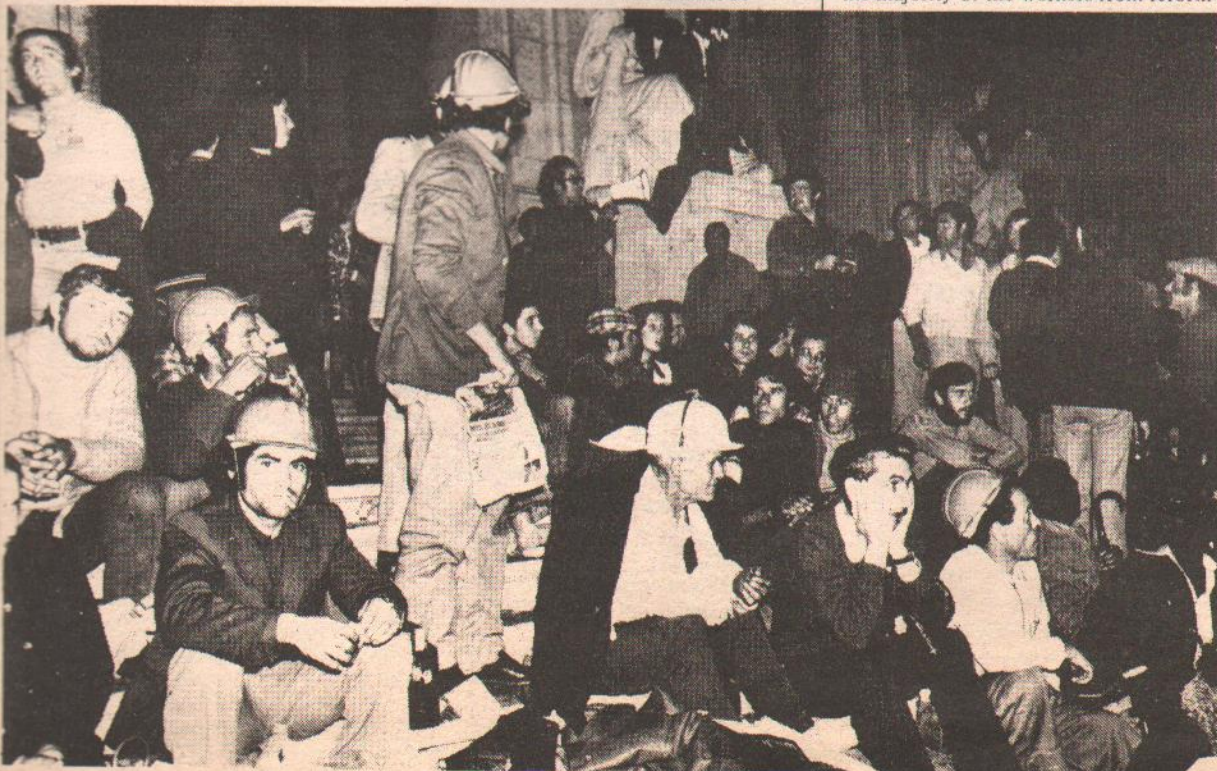
Instead of correcting its error, however the PRP deepened it. If bourgeois electoralism couldn't be got rid of by convincing, then perhaps its results could be got rid of by decree. The PRP decided to demand the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly - a line which was trumpeted all over the pages of *Socialist Worker*.

Nothing more likely to cut off the revolutionaries from the masses and throw large sections of the workers and the entire population of the north into the hands of reaction could be imagined. It was a classic case of attempting to rape the masses having failed to convince them. It was a line for starting a civil war with an absolute guarantee of losing it.

To take up comrade Harman's criticism: the problem with the PRP isn't that its paper doesn't come out regularly enough - the problem is what's in it when it does come out!

In next week's final article we will deal with the PRP, the Communist Party, and the 'lefts' of the Armed Forces Movement.

This month the LCI (Portuguese sympathising organisation of the Fourth International) holds its congress. *Red Weekly* will be carrying a full report together with extracts from the most important documents adopted. Don't miss an issue.



Building workers besiege Azevedo in support of their wage demand—this kind of mass action showed the way forward



# Zambia's 'detente' moves against MPLA

This weekend the Organisation of African Unity meets in Addis Ababa to discuss again its attitude to the war in Angola. Since its last discussions, nineteen of the 46 OAU members have recognised the MPLA Government in Luanda. But in spite of the South African intervention, many of the African states still refuse to commit themselves --among them 'humanist' Zambia. In a special report for Red Weekly, JOHN BLAIR looks more closely at the reasons for this situation.

The present civil war in Angola is proving to be a litmus test of the real nature of Africa's neo-colonialist regimes. For the past two months at least the intervention of imperialism on the side of the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) has been public knowledge. Yet many 'independent' states in Africa have either tried to put off recognising and confronting the reality of this development, or in some cases have actually collaborated in its execution.

On the one hand there has been little attempt by the US Government to disguise the fact that the main purpose of its recent 11-fold increase in aid to the Mobutu regime in Zaire was to strengthen the FNLA's drive towards Luanda. This movement's power base has always lain almost exclusively amongst the Bakongo peoples, who straddle the Zairean border in the north of the country. Its leader Holden Roberto is brother-in-law to President Mobutu and the owner of a good deal of property in the Zairean capital, Kinshasa. FNLA has historically been quite explicitly pro-imperialist in its political statements, and there is no doubt at all that the US has been its main backer.

## MERCENARIES

Evidence of the composition of FNLA's fighting force came from two mercenaries captured by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) on 10 November. These men had been recruited in Johannesburg and Salisbury respectively with promises of rich rewards for their work of butchery. After being transported via Kinshasa, where they were stripped of all their personal documentation, they were sent to Ambriz to join an army which consisted of about 2,500 Portuguese, 2,200 Zaireans (presumably members of Mobutu's own regular forces), South African and Brazilian experts, and only 100 indigenous Angolans. Disillusioned with their pay and conditions, and obviously fearful of the result of impending battles, they deserted individually to surrender to the MPLA.

As for UNITA -- which in July was proclaiming that, unlike its two rivals, it was totally without outside financial or logistical backing -- this movement has solved its problems by becoming the tool of the apartheid regime in Pretoria. Numerous western reporters have testified to the presence of regular South African soldiers in the UNITA 'capital' of Huambo (formerly Nova Lisboa) and in the port towns of Lobito and Benguela.

In the face of these co-ordinated attempts of imperialism and its South African client to secure the defeat of MPLA, it is worth looking at the position of Zambia's 'humanist' regime as a crystal clear demonstration of the Kaunda Government's real position on the liberation struggle in southern Africa.

During the ten year liberation war, Zambia gave logistic and diplomatic support to MPLA. But this has rapidly changed in the past eighteen months in tune with Zambia's simultaneous changes of line on the question of



Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). The overwhelming obsession of Zambia's pathetically weak state capitalist bourgeoisie has become that of securing 'peaceful change' which can bring succour to the country's ailing economy.

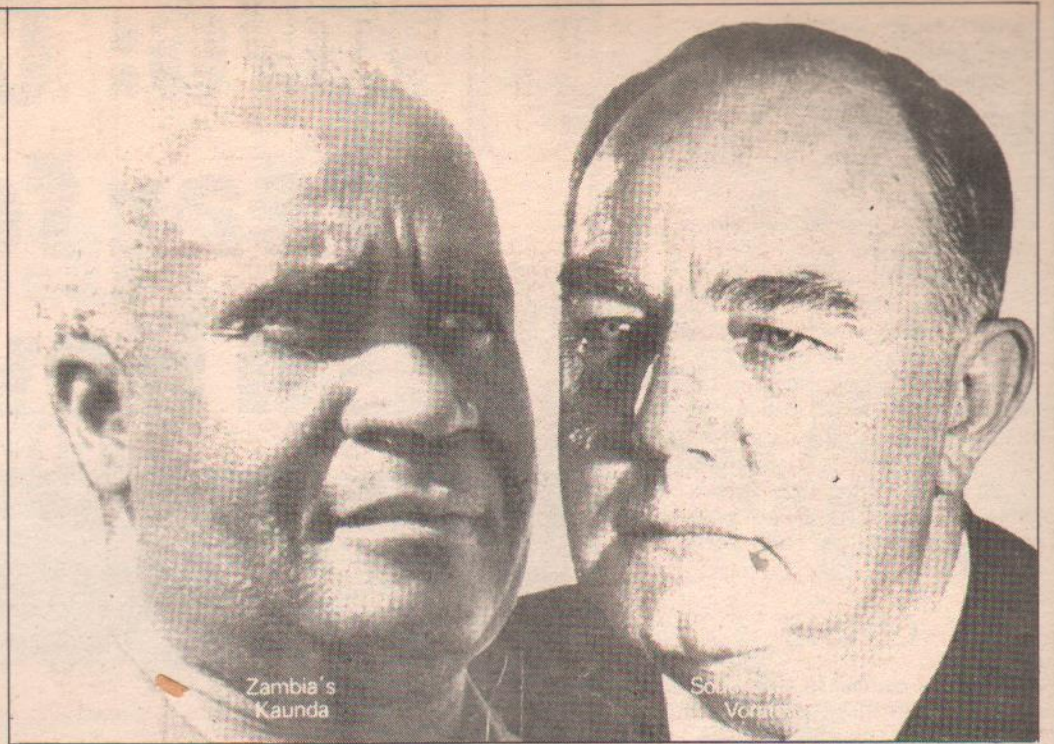
In the past 18 months the price of copper, which accounts for 97 per cent of exports and 40 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, has slumped to a level at which production in most mines is at the moment actually unprofitable. Simultaneously the country's capacity to feed itself has, due to insufficient investment in the rural sector, been constantly declining. It is these economic factors which provide the essential background to the Zambian Government's current moves in the field of foreign policy.

It is no exaggeration to say that the restoration of full economic relations with the white south is key to the survival prospects of the ruling Kaunda clique. Moreover, Zambia's rulers are also very conscious of the contagious effect which the opening of mass struggles in other parts of southern Africa could have upon their own population. Because of South Africa's intimate links with imperialism, there is no doubt that struggles in the apartheid stronghold will involve from the very beginning a challenge to the capitalist system as a whole. Such an example on their very borders is the last thing likely to ensure 'stability' for Zambia's rulers!

## OBSESSION

On the question of Angola these needs -- which in the circumstances of continued world recession now amount to a veritable obsession -- have led to a de facto state of collaboration with the South African intervention. Zambia's totally Government-controlled news media have provided a clear example of this. Despite all the clear reports worldwide of South Africa's direct involvement in support of UNITA, by early December not a single word had appeared in Zambia's press, radio or TV affirming this fact.

The political 'education' which is daily administered to the Zambian population places the entire responsibility for the Angolan civil war upon the 'misleadership' of the various movements. For instance, Kaunda stated at the opening of the fifth 'participatory democracy seminar' of the armed forces in Lusaka on 4 December: 'The fundamental cause of the civil war in Angola and what has brought the presence of foreign forces lies in the leadership of



Masterminding 'detente': President Kaunda of Zambia and Premier Vorster of South Africa

the liberation movements'. These leaders, it is said, have managed to enlist the support of the two 'super powers' in a selfish attempt to pursue their own goals of political power. But no details have been given of the actual sources of the growing support for FNLA and UNITA.

The reasons for all this are crystal clear. The Zambian and South African regimes are now *de facto* allies in the attempt to destroy MPLA.

## INVALUABLE

UNITA remains the only Angolan liberation movement allocated time on Lusaka radio. Journalists travelling into UNITA-held areas of Angola have testified to the presence of crates of arms with Zambian army labels on the Lonrho-supplied jet, which flies regularly in and out of Lusaka. While UNITA with its new more powerful backers now has much less need of such material support, it is crucial for UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi to maintain links with black Africa by which he can counter the allegation that he is simply a white man's stooge. For this purpose the Zambian connection is invaluable.

In the past month the press internationally has carried several reports of supposed deals being cooked up between Zambia and South Africa. These have involved trading off the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe in return for relief for Zambia's economy.

It has been suggested that Zambia has agreed to back whatever deal the Nkomo faction of ANC can cook up with Smith, and as a result to withdraw any form of diplomatic or logistic support from the armed struggle wing of ANC. Such an agreement will be followed by the re-opening of Zambia's quickest rail connection to the sea via the Victoria Falls Bridge, Salisbury and Beira -- which will further enmesh Zambia in the search for 'security' in Rhodesia against the guerrillas. This will be followed up with a generous loan from South Africa to tide Zambia over its present economic difficulties.

## CENSORSHIP

Like the information about the South African presence in southern Angola, these allegations have been suppressed inside Zambia, although they have been denied by Zambian representatives abroad. But one allegation which has not been denied anywhere appeared in Rhodesia's *Sunday Mail* on 16 November. It spoke of a secret agreement

involving the clearing of the massive stockpile of more than 90,000 tons of copper in Zambia (largely caused by the closure of the Benguela railway through Angola). This work apparently involved South African railway and harbour experts working in Mozambique in collaboration with the Frelimo Government to expedite transit via Rhodesia and Beira.

Suspicious about the extent of these links are strengthened daily as Zambia's position on Angola becomes ever more out of step with that of other African regimes with whom she has hitherto collaborated. At independence on 11 November the MPLA Government was recognised by only a handful of states. But the mounting evidence of South African involvement has brought a rapid change. Nineteen African states now recognise and give at least verbal solidarity to the MPLA Government. Most have cited South Africa's support for the other movements as the central reason for their decision.

## 'ABSTENTIONIST'

At the time of writing three strange bedfellows still defend the continuation of the OAU line, which recognises all three movements but no single government and calls for continued attempts to effect a reconciliation between them. The three are Kaunda of Zambia, Mobutu of Zaire and Amin of Uganda. They are being encouraged from the sidelines by South Africa, whose press has been waxing ecstatic about the apparent unanimity between Vorster and the OAU in condemning the supposed Russian 'invasion' of Angola.

It has become absolutely clear that this 'abstentionist' position, couched in seemingly laudable sentiments about the Angolan people's own right to choose, the need to eliminate outside influences which cut across the right to self-determination etc., objectively gives support to the intervention of imperialist interests and South Africa in Angola. Far from being an assertion of democracy, any kind of recognition of movements whose essentially 'puppet' nature becomes daily clearer simply gives full support to those forces attempting to reintegrate Angola safely into the imperialist camp.

The task of recomposing an international movement of solidarity with the struggle led by MPLA is thus of great importance. The extent to which the solidarity movement can be developed now within the imperialist countries will be of crucial significance for its outcome.



South African soldiers captured by MPLA

In its review of 1975 the *Irish Times* summed up the present situation in the Six Counties in this way: 'British long term policy...is a movement towards some form of administration in the North which will involve a lessening in British involvement and which will not involve a united Ireland — in simple terms a form of independence.'

The *Irish Times* is not alone in making such prophecies. The British Government's decision to close down Rolls Royce in the Six Counties, together with its decision to exclude both the Belfast shipyards and the aircraft industry from current nationalisation plans, have been seized on by the Loyalists as providing evidence of a policy of gradual withdrawal by Britain from Northern Ireland.

## CRISIS

The Provisional IRA draws similar conclusions from government policy in its new year message: 'Britain's days in Ireland are numbered, the Irish people recognise it, the world at large recognise it, and the Irish Republican Army recognise it... Even the vast majority of the English people, who have in the past given a blank cheque to their government to colonise Ireland, are now vociferous in their demands for a British withdrawal.'

Such prophecies are not based on fantasies. There is no doubt that British imperialism in Ireland is in as great a crisis as at any time in the past seven years. The probability that Northern Ireland Secretary Merlyn Rees will reject the demands of the Loyalists contained in the Convention Report, to be followed by an inevitable period of direct rule, will do nothing to stabilise the British presence in Ireland.

On the other hand, a complete surrender to the Loyalists would equally perpetuate an unstable situation in the Six Counties, resulting in a protracted war by the nationalist population and the possible dragging in of sections of the Irish people in the 26 Counties.

## IMPASSE

In short the impasse remains. The imperialist hopes that rose with the advocacy by Craig of some form of tactical power-sharing are now more or less dashed — as a recent Loyalist colleague of Craig put it: 'Craig is in the wilderness and he is getting shorter of water every day.'

It is an indication of the depth of the crisis that Rees is now giving serious consideration to holding a referendum in the Six Counties on the issue of power-sharing. The fact is that such a referendum would solve nothing. The probability is that it would be boycotted by large sections of both the Loyalist and Republican populations, so that even an outcome favourable to the British Government would be largely meaningless. And a vote against the Government would deepen the crisis still further.

But despite such problems the

# 1976: Critical year for the Irish Revolution



prophecies of a coming British withdrawal are at best simplistic and at worst downright dangerous. Britain will not willingly give Ireland back to the Irish people.

Any 'withdrawal' will be tactical and superficial. British and other foreign owned factories will continue to play their imperialist role in all

of Ireland. Britain will continue to use the Southern government as its representatives in Ireland. Equally any possible British withdrawal from the Six Counties will only take place after the British army has made every possible attempt to smash all progressive movements there — which means the Republican and socialist move-

ments.

So if 1976 promises to be a critical year for British imperialism in Ireland, it will also be a critical one for Republicans and socialists involved in the struggle for national liberation in Ireland.

The recent 'feud' between the Provisionals and Officials has left a

good deal of demoralisation in the Catholic ghettos of Belfast; and the continuing strength of the Loyalist extremists has had the same effect. The assassinations of Catholics by Loyalists have produced a feeling in many areas of hopelessness and pessimism.

## UNDERSTAND

The need for a widespread and united response to such developments becomes daily more urgent. In this respect the apparent decision of the Provisionals to resume full-scale military activity against British imperialism is understandable, especially in view of the British army violations of the cease-fire (numbering over 1,500) and British army involvement in the Loyalist murder gangs (a British soldier has recently been charged with membership of the UVF).

However, while *Red Weekly* will not join the chorus of righteous indignation moralising about the Provisionals, it is necessary to point out that widespread bombings, whether in the Six Counties or in Britain, will in no way provide an adequate defence against the Loyalist murder gangs. Nor will they mobilise the nationalist population in the Six Counties to kick out all the manifestations of British imperialism in Ireland once and for all.

The move to resume full-scale military activity has its roots in a healthy wariness by the Provisional rank and file in Belfast of the policy of 'negotiated withdrawal' in which the leadership of the Provisionals have placed such trust. In this respect the decision of the Provisionals to resume military activity is not a last desperate throw, but is a consequence of a growing awareness that any 'secret deals' with British imperialism are not worth the paper they are written on.

## TROOPS OUT

And it is because of this that it is important to say that the combativity of large sections of the Catholic population in the Six Counties remains — but it is a combativity that would find its most successful manifestation in a united mass movement against British imperialism rather than in bombing actions.

The primary role of British socialists is still the same. It is not to tell the Irish how to wage their struggle but to build a mass solidarity movement demanding 'Troops Out Now'.

This movement must be unequivocal in its demands on the British Government. There must be no question of secret diplomacy, no question of 'negotiated independence' for the Six Counties. Nothing less than self-determination for the Irish people as a whole will do — which for a start means troops out now.

A mass troops out movement in this country could be a crucial factor in taking the situation in Ireland forward over the next twelve months, turning the crisis of British imperialism into a road to victory for the Irish national movement.

TOM MARLOWE

# ALL OUT FEBRUARY 1st

Britain has been in Ireland for over 800 years. During those centuries there has rarely been peace in Ireland. The Irish people have suffered from the barbarism of British kings, queens and governments; they have been driven from land they once worked, houses they once lived in; they have been denied the right to rule themselves. Irish men and women have been starved to death while the food they grew was imported to England; they have been imprisoned for years for daring to challenge the right of a foreign occupation; they have been killed in thousands for fighting the forces of foreign occupation.

During the last eight years this process has continued: ordinary civil rights were denied, men and women were locked up without trial, and as more British troops were poured into Northern Ireland, the suffering of the Irish

people increased and multiplied. On 30 January 1972 fourteen men were shot dead on the streets of Derry by British paratroopers because they dared to demand that internment be ended. The innocence of those victims was later proved — the guilt of the British army and government remains: an army and a government which acts in our name.

We are often told that Ireland is a 'difficult', 'complicated' question. It is nothing of the sort. The issue has been, and remains, simple: should Britain stay in Ireland and dictate to the Irish people how they must behave? And if the question is simple, so too is the answer: end all British interference in Ireland, let the Irish people rule themselves, own their own natural resources, profit from the fruits of their own labour.

For too long the labour, trade union, and progressive

movements in this country have been silent on the issue of Ireland, or have been divided amongst themselves. Through the demonstration on 1 February the Bloody Sunday Commemoration Committee aims to begin a process which will correct these failures. The slogan on which the BSCC was set up — END BRITISH INVOLVEMENT — was designed to win the broadest possible unity of all those who support the right of Irish self-determination. For too long the British imperialists have prospered by dividing and ruling the Irish working class; for too long they have prospered by dividing and ruling the British working class on the Irish issue. For too long, too many of us have stood idly by.

(from the Bulletin of the Bloody Sunday Commemoration Committee—price 5p plus 7p p&p from BSCC, c/o 1 North End Road, W.14)

# Parties scramble to halt Italian abortion movement

Desperate attempts are now being made by the various Italian parliamentary parties to reach a compromise agreement which can halt the abortion movement in its tracks without creating the kind of major split which resulted from the divorce referendum in 1974. Because well over the required half million signatures were collected, a referendum on abortion must be held by mid-June unless an acceptable parliamentary bill can be presented in the meantime.

The position is serious. Thousands of women die each year, and more are seriously maimed, as a result of the millions of illegal abortions (the 1969 Congress of Italian Gynaecologists estimated the figure at about three million annually). The growing pro-abortion movement - 20,000 joined a demonstration in Rome on 6 December - threatens to bring about the same sort of upheaval that occurred during the divorce campaign. The ruling class do not want to face that again.

Leading the campaign for change are the Radical Party (which also led the divorce battle) and the women's movement. The former, together with the Italian Committee for Sterilisation and Abortion, has organised clinics where abortions can be cheaply obtained. The Florence clinic was raided a year ago and Adele Faccio, ICSA's secretary, and Gianfranco Spadaccia, Radical Party secretary, were both arrested.

Last year, too, the Radical Party persuaded Socialist Party MP Loris

Fortuna (who piloted the divorce legislation) to amend his luke-warm 1973 abortion bill to give free abortion on demand during the first three months. This reflected the increasing impact of the campaign. In 1973, a poll showed only 36.6 per cent of women in favour of liberalisation. A year later, this had increased to 72.5 per cent.

The Vatican has responded to the increasing pressure from the pro-abortionists by producing a new 'sex-manual' which reiterates all the tired old formulas about the sanctity of the family and the immorality of women attempting to control their fertility in order to gain a small measure of personal freedom. The childless old celibates of the Church are again pronouncing on the selfishness of young women who try to ensure that they have only those children they want and can cope with.

The antics of the various political parties, including the Communists,



'No party leaders, no husbands, no doctors will decide—it must be our choice alone.' That was the demand of 20,000 pro-abortionists in Rome on 6 December.

are hardly less despicable. Last year six different proposals came up before Parliament, and now all the parties except the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI) are trying to agree on one bill. An additional factor, however, is the determination of the Socialist Party to drive a wedge between the Christian Democrats (the Catholic party) and the Communists (who are engaged in a long-term project to win the Catholic vote via a coalition with the Christian Democrats).

## Punishable

The Christian Democrats have lost a vote in committee by which abortion would have remained a criminal offence; but abortions outside of the very limited grounds allowed under the present proposals would still be punishable by fining the woman and imprisoning the doctor.

Under pressure from the Socialists, and even more perhaps because of the attitude of their own women members (as well as the general women's movement), the Communists voted against the Christian Democrats' proposal that abortion should remain a criminal offence. In an unprecedented gesture of independence, the CP women's organisation, Unione Donne Italiane, rejected the draft bill; and the CP paper, *L'Unita*, was forced to publish their protest.

The Socialists too are in disarray because of the resignation from Parliament of Loris Fortuna, who has now joined the Radicals. They have now put an amendment to give women, rather than doctors, the right to decide. This amendment is basically a strategic one, designed to split the Communist Party and pre-

vent the Christian Democrat-Communist coalition. But unless agreement can be reached, the referendum will go ahead.

Nothing can now stop the movement towards free abortion in Italy. All the manoeuvres of the parliamentary parties, all the pathetic bleatings of the sick old men of the Vatican, cannot stop the women of Italy from fighting for and gaining a full contraception and abortion service. They will not be misled by the parliamentary games - on the contrary, the rise of the women's movement may lead to unprecedented splits within the traditional organisations. The major task of the women's movement now is to extend the campaign deep into the labour movement, for it is working class women who are the greatest sufferers from Italy's present barbarous laws.

Leonora Lloyd

## WOMEN AND THE CUTS

... (Small text below the header)

### LONDON CONFERENCE ON SAT 28 FEBRUARY

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

CONFERENCE CALLED BY THE WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER

# What the papers say!

On 29 December the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts came into force. The press has had a field day. Cartoons and comment have come from every quarter.

The 'quality' papers have tended to play down the whole business. The *Financial Times* said on 30 December: 'The whole fuss will have precious little effect and this is prob-

ably the best outcome.'

The same message came from the *Daily Telegraph*. Citing a mass of figures and a graph, they estimate that the cost of the whole exercise will be no more than 3 per cent of the total wage bill. The message to the bosses is - don't worry, it won't hurt you that badly.

The 'popular' papers were less

blase. They, after all, are talking to the masses. And the working class, it seems, has got just a little too keen on the notion of equality for women.

The *Daily Mirror* neatly managed to combine a slap on the back for women's rights fighters, interviewing a number of women workers, with a male pin-up (!) on the one hand and the following from Marjorie Proops on the other: 'We'll never rule the world for the simple reason that though with our minds we might like to, our hearts aren't really in it.' Oh well - back to square one.

But if the *Mirror* is trying to have it both ways, the prize must really go to the *Sun*. Their issue of 31 December had on the same page the 'Sun Equality Desk' - which highlights complaints about breaches of the new Acts - and a large article about English men looking for Asian wives....because the latter are supposedly happy to stay at home and do as they're told. This undeniably neat combination of racism and sexism was capped by a half page picture containing no less than twelve bare breasted women spelling out 'happy new year'.

The idea (you can always rely on the *Sun* to express things in the crudest possible way) is quite simply to have your cake and eat it too. Equality we are told has been achieved..... but nothing is going to change. In reality, as the quality papers have made only too clear, the SDA and EPA have not had a significant effect on the position of women. The fight is only just beginning. That is precisely why the *Mirror* and the *Sun* are calling a halt.

Janice Mills

**BRITONS GO HUNTING FOR ASIAN BRIDES**  
 'They don't argue with their men'  
 BRUCE TIPPED AS MALE PIG OF YEAR

**DAILY EXPRESS**  
 Monday December 22 1975  
 Equality Day—but 3 out of 4 women may be losers on jobs  
**IT'S NOT SO FUNNY, LADY**

THE SUN EQUALITY DESK  
 How to sue the boss

SPINNS, PLUS ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EQUALITY PAGE 6

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**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:

- \* Launching 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 £5,500 so far. Now we need another £9,500 by the end of February. Send donations to Jo-Ann, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. (cheques/POs payable to 'The Week').

# RED WEEKLY

# NOW BREAK ALL LINKS WITH CHILE



'No British Government can accept such uncivilised brutal treatment of a British subject at the hands of a foreign government.' These were the carefully chosen words James Callaghan used to announce the recall of the British Ambassador from Chile after the revelation that Dr Sheila Cassidy had been tortured while being held by the junta's police.

The Foreign Secretary said nothing about the 15,000 people murdered by the junta; nothing about the 95,000 people arrested since the coup in September 1973, many of whom were also tortured and thousands of whom are still held. He said nothing about the ruthless crushing of the Chilean workers' organisations.

Callaghan was and is concerned simply with an affront to British imperialist dignity - which explains why his action was applauded even by the right-wing *Daily Telegraph*.

## Scabbing

The Cassidy affair has nevertheless provided a fantastic boost for the solidarity campaign in this country. The brutal reality of the Pinochet regime has been blazoned across the front page of almost every daily newspaper. Now is the perfect opportunity to press home the demand that the Labour Government break completely with the junta.



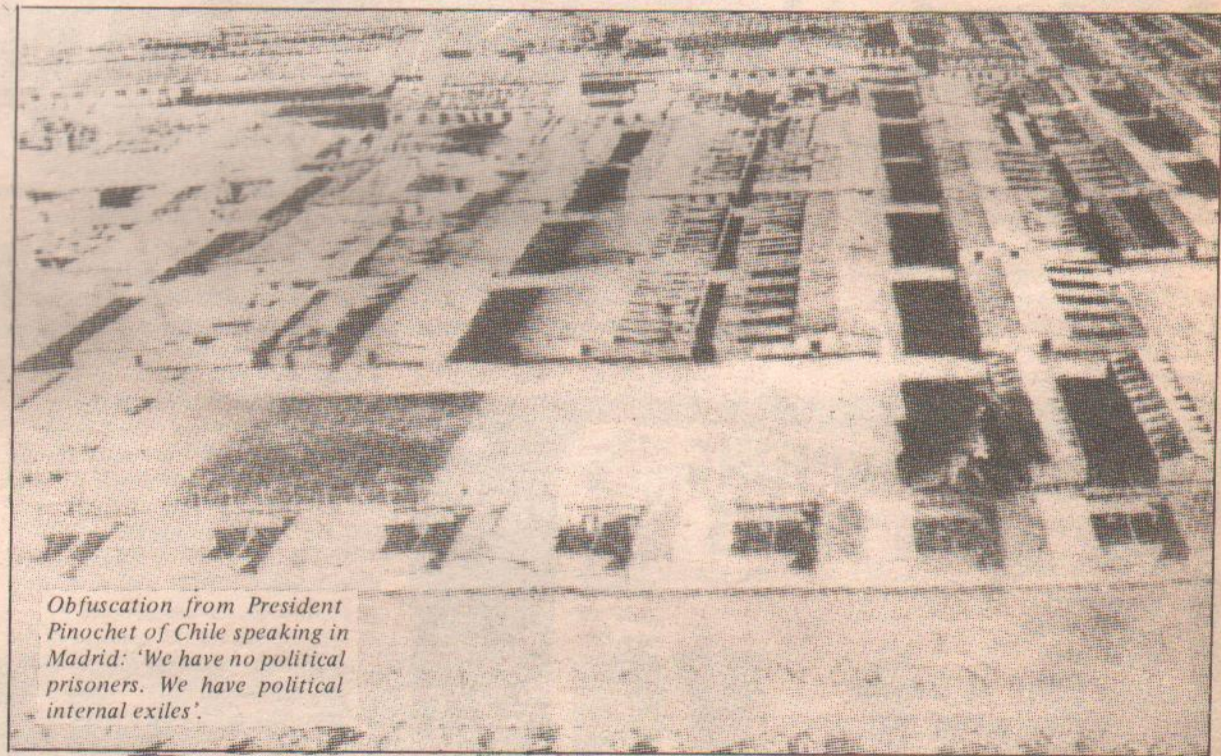
DR SHEILA CASSIDY

The effect that such action would have in Chile cannot be doubted. Despite the scabbing of the Labour leaders and their colleagues elsewhere, the solidarity campaign mounted by the labour movement internationally over the last two years has isolated Chile to such an extent that serious splits are now reported inside the regime. The third-ranking army officer General Stark resigned last weekend, and this is believed to reflect an internal power struggle in which opposition to Pinochet is being masterminded by air force commander General Leigh.

## Reactionary

Leigh is every bit as reactionary as Pinochet, but the very fact of a split can only strengthen the determination of the resistance to finish with the whole regime. Labour can further aid this process by hitting the junta where it hurts most.

Despite the Government's refusal to renegotiate the repayment of Chile's debts, nothing has been done



One of the junta's torture camps at Chacabuco

## BUILDING THE ALTERNATIVE

Our first Fighting Fund of the New Year has got off to a slow but sure start. Old friends in North and West London sent us a total of £23, and individual supporters sent us another £41.50. So our first total for January stands at £64.50.

Now we need help from you to reach our £500 January target. The fiasco at Chrysler has demonstrated more clearly than ever the price the working class will pay unless a credible alternative leadership is built in the workers' movement which can lead the fight back against the attacks of the Wilson Government.

*Red Weekly* is the only paper on the left which fights for the policies of workers' control, opening the books and nationalisation around which this new leadership can be created. Every penny towards our Fighting Fund is a penny towards fulfilling this task. So rush a donation to us at 182 Pentonville Road, London N.1.

to enforce this. But the means are to hand.

For a start, the two submarines under construction for the Chilean navy must not be delivered. Chilean servicemen training here must be expelled. All trade and aid must be stopped. The withdrawal of the British Ambassador must be made permanent, and Pinochet's stooge in London thrown out.

If the Government refuses to act on these demands, then the labour movement must take its own action to enforce them. That is the least that can be expected after all the brave words from trade union leaders at the Chile Solidarity Campaign conference only three months ago.



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

'Thanks for everything, Harold'

## Mario Soares's dream comes true

On 25 November, Mario Soares's dream came true. Using the excuse of a left-wing soldiers' rebellion, the Sixth Provisional Government (dominated by the Socialist Party and its military elite) was able to come down hard on what it called 'anarchy' and the 'totalitarian danger'. At last the way was open for that 'democratic socialism' of which Soares had talked so much.

Six weeks later, the picture is rather clearer: arrests of hundreds of left-wingers; the closure of some newspapers and radio stations and the replacement of staff in others; the smashing of land co-operatives; the banning of all political rights in the army; a complete wage freeze; massive price increases; mass sackings; compensation to expropriated bank shareholders; the re-opening of the stock exchange. And then, just to ram the message home, the murder of four demonstrators by the hated Republican Guards on New Year's Day.

## Crush

Just what has this to do with 'democratic socialism'? You may well ask. But don't expect an answer from Harold Wilson, Willy Brandt, Francois Mitterrand or any other of the European social democrats who set up a 'Committee of Friendship with Democracy and Socialism in Portugal' a mere four months ago.

We said at the time that they 'were there to discuss how to crush the Portuguese revolution in the embrace of the capitalist Common Market'. And their delight at the present turn of events can be judged from the report that West German social democratic leader Helmut Schmidt is now considering an £800m. loan to Portugal.

Naturally, the course of action which Soares is now pursuing does present some problems. Some workers may refuse to accept that the press is 'totalitarian' when many of its staff are Communist sympathisers but 'objective' when they are

replaced by Socialists. Others (stupid fellows) may find it hard to reconcile Soares's calls for 'press freedom' with the forcible closure of workers' newspapers like *Republica* and *O Setubalense*.

It may even seem a bit odd that while French Socialist leader Mitterrand is calling for the release from prison of French soldiers demanding political rights, Soares is busy imprisoning Portuguese soldiers for doing exactly the same thing.

## Prisons

That's what the workers who gathered outside the Custoias and Caxias prisons at New Year thought. There were a lot of them at Custoias too. While the first Reuter report spoke of 'a few hundred' it later had to revise its figure to 5,000, while the French newspaper *Le Monde* (which is generally more reliable in these matters) estimated the total at twenty to twenty-five thousand.

The brutal response of the Republican Guards was not only a sign of the Government's preparedness to resort to open repression (using a force which has been left more or less intact since the days when it was Caetano's favourite weapon), but also an indication of its nervousness faced with such unexpected opposition. And its action brought the immediate condemnation of Labour MP Tom Litterick, who was in the crowd outside Custoias as an observer for the Russell Committee for Portugal.

## Conference

These latest developments indicate clearly the need for the conference called by the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class for 13 March. A special effort must be made to get as many Labour Party delegates as possible, to build up an opposition to Wilson's collaboration with the repressive regime in Portugal. Details of the conference can be obtained from the Solidarity Campaign with the Portuguese Working Class, 12 Little Newport Street, London WC2.

*Obfuscation from President Pinochet of Chile speaking in Madrid: 'We have no political prisoners. We have political internal exiles.'*



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