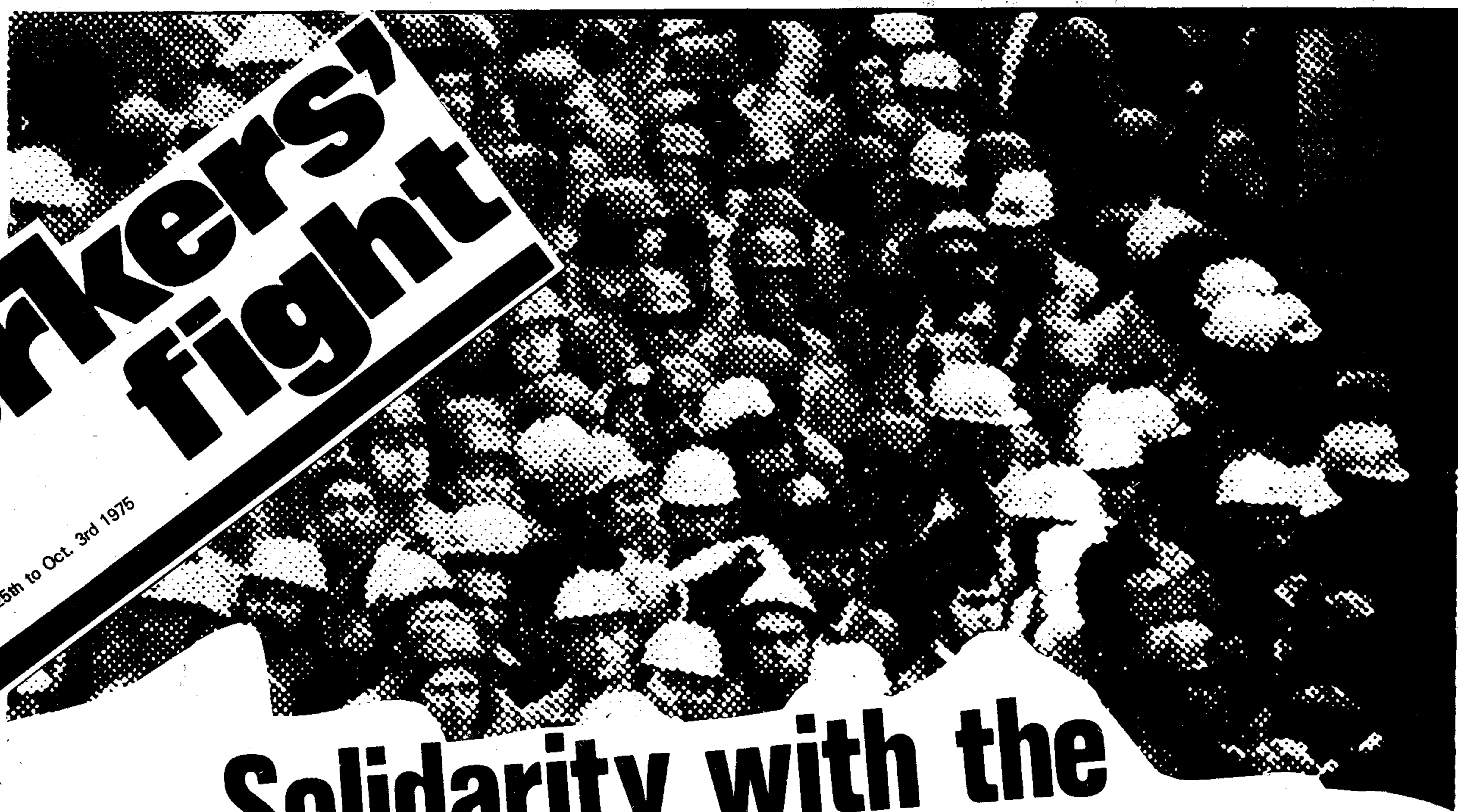
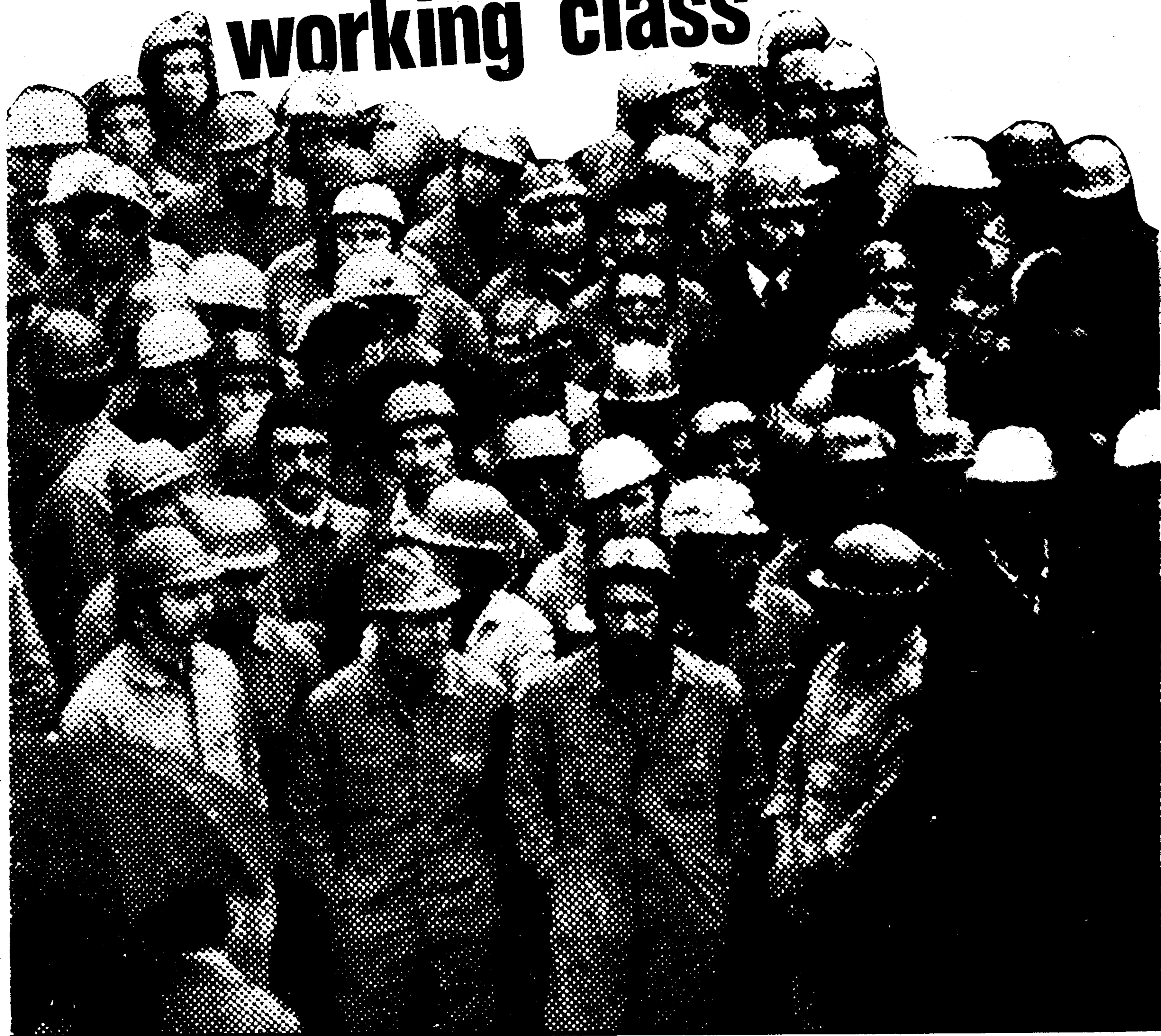


Workers' Fight
No. 110 - Sept. 25th to Oct. 3rd 1975
5p



Solidarity with the Portuguese working class



- **SOLIDARITY WITH THE MPLA**
- **AN END TO ECONOMIC BOYCOTT**
- **HANDS OFF PORTUGAL**
NO NATO-CIA INTERVENTION

LP resolutions reflect recent campaigns

THE MOST welcome resolutions on the 1975 Labour Party Conference agenda are the five calling for the repeal of the "Prevention of Terrorism" Act — from Manchester Withington, Hammer-smith North, Bristol West, Vauxhall and Northampton South. The Bristol West resolution condemns the provisions of the Act which "facilitate the harassment of any Irish trade unionist or political activist in this country..."; and Vauxhall points out that "the Act has already been used against trade union activists and opens the way to more extensive attacks on the labour movement in the future." Both declare against "any plans to replace this Act by permanent legislation."

where the Appeal Court ruled that picketing other than in pursuance of an industrial dispute (in that particular case, picketing to protest against an estate agent's treatment of tenants) was illegal. Islington Central, Hull Central, Ilford North and Ruislip Northwood all call for reforming the law.

Several resolutions call for a reform of the conspiracy law, and Beeston and New Forest CLPs mention the case of the 21 Iranian students charged with 'conspiracy to trespass'. Chingford CLP "condemns the inaction of the Home Secretary and the Labour Government in failing to release the two imprisoned Shrewsbury pickets."

N.H.S.

The sections of the agenda relating to the National Health Service are among the largest, and also among the most radical. Demands for "democratic control of the structure of the Health Service by elected representatives, drawn from the community and from all levels of health service workers" appear frequently; as do demands for completely free provision of health services, for the ending of private practice, for nationalisation of the drug industry, and for increased wages for NHS workers.

The Socialist Medical Association ends up with a simple, but most unusual clause: "Conference ... pledges the support of the Labour Party to all health workers and other trade unionists who are fighting for these demands." In fact, that is about the nearest any of the 430 resolutions and numerous amendments come to committing the Labour Party membership to action. For the rest, the resolutions "urge", "call for", "deplore", "demand", "ask" — all relying on the Government to carry out the necessary action. Yet the fact is that many of the most important proposals are on the agenda only because of active campaigns, usually against the Government, in which Labour Party members have been active.

No call for troops out



Ireland

Croydon North West CLP has also put down a resolution for the immediate ending of internment, another sign of the development of some understanding in the Labour Party ranks of the need to oppose the anti-Irish policies of successive governments, Tory and Labour. However, there is no resolution recognising the right of the Irish people as a whole to determine their own future on a 32-County basis, nor any resolution calling for the withdrawal of troops from Ireland. Where, one wonders, is the Troops Out Movement?

Abortion

On a number of other questions major campaigns over the past year have found a reflection in the Conference agenda. Newcastle under Lyme and Rye CLPs, and the Socialist Medical Association, call for free abortion on demand, and a whole string of resolutions oppose all attempts to amend the 1967 Abortion Act in a restrictive sense.

Southall CLP calls for the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act and "condemns the threats of deportation against immigrant workers (as in the Franco Caprino case)".

Four resolutions reflect the campaign over the Prebbles case.

Directing investment: revolutionary, or a licence for leeching?

Undoubtedly, the key debate at this year's Labour Party Conference will be on economic policy. And the key idea in the resolutions for that debate is not price controls, nor import controls (a favourite with the Tribune nationalists) nor even nationalisation — though all these, of course, figure largely — but the idea of directing investment.

The resolution which best sums up the drift of a dozen or so others is one from ASTMS: "This Conference is critical of the fact that there has been inadequate control of prices, a slowness in imposing selective import controls, and an ineffective curbing of capital outflows, and is convinced that Britain is over-exposed in the international banking system to the detriment of the British economy and the need for investment in British manufacturing industry. Conference calls upon the Government to plan for the direction of

investment into socially worthwhile and value-added enterprises."

This formula — "directing investment" — can in fact have two sharply different meanings. Take the most radical interpretation, and it means an overall planning of the economy; resources allocated not according to the laws of profit, but according to social priorities; control of the major means of production by democratic decision, and not by the moneylords. In short, it means a workers' socialist revolution: for what less than revolutionary workers' action will force the millionaires to hand over their wealth and their power to the community?

Licence

That is the most radical interpretation. But "directing investment" can also mean schemes like the Lever Bank, the National Enterprise Board, "development subsidies", "economic



Wilson, Soares, Rabin, and other "Socialist" leaders. York CLP demands — support the Portuguese working class instead.

Get out of NATO and break with Mario Soares

GIVEN the lack of any clear resolution on Ireland, the most important debate on world politics at the Labour Party conference promises to be around York CLP's amendment to the EEPTU's resolution on Portugal.

In place of the EEPTU's support for Mario Soares and the Socialist Party leadership, York CLP declares that: "The international support afforded these people and their call for a 'pluralist' (i.e. capitalist) democracy, is typified by the spousal of their cause by such champions of socialism as The Times, Daily Telegraph, Economist etc. Conference sees no solution to the problems of the Portuguese working class, other than the complete abolition of capitalism and the establishment of a democratic workers' state."

This resolution obviously connects up with the call for withdrawal from NATO made by Twickenham and Croydon North East CLPs: for in the National Executive Committee's report to the Conference it states that "During a difficult year for Portugal the Government has, in the EEC, in NATO, and at a bilateral level, given full support to those forces in Portugal working for a true, pluralistic democracy". (Our emphasis). "True" democracy, it appears, is democracy at NATO gun-point!

There is also an important resolution from Tunbridge Wells CLP calling for the withdrawal of British troops from the Persian Gulf. "Conference believes that what the Government call the 'maintenance of stability' in the Gulf constitutes the financing and propping up of the corrupt and savagely repressive regime of Sultan Qabus bin Said, and that this is in order to facilitate the commercial exploitation of the rich oil reserves of the Persian Gulf, to maintain a military presence at the strategically important air-staging base at Masrah Island off Oman at the southern entrance to the Persian Gulf and to retain a lucrative market for British military technology."

CHRIS REYNOLDS looks at some of the resolutions for this year's

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA?

Elected leaders — if it's OK with the Queen

"THIS Conference is concerned that national leaders can blatantly ignore or actively campaign against the National Conference policy of this party..."

Glasgow Central's resolution represents a longstanding feeling among party activists, but proposes no solution to the problem. In the last few months, a number of local parties have begun to move towards half the solution to the problem — sharply calling to account notorious right wingers like Prentice and Tomney. The other half — organising the rank and file for action, if necessary action against the Labour Party establishment — is still to come.

Although Newham North East's success in humiliating Prentice has set many Labour Parties astir of late, only a few resolutions on the Conference agenda raise the question of Party democracy. The Birmingham Perry Barr resolution is central: "all members of Parliament and councillors to be accountable to their local parties and subject to recall ... all Labour Party officials to be elected and similarly recalled; effective measures to be taken to ensure that the PLP carry out policies agreed by National Conference."

Sheffield Brightside's resolution adds a point — "the Leader and

'cabinet' of the PLP should be elected annually by Conference" — but worries about "the necessary constitutional legislation", in case (horror of horrors!) this "may not comply with the present rules of Crown and Parliamentary privilege."

Bans

Unfortunately, no resolution raises the other major question of party democracy, the question of 'bans and proscriptions' — despite the fact that the recent press witchhunts against the members of Newham North East CLP and against the 'Militant' make that question increasingly vital.

capitalist system, and simply become additional and alternative means of serving the exploitation of the working class and the accumulation of capital.

Waste

Without a doubt, most of the CLPs putting forward resolutions on 'directing investment' saw themselves as arguing for anti-capitalist measures, for a clamp-down on the irresponsible and socially wasteful behaviour of the profiteers. But where, in their resolutions, they wrote "our economy", real life writes "the capitalist economy"; where they wrote "our Government", reality writes "the government of Wilson and Healey, who are as dedicated to serving capitalism as are the Tories". Thus, confused anti-capitalist intentions are actually roped in behind not-so-confused pro-capitalist policies: the only real-life meaning of "directing investment" is state propping up of industry with a view to capitalist ration-

alisation.

And even as recommendations for capitalist policy, the resolutions are already beginning to give off the characteristic odour of dated, ineffectual good intentions, as the Government slaps down Benn, brusquely tells the NVT workers to sink or swim, and imposes the £6 wage limit.

The lack of any cutting edge in the programme of "directing investment" is shown by the fact that it can equally well be coupled with opposition to wage curbs (Hornsey CLP resolution) or support for wage curbs (Birmingham Small Heath CLP resolution). It is open to any Michael Foot, Wedgwood Benn or Jack Jones to argue that "directing investment" is indeed necessary, but to make it work "we" need economic stability and therefore the £6 limit. The left wing supporters of "directing investment" will have no answer unless they sort out the ambiguities in their own ideas.

AUTHORITIES POWERLESS TO GAG THE PRESS

On Tuesday September 9th, Portugal's president General Francisco de Costa Gomes signed a decree severely restricting the right of the press to report events in the armed forces. The only information which is supposed to be published is official statements from the government and the top military authorities. Papers which defy the ban can be closed down for up to 10 days. So much importance was placed on this decree that it was made a 'constitutional decree', with the aim of giving it extra weight.

The reason for this move is easy to see. The last few weeks have seen an explosion of democratic activity in the army. Soldiers' committees — independent of the officers — are being set up in many units. The day after the decree was passed, 3,000 rank and file soldiers joined a demonstration in Oporto, in support of the 'Popular Power' (workers' and soldiers' committees, and the Popular

Assemblies) and against reaction. This was despite the determined opposition of their generally right wing officers.

In the most radical units, all important decisions are taken by mass meetings of soldiers. Within the last two weeks, a military police regiment has decided to admit people from the district in which their barracks are situated, to attend and vote at their meetings. And these meetings are not just a political debating society: they are where the regiment makes its decisions for action.

This sort of development puts all the talk about an army-people alliance on a far more real and genuinely working class basis than it has been before. In the same unit, the left wing commanders were removed by the high command, but 5 days later they were still there — the soldiers would not let them go.

And the military police is the

unit responsible for discipline in the army!

Most of the leaders of the MFA are terrified by these developments, which are a real threat to their continued control of the army. They want news of these events to be restricted, in the hope of stopping other units taking similar action. But the decree has been an absolute and total failure. There is nobody to enforce it. Within 3 days, 21 newspapers (including all the major ones), the TV and radio stations, had all defied it. If anything, it has had the effect of creating more interest in military affairs, and thus more space has been devoted to them.

There was nothing the authorities could do. The COPCON units who would have had to enforce the law, such as the military police, refused to do so, and instead stated that they would intervene to defend the press if necessary.

This is the real meaning of press freedom in Portugal today. It, certainly, has nothing to do with the freedom demanded by the Socialist Party leadership. They have made the return of the paper 'Republica' to its pro-SP management a condition of their joining the 6th Provisional Government.



This is despite the fact that they already have the morning paper 'Jornal Novo' and have recently set up a rival evening paper, 'A Luta', which puts forward their views.

The Socialist Party have no need to demand access to newspapers for themselves. In effect what they are demanding is denial of such access to other currents in the workers movement.

Yet when there is a real challenge to the press, as in the

Sept. 9th decree, we hear nothing from them. The reason is clear. The SP's supporters in the army, men like Major Melo Antunes, are among those most scared by the present situation, and keenest to re-establish their control over the ordinary soldiers. The struggles of the rank and file in the army threaten to sweep them away, together with the system that they, and the Socialist Party leadership, support.



Kate Docherty describes a visit the Portuguese Workers Coordinating Committee made to an occupied farm in the Alentejo district

"I would fight until death before the boss could regain control of our land. He even refused to open up a well for us to get water — we were nothing more than slaves."

These were the parting words of an agricultural worker in the Beja district of Alentejo, at the end of our visit to an occupied farm.

The farm, near the village of Vila Nova de Baronia, is one of the biggest in the area at 1,400 hectares, and was occupied by the 25 workers on 14th July this year after a wage demand had been refused. The demand was for 190 escudos (about £3.25) a day for everyone. Their last rise had been in June 1974, following a wave of strikes by agricultural workers up and down the country protesting about the abysmal wages and conditions. Previous to 25th April, under fascism, the wages were 90 escudos (£1.50) for the men and 60 escudos for the women, and this was about average.

Co-op

Since the occupation the workers have been paid by their union at the rate of 160 es. for men and 120 es. for the two women, until they can work out a system of selling their produce and becoming self-sufficient. They are discussing forming a cooperative, but feel that the farm is too small on its own, and are hoping that the neighbouring smaller farms will soon follow their example and occupy, so that they can link together. Their main products are wheat, oats and maize, together with 3,000 olive trees, a cork

plantation, 100 beef cattle, 100 pigs and 300 sheep.

In the district of Beja, 55 farms have been occupied so far (averaging 900 hectares) and this number is rapidly on the increase. In the last four weeks, the total area of occupied land has grown from 36,000 hectares to well over 50,000.

The neighbouring district of Evora is even more advanced. In fact it is the most advanced in the country. Over 100 farms have been taken over by workers there, and more than a third of the Agrarian Reform programme as determined by law has already been completed through occupations. The Institute for Agrarian Reform (IRA), a regional based organisation under the Ministry of Agriculture, carries out the reappropriation of the land for the state of all farms over 700 hectares.

Further legislation has recently been introduced to cover smaller farms if the workers can prove sabotage or under-cultivation of the land.

The 'IRA' also gives technical

advice and assistance by providing agricultural technicians who work through the unions, giving help to workers on occupied farms and cooperatives. On the farm we visited the workers had been in regular contact with a technician since their occupation. They were in fact waiting for the delivery of a new tractor the following day, supplied free by the union. This resulted from a visit by the technician to make an assessment of their equipment, and he had decided, in consultation with them, that the 3 tractors and one harvester which they had were not sufficient for their needs.

The Agricultural Union is a district body, not national. According to the men we spoke to, the union in Beja is one of the most active. It now controls all employment in the district and will supply extra labour to occupied farms where they can prove undermanning. There is no longer any unemployment of agricultural workers in Beja, a very different situation to that before 25th April.

They said that for the first time they felt they were in control of their own lives and not simply slaves with no guarantee of work or wages from one day to the next. Before the occupation they had



How they took over at Vila Nova de Baronia

not received any pay for days not worked, whether it was because there was no work, or through sickness, or even bad weather conditions. They are now paid 75% of their wages by the state if they are sick, for an unlimited period, and employment is guaranteed by the union.

Following the wave of occupations in the district, the union has set up a free repair centre for farm machinery, and supplies free petrol for tractors. The men are all quite involved in union affairs, and most of them go along to the local offices at least once a fortnight to discuss with workers from other farms.

The two women workers, however, although they are union members, never attend the meetings. We were told by the men that this was because of family commitments, but they insisted that they always report everything to the women when they get home and discuss with them any questions which may have arisen. We were unfortunately unable to

speak to either of the women.

The farm has an elected shop steward who attends weekly meetings where the main topic on the agenda is the formation of cooperatives. In addition to this, meetings are held on the farm every Friday evening to discuss what has to be done the following week and to distribute the work.

With the occupation of the land, the workers also took control and now regard as their own the large, rather luxurious farmhouse, which is packed with antique furniture. This is where the overseer lived, although the house and furniture belonged to the landowner, who apparently has several other similar farms in the south of Portugal. The overseer had informed the workers when they decided to occupy that he was with them. But within a week he had packed and left.

Three families have now moved into part of the house, but it remains largely empty. When we asked why some of the other workers didn't move in and leave

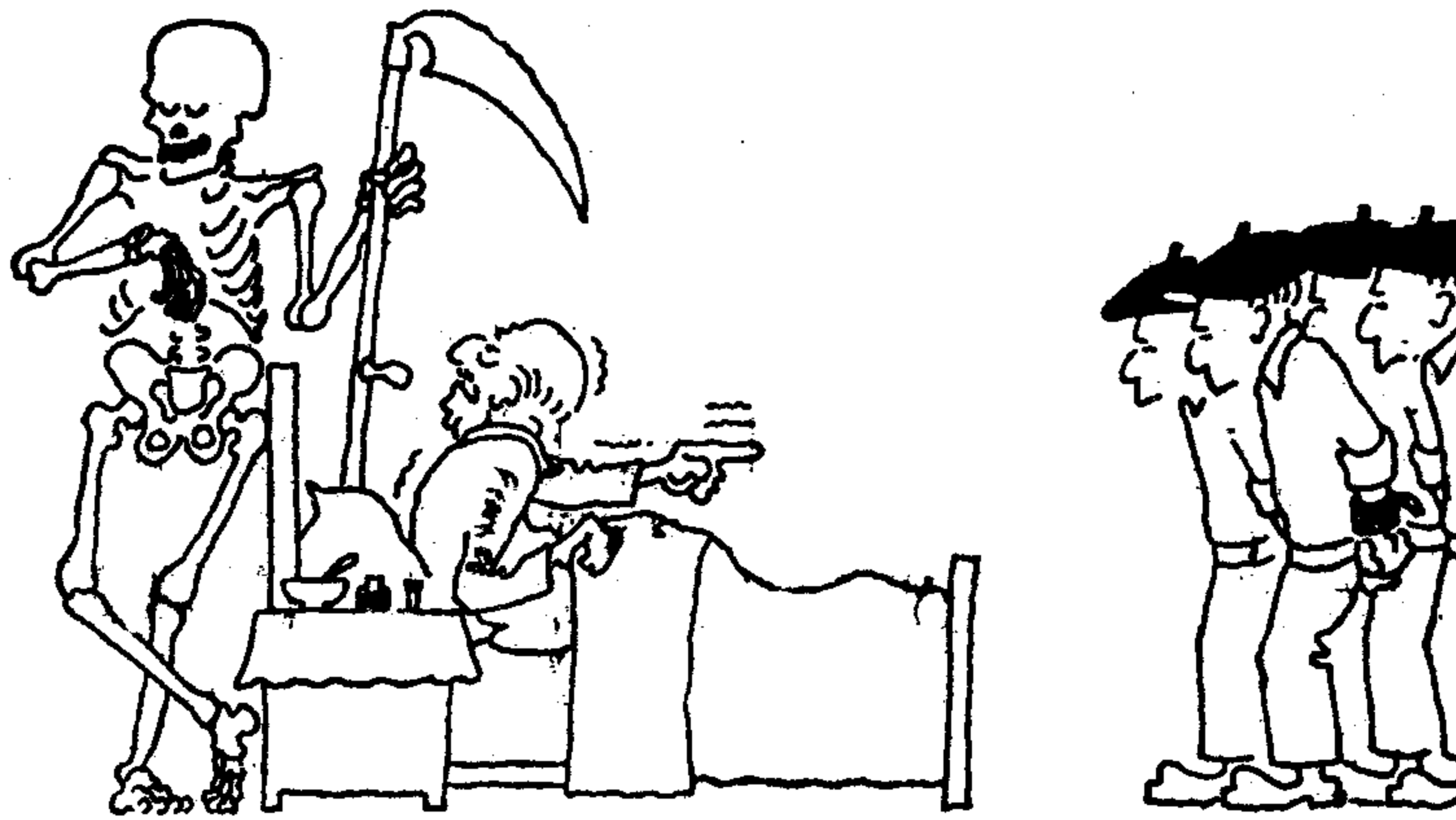
their tied cottages which are without running water or electricity, they replied that they were waiting for the landlord to come and remove his furniture, which they found very uncomfortable and which they regarded as his personal property.

It was obvious that these workers had no intention of ever returning to the slavish conditions which they had endured for most of their lives. Their pride in their work and their farm was very clear. They insisted that they had not had to work any harder or longer hours since the occupation, but that as they were more organised, and taking their own decisions, more work was being done and it was being done to their satisfaction, unlike before. This is perhaps borne out by the fact that agricultural production in the whole of Portugal has, contrary to most expectations, been higher this year than in previous years.

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Our Common Struggle



Now 10 are lined up for Franco's executioner



executioner

The last victim - 12 minutes to die by the garrot

TEN opponents of the Franco regime in Spain now face sentences of death by garroting. To the Basque nationalists Garmendia and Otaegui have been added three members of the Maoist group FRAP, then another five FRAP members, as the military tribunal in Burgos hands out execution orders with the minimum ceremony. Still further prisoners, including Pedro Beotegui, leader of the Basque nationalist organisation ETA-5, may be dragged before this tribunal, from whose sentences there is no right of appeal.

The charges were to do with involvement in the killing of Civil Guards, with whom large sections of the population are now in a state of virtual war. Demonstrations of the right wing in Spain have demanded severe measures against the prisoners, at the same time as thousands have protested internationally, and especially in France, against the sentences.

The reaction of the Franco regime, frantically lining up more and more victims for garroting, indicates not strength, but weakness. But even in its dying moments the regime can strike down these ten militants, unless we react energetically and rapidly to stop it. Among the slogans on Saturday's Portugal solidarity demonstration, the cry "Stay the hand of Franco's executioner" must find its place.

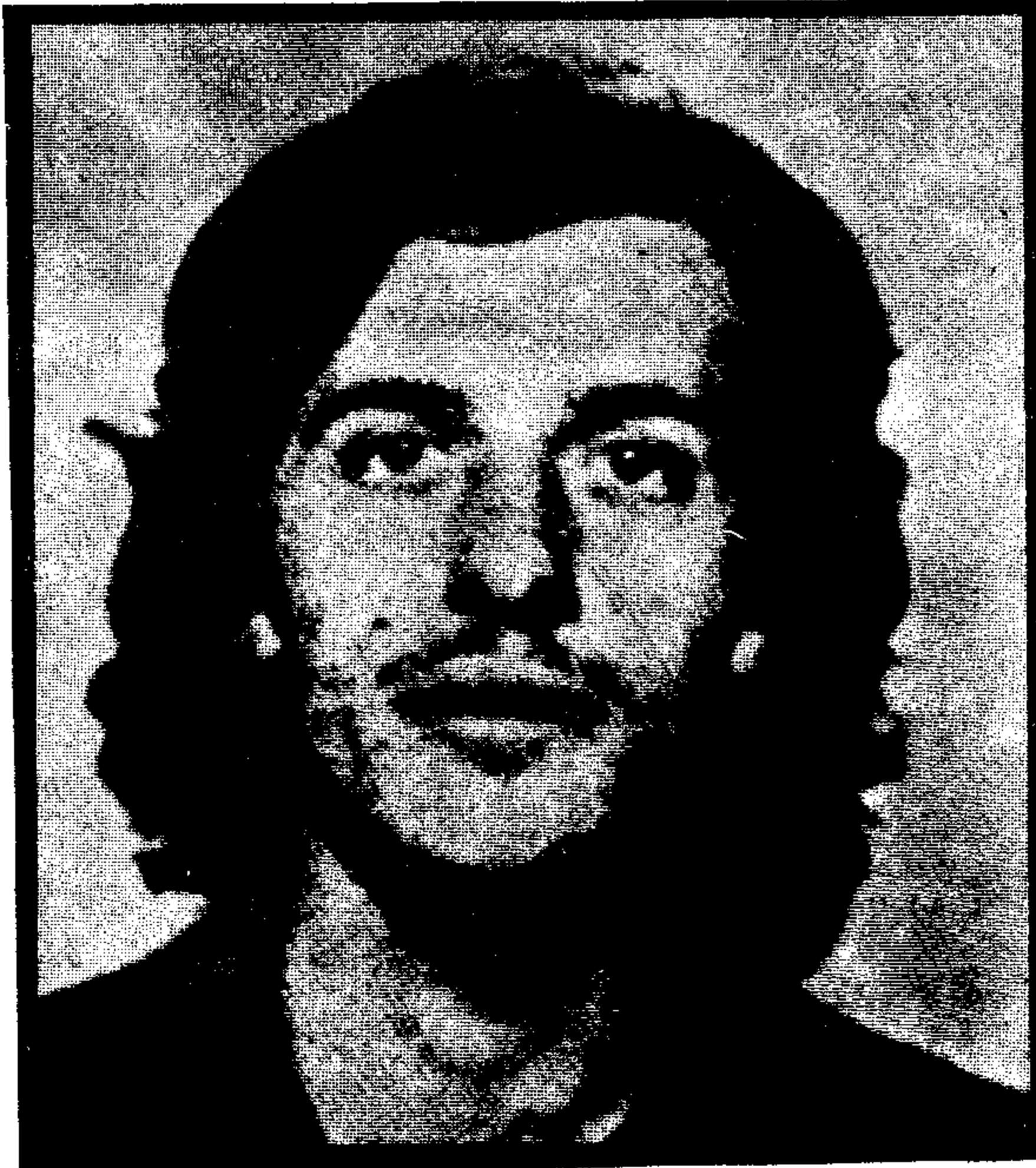
AFTER 11 years free from political executions in Spain, Salvador Puig Antich, a 26 year old Catalanian, was garroted on the morning of March 4th 1974.

An international campaign of demonstrations, pickets, petitions and appeals, and protests within Spain, all failed to save him, though such protests, four years before, had succeeded in stopping the execution of 8 Basque militants condemned to death in the infamous Burgos military trial.

Like Burgos, and like the recent trials leading to five death sentences, Puig faced a military tribunal, which took just one day to pass its verdict and a double death sentence. Typically, too, his trial and arrest involved torture — his arrest followed the torture of 7 of his comrades in the Anarchist Iberian Liberation Movement (MIL).

Despite the double death sentence — for a bank robbery and the fatal

Salvador Puig Antich



wounding of a member of the political police during a clash when Puig was arrested — the execution came as something of a surprise. The last of these spuriously judicial murders had taken place in 1963, when Communist Party leader Julian Grimau was shot.

But the Franco regime seems determined to go out as bloodily as it came in 37 years ago. The old dictator and his stalwarts, now looking fear-

fully over their shoulders at Portugal as Franco totters into his grave, must be thinking that the customary 25 and 30 year sentences meted out to trade unionists, underground political resistance fighters and Basque separatists must have little chance of running their course, and little chance of intimidating those struggling to bury the regime together with its senile figurehead and open up the jails.

BRITISH POLICE AID FRANCO

AS part of the international protests against the threatened murder by the Franco dictatorship of Garmendia and Otaegui, nineteen British socialists occupied the Regent Street offices of Iberia Airlines on Wednesday 10th September, while about 50 to 100 others demonstrated outside.

The occupation was entirely peaceful, and the occupiers complied with all the requests the police made when they entered the building; but after about 40 minutes all 19 were arrested without warning, and after being kept in the cells for about five hours were charged with "conspiring together and with other persons to

enter as a trespasser the premises of the Iberia Airlines, 169 Regent Street London W.1."

The 19 have been released on bail, and committal proceedings are at present scheduled for November 25th. In a statement, the 19 declare that: "We wish to make it known that we consider the use of conspiracy laws in this case — as in the recent cases of the Shrewsbury building workers and the Iranian 21 — to be a serious threat to the democratic liberties of the British working class..."

"We call on the Labour Government to:

"1. Publicly and unilaterally oppose

the death sentences on Garmendia and Otaegui and all other Spanish political prisoners;

"2. Give its full backing to the resolution passed overwhelmingly at the recent Trades Union Congress, which called for 'support for those in Spain fighting for an end to fascism and the establishment of a democracy';

"3. Drop the charges on the Iberian 19, and end the use of the conspiracy law."

Plans are being laid for a defence campaign for the 19, and a first meeting has been called in London on Friday 19th September.

Missiles in the wake of 'peace'

by ARYE SAMUELS

THE hollow hypocrisy of the description of the Egypt-Israel accords as a "peace" agreement was clearly exposed last week when Ford confirmed newspaper reports that the US was "selling" Israel F16 aircraft and Pershing missiles.

The range of the Pershings is about 460 miles — making it capable of hitting Cairo, Amman, Damascus, Beirut, etc., from inside Israel. The fact that the US says that it is not supplying the Pershings with nuclear warheads in no way means that Israel will be confined to conventional weaponry, as it is in a position to manufacture its own nuclear warheads at plants like that at Dimona.

As Workers Fight pointed out last week, the agreement is just the beginning of a whole strategy. For example, it has been in doubt for some time whether Congress would permit the sale of Hawk anti-aircraft missiles to Jordan — a state completely sold to US imperialism. Now it seems that these sales are likely to go through in the wake of the much larger deal with Israel.

Not all the finances of the US are funnelled into Egypt by the US as

payment for Egypt's deal with Israel will come directly from the US. Much of it will be "laundered" through other Middle East nations, in particular Saudi Arabia (see last week's WF) and Iran. Iran, for instance, has just signed a \$1 million agreement with Egypt setting up a Teheran-based joint shipping company (Iran gets 51%; Egypt gets 49%) with all the funds coming from Iran.

As soon as the Cairo Voice of Palestine radio station broadcast the Palestine Liberation Organisation's View of the Egypt/Israel deal, referring to it as "an affront to the dignity of the Arab nation", it was closed down by the Egyptian Ministry of Information. The premises were sealed and an Egyptian broadcast praising the terms of the pact went out over the air on the same wavelength.

These disgraceful measures were described in the Egyptian newspaper 'al-Ahram' as 'a clear violation of the Palestinian right to self-determination'.

"We expect, during the following month, a new reactionary plan to emerge aimed at destroying us as a Palestinian resistance movement and destroying the Lebanese national movement" announced George



Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

In a press conference given in a refugee camp in Lebanon he denounced the Egypt/Israel accords and put his faith in President Assad of Syria to continue and lead the struggle against Israel and "turn Sadat and his policy into an insignificant moment in Middle East history."

Meanwhile Egypt's Foreign Minister, Ismail Fahmi, was confident that Assad would follow Sadat in making an agreement with Israel. "Now that Israel is starting to withdraw (on the Sinai front)" he said, "it will have to undertake a similar move on other fronts. This is why I am sure that another Israeli/Syrian disengagement is imminent and it will be followed by a disengagement on the Palestinian front. ... Contacts for an Israeli withdrawal on the Syrian front will start some time in October and all the parties concerned are aware of this."

Naturally this could be a piece of wishful thinking on Fahmi's part. Whether it describes the moves towards a similar move on other fronts will be seen in the coming months.

ON THE GRAVY TRAIN

LAST week it was announced that former senior civil servants would be getting pension increases, amounting to as much as £40 per week in some cases. This would be in addition to their present pensions of around £160 per week. The needy beneficiaries of this rise include retired under-secretaries and judges.

Perhaps the rest of Britain's pensioners might be interested to hear that Mr. Foot, Secretary of State for Unemployment (sorry, Employment), has stated that the £6 limit on wage settlements would not apply to pensioners. However, unlike the retired toadies of the ruling class, the working class pensioners are still wondering when they are going to get their £6 — minimum OR maximum...

BRITISH Leyland workers may have noted the news last week that their new boss Mr. Alex Park will be the highest paid head of a nationalised industry, at a salary of £50,000 a year. Perhaps after the first flush of pride had faded a number of them did a quick mental calculation to work out how many years of monotonous logging it would take one of them to earn that sort of money. However, we hope they spare a thought for the poor underprivileged heads of the other nationalised industries, whose salary increases have been frozen since last December. Some of them have written to the Prime Minister bemoaning the fact that they receive much less than the chairmen of private industries. They are worried that the recommendations of the Top Salaries Review Body might not be implemented in full. The recommendations were that, for example, Sir Monty Finniston of British Steel and Sir William Ryland of the Post Office should get £40,000 each (up from present meagre pickings of £28,100 and £23,100 respectively) whilst the chairmen of airways, railways, coal, electricity and gas should get £35,000 a year instead of their present £23,100. Perhaps they might all go on strike! How on earth would we manage?

Car manufacturers are well aware that the wealthy are unaffected by unemployment and the leaping price of food. Jaguar last week announced their ridiculous new 150mph car costing £8,900. Recently Mercedes-Benz revealed their even more ridiculous new car costing £20,000, which will probably sell better than the Jaguar to people like the woman quoted in the Sunday Times' LOOK column last week who, wondering which of two handbags both priced £60 she should buy, commented that if one was more expensive, she would know to buy it. In any case, it seems there is already a long waiting list for both cars — so don't think you can rush out and buy one.

THE death was announced last week of Sir Denys Lawson, former Lord Mayor of London and 'financial wizard'. Sir Denys won't be remembered as Mayor, but for the deals in money which netted him considerable sums of money. In fact he was so good at it that it was embarrassing! After he'd netted a cool £5 million in 1972 in a share deal, investigating inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (though precious little industry was expended by Sir Denys to get his £5 million) concluded that his motive was to obtain "substantial gain for himself and his family". Well, who would have thought of it? Anyway, he paid some of the money back, and promptly went on a multi-thousand pound world cruise on the QE2 to atone for his little indiscretion.

The Times thinks Sir Denys's case is 'unrepresentative'. Indeed it is — how many other City sharks spew up their ill-gotten gains? "His career and methods", it goes on to say "never represented the best City practice." No. The best City practice certainly doesn't involve being found out...

ABOMINABLE as many of them are, however, it can't be said that Tony Boyle, ex-president of the United Mine Workers of America, DID represent the best practice of his fellow gangsterish trade union bosses there. Last week he was sentenced to three consecutive life terms for his part in the murder of Jack Jablonski who opposed him. Jablonski's wife and daughter were also killed. Boyle was found guilty of ordering the murder, and had the gall to charge for £25,000 to be set

TWO UNIONS SET TO BREAK LABOUR'S £6 BARRIER

by Francis Maynard

IT IS not much more than a fortnight since the TUC accepted the self-mutilating policy of not demanding more than £6 a week wage rise, and already two unions are pursuing claims that go

beyond the government's "ceiling". The opposition of the National Union of Blast-furnacemen (NUB) and the farm workers' union (NUAAW) should

demonstrate to the more powerful opponents of the government's pay policy — unions like the AUEW, UCATT and ASLEF — that the membership are not prepared to take cuts in their living standards.

The support the NUB has received from its members has been terrific. The flash-point of the claim — which demands more for blast-furnacemen operating the new 5,000 tonnes plus blast-furnaces — is at Lanwern, where 600 are out on strike after failing to agree rates for the furnaces just commissioned there. The Lanwern men are being supported by blast-furnacemen at the BSC's South Teesside works (Lackenby and Cleveland) where output is down to a trickle, and those at Scunthorpe, Corby and Port Talbot.

Board whose decisions are supposed to be binding. (The fact that there is no free collective bargaining for farm workers provides another irony, because the NUAAW voted for the resolution at the TUC conference which called for an end to interference in free collective bargaining.)

Stressing the justice of their claim, the NUAAW pointed to the low wages and high accident rate in the industry (84 fatal accidents, 30 of whose victims were children, so far this year) as well as the notorious tied cottage system.

Neither of these unions are left wing in any sense, neither of them are very big, and neither of them have any reputation for fighting (though the NUB has been involved in two similar instances, in 1970 and 1972, where the executive, after a period of brinkmanship, called off its members' action). But there are unions which are. The AUEW is all three, and yet so far it has put off making any decision on how it will pursue any claim. It has even defaulted on taking a clear decision on whether or not it will put in a claim above £6 for its members working for local councils. It can only be assumed that the GMWU and NUPE demand of '£6 and not a penny less' will apply to AUEW members too. Officially the AUEW is following the farcical course of 'seeking advice from the TUC' on how the new policy will affect the union's two tier wage claim structure.

The government's pay policy is nothing less than a poverty policy. In a recent survey it was shown that the average worker is £2 worse off in real terms than last year. The low paid farm workers and the much higher paid blast-furnace men are both feeling the pinch, and what they are feeling is being felt by the rest of the trade union movement. Despite the betrayal of the trade union bureaucracy at Blackpool, the millions of that movement must push their leaders to follow the path of the NUB and the NUAAW... and smash the £6 limit.

Low wages

The refusal of the East Moors (Cardiff) and Shelton Bar (Stoke) men to come out in support is due to their fear of closure. In general, though, there is obviously a great deal of enthusiasm for the union's refusal to pay any attention to the Government - TUC policy. Technically the union and BSC justify this by saying that as the job will be a new one — the larger furnaces demand changed procedures — the £6 ceiling doesn't count.

'Technically' that is true. Nevertheless there can be no doubt that the NUB's claim, in line with their opposition to the TUC's acceptance of the £6 limit, is way over the top.

The NUAAW voted with the TUC general council, supporting its recommendation. In line with their delegate conference, however, they have now put in a claim for £9.50. This claim will go to the Agricultural Wages



ABOUT 40 people, including a group of Turkish workers joined a picket organised by the Angola Solidarity Committee outside South Africa House (Trafalgar Square) at lunch-time on Wednesday 17th.

The picket was called to express solidarity with the MPLA and to protest at the

recent invasion of Angola by South African forces stationed in illegally occupied Namibia. During the invasion a zone extending some 25 miles into Angolan territory and including the town of Pereira d'Eoa was seized by the South African forces.

Drop all charges against BWNIC 16

ON MONDAY 29th September the trial begins of 16 supporters of the British Withdrawal from Northern Ireland Campaign, some of whom face possible life imprisonment under the charge of conspiracy to contravene the Incitement to Disaffection Act (1934) for possession of a leaflet "Some Information for Discontented Soldiers".

At a rally at Conway Hall, London, on September 15th, Labour MP Joan Maynard called on the labour movement to campaign for the dropping of the charges, together with other speakers including Paul Foot (IS), Alastair Renwick (Troops Out Movement), George Anthony (AUEW), Eric Tomlinson (one of the Shrewsbury Two building workers imprisoned under the Conspiracy laws) and Charles Clarke (National Union of Students). There were also messages of support from Lawrence Daly of the National Union of Mineworkers, Jo Richardson MP, and the journalist James Cameron.

The rally placed the trial in the context of increasing state repression through the use of the conspiracy laws in this country and the use of the army against the Catholic population in Northern Ireland.

CONCERN

Jack Dromey of the National Council for Civil Liberties spoke against the use of conspiracy charges and in favour of the right to communicate information to soldiers and for soldiers to engage in legitimate political activity such as organising in trade unions. He reported that the Greater London Association of Trades Councils also supports the 16 defendants and has called for the repeal of the Incitement to Disaffection Act, expressing concern at the growing use of the army in emergency situations. In recent months the army has been used not only in Northern Ireland but

in Glasgow to break the dustcart drivers' strike and in 'manoeuvres' at Heathrow, to gain experience in civilian operations.

Eric Tomlinson pointed out that the conspiracy laws had been used against him and Des Warren to make them whipping-boys as an example to other militant workers. "They're not fussy who they put away, as long as they make an example". In the last few years, conspiracy charges have also been used against the 'Angry Brigade', against 21 Iranian students who occupied the Iranian embassy in protest against the murder of nine political prisoners in Iran, and now against the 'Iberian 19' (see p.4).

TRIAL

Joan Maynard linked the case of the BWNIC 16 with the use of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and argued that the labour movement must be alerted the dangers of moves against free speech on Ireland.

Only last week, the Shepherds Bush Gazette (September 11th) reported the case of an Irish chef detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Fellow trade unionists held an emergency meeting of their union, NUPE, and threatened to picket Hammersmith police station in protest against the imprisonment and alleged maltreatment of their workmate. The man was released before the trial even took place.

Examples of such trade union action need to be seen more often. George Anthony of the AUEW said that the TUC did everything possible over the Shrewsbury Two — except take action. We cannot afford to see the same attitude over the BWNIC 16. Already one of the charges against Andrew Lloyd, one of the 16, has been dropped. The trade union movement must take up the fight for the dropping of all the charges.

Marian Mound

Notts police harassment

POLICE have launched a series of purges on paper sellers in Nottingham. This fact was openly admitted by the police last Saturday following the arrest of three paper sellers for allegedly obstructing the highway. The two Workers Fight sellers involved, Mick Wilson and John Richardson, had been standing outside the Victoria shopping centre for about two minutes when the arrests occurred. The police were there already, waiting.

After charging three comrades the police inspector said it was too late now just to caution them. Indeed, he said his patrol for the day was to arrest some paper sellers. The police would do it every couple of months, he said. He denied

any knowledge of criteria laid down by the police themselves for paper sellers, namely that they must be at least 5 yards apart.

Following a meeting between the Chief Inspector of Nottingham and the International Marxist Group (who also had sellers arrested), the charges were dropped, mainly because Nottingham IMG and the Workers Fight supporters involved had decided to fight the case on the grounds that the comrades had received no warning and were conforming to the police criteria. The police were undoubtedly influenced by the fact that on a similar purge of IMG comrades five months ago, they lost their case in court.

The right way to fight £6 limit

NORWOOD Constituency Labour Party have passed a resolution stating that they are opposed to the £6 limit and to all cuts in public spending, as an attack on the living standards of ordinary working class people.

That, in itself, is not too exceptional. But Norwood CLP did not stop there.

They have decided to produce a leaflet explaining their opposition to the £6 limit and distribute it to every household in the constituency. They have also called on the MP (John Fraser, under secretary at the Department of Employment) to oppose the measures inside and outside

parliament.

Resolutions opposing the £6 limit in closed Labour Party committee rooms are welcome — but bushel upon bushel of such resolutions will still not do much to help the fight to maintain workers' living standards. Norwood CLP have done more. They have decided to declare — in front of the whole working class in their area — that in a clash between the Labour Government and workers demanding better wages and conditions, they are on the workers' side. Actively, positively, publicly on the workers' side — not just expressing good intentions in committee rooms.

Pete Firmin

Convenor on the board dumped by workers

AFTER being appointed a member of the board of directors of the Felixstowe Dock and Railway Company, Larry O'Donnell was sacked five days later by his fellow workers as their convenor.

The appointment was meant to be a 'progressive' move by the board of this private enterprise to show they were allowing workers' participation. What this meant was shown by the attitude of O'Donnell himself, who when asked what he would do if the company would have difficulty paying for a large wage claim said, "With books being opened to unions it might not arise — anyway, we now have the new pay limits".

The other dockers decided, quite correctly, that he couldn't do both jobs. He would not be able to represent them properly as convenor if he was on the board too.

O'Donnell said that when the stewards told him he should stand down as a director or resign as convenor, he couldn't leave the board because "TGWU policy is for workers to have seats on the board; it is TUC policy and it is going through Parliament. I couldn't see my way clear to resign".

O'Donnell is now looking for another job which will enable him to bring "different attitudes and first hand knowledge of what the shopfloor is thinking to the attention of the board". So much for representing workers' interests.

CUTS CUTS

ABOUT 4,000 women clothing workers, employed by John Colliers and Alexandre tailoring organisations, are to be put on a three day week from Monday 15th September. This will mean a reduction in their wages of about £11 — and they were only on an average of £28!

The plants affected will be Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, Gateshead and South Shields in the John Collier organisation, Darlington and Peterlee in the Alexandre group.

The local union official, Albert Burton, of the Tailors and Garment Workers Union, was said to be very angry over "the lack of consultation over the decision to bring in short time working". Presumably if he'd been told it would have been all right! He went on to brag that "we have given this company more cooperation in the last decade than any other section of British industry has received". No wonder the women only earn £28.

But what will happen to their standard of living now? There will be no other jobs available as other firms employing women in the area are also cutting back on the number of jobs.



GEC are planning to cut back the number of workers employed in their Middlesbrough factory by 200, mainly women. GEC has already got rid of 3,000 workers in the UK over the last year through such schemes as voluntary redundancy and 'natural' wastage. Another north-eastern factory to be affected is Hartlepool with 470 to go. The new redundancies will be forced redundancies.

Mr Owen Richmond, Hartlepool District Secretary of the engineering workers' union, said that no local industrial action is planned as "it would be unproductive". He has asked Hartlepool MP Ted Ledbitter to make the strongest possible representation to Industry Minister Eric Varley.

MEETINGS

OUR COMMON STRUGGLE

Newsletter of the Portuguese Workers Coordinating Committee. No.10 now out: articles on Radio Renascença, the 5th Provisional Government, a farm occupation, workers' control in a brewery; diary of August events. 7p from PWCC, 12 Little Newport St, London WC2.

London Workers Fight readers' meeting: "THE COLLAPSE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL AND THE TASKS OF WORKERS' FIGHT". Speaker: Sean Matgamna. 7.30pm, Sunday 21st September, at the 'George', Liverpool Rd, N1.

LIVERPOOL Workers Fight public meeting: "Portugal: what next?". 8pm, Wednesday 24th September, at the Mitre, Dale Street.

Merseyside International Women's Year Committee one day conference: Sunday 5th October, 10.30am to 4pm, at the SOGAT offices, 254 County Road, Liverpool 4. Tickets in advance, 25p from News from Nowhere, 48 Manchester St, Liverpool 1. Creche provided.

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