

## SPAIN: The Powder Keg

Just before Franco's final collapse, the Economist compared Spain to a car driven by a little old man whose eyes are fixed on the rear-view mirror. He has just taken it through a red light and onto a dangerous crossroads. Can the driver be persuaded to look forward instead of back or can someone else intervene to slam on the brake?!

Now that Franco's hands have slipped off the wheel, the car looks even more dangerously out of control. Juan Carlos, elected head of government last October and Franco's designated heir, seems incapable of slamming on any brake and defusing the explosive situation building up.

On the contrary, his election has coincided with a deft push on the accelerator as hard-line Franco supporters have moved into action. In the past few months, Basque nationalists have been further repressed, opposition spokesmen in Madrid intimidated and student assemblies in Valencia and Seville broken up, leading to over 100 arrests.

### Opposition

The Economist's concern for democracy is not, of course, genuine. It is motivated by fear: fear that unless concessions are quickly made, the masses may very well begin, themselves, to dismantle the system under which they have suffered for 40 years, and install a democracy on socialist lines. Memories of Portugal, just after the overthrow of Caetano, are still too vivid.

Such a fear is perfectly justified. Opposition is growing on all sides as ever-wider layers grow impatient for change. The student rallies represent only one aspect of the mass discontent which has grown in determination and size since the Burgos trials in 1970.

The development of the workers' commissions, which last year swept the elections in the fascist trade unions, averaging 75% of the votes, represents another. It is these commissions which have been responsible for the enormous growth in strikes - over 2196 last year involving over 700,000 workers - which have shaken the country.



Another time-bomb confronting the Carlos regime is the unresolved problem of the oppressed nationalities whose rights have been trampled on for decades by the Franco dictatorship. Despite Carlos' recent decision to grant such nationalities the right to use their own language, the situation in the Basque country, where a virtual reign of terror existed, is explosive.

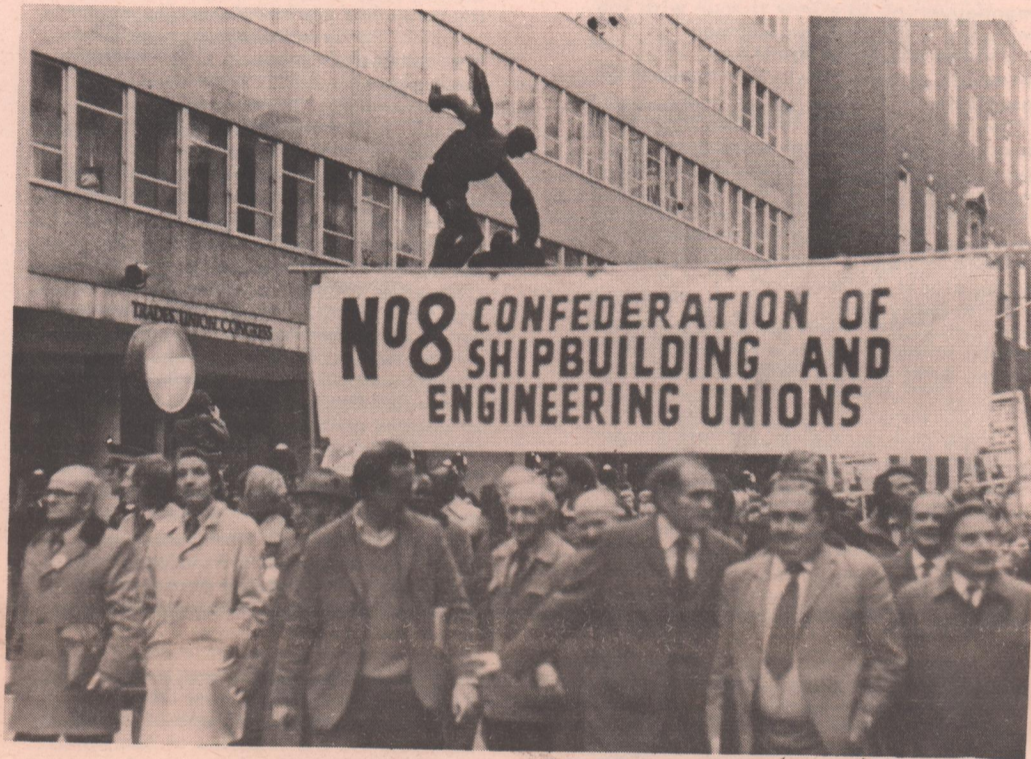
As the Times recently suggested, the intensified repression of Franco's last period succeeded not only in alienating the masses but also the former pillars of support, in the Catholic Church and the Army!. The fact that last year alone 13 young officers of the UMD (Democratic Military Union) were arrested for advocating a return to 'democracy' is an indication of how deep popular opposition to the dictatorship is.

### Concessions

The major concern occupying bourgeois commentators is whether, as the New York Times put it, these trends

(cont. p.2)

# THE RIGHT TO WORK



ANDREW WARD (REPORT)

On November 26th, over 20,000 trade unionists lobbied Parliament in protest against unemployment figures nearing the one and a half million mark and officially estimated to 'peak' over the two million mark later this year.

The response of the TUC leadership to the demonstration - which had brought workers from as far afield as the Coventry Chrysler plant to the Glasgow Persona factory - was summed up in the comment by General Secretary Len Murray who described it as the work of 'extremists'!

That the TUC leaders could describe a demonstration for the right to work as 'extremist' says less about the demonstrators than it does about the TUC. It reveals just how far they have gone in becoming apologists for the government's class-collaborationist policies - policies based upon creating mass unemployment - in the unions.

### Social Contract

Originally, of course, the TUC leaders sold the Social Contract - and the more stringent £6 limit - to the unions on the grounds that it was the only way to save jobs. They faithfully echoed Healey's words that it was better for all to take a cut in living standards than that those lucky enough to keep their jobs should scoop the pool while millions are living on the dole!

The chickens in this argument have now come home to roost. Despite the fact that wages have complied with the Social Contract - which has even been accepted by such unions as the NUM - unemployment has continued to soar. While wages, according to the CBI, have dropped by 7.3% over the past 9 months or so, unemployment is still escalating at the alarming rate of 1000 a day.

In certain areas, such as Merseyside, the shadow of the thirties is becoming once again a stark reality as closures and lay-offs have pushed up the total to 10%. Such figures, which hide the shortened work-week in industries like textiles and car manufacturing, are only a taste of what is to come.

An ASTMS document, published for the last Labour Party conference, indicates that the jobless total by the end of the year will have reached something in the

not been wanting. Individual factories from Plesseys in Liverpool to Persona in Glasgow have been occupied as the workforce spontaneously began to reject the 'irrationality' of a system which can throw people on the scrapheap at a moment's notice.

These struggles, while a sign of growing militancy, have generally remained isolated and, as a result, have often ended in defeat. While supporting such initiatives, the key task at present is to spearhead the fight for the right to work in the labour movement as a whole - in the trade union and Labour Party branches - demanding that the leadership begin to challenge head-on the pro-capitalist policies of the Labour government.

The problems of individual groups of workers - from teachers to dockers - can no longer be solved in isolation. They must act as the springboard for hammering out, inside the labour movement, a programme to safeguard jobs at a national level which the present government, elected by working people, must be called upon to implement in the interests of working people.

The proposals submitted so far by the TUC are totally inadequate in this respect. Demands such as 'import controls' are no solution to mounting dole queues. Trying to 'export' unemployment merely hides the fact that cutting out cheaper imported goods will only push prices up. In a situation of wage restraint, this will mean that workers will be able to buy less and will only therefore force unemployment in other sectors of the economy.

A mass campaign for the right to work - a campaign demanding the present leadership challenge head-on Wilson's class-collaborationist policies - must be based on uniting workers and not dividing them.

### Labour

Unless such a campaign is developed in the period ahead, it could lead to a serious demoralisation in the labour movement, opening it up particularly to racist demagogues. This is true not only for those facing redundancies in the period ahead but also for those already on the dole whom the trade union leadership must be compelled to fight for.

In fighting to unite both employed and unemployed, socialists should be prepared to work with all forces in the labour movement in a common attempt to make the TUC and Labour Party demand the present government act in the interests of working people - or else replace it with one that will.

#### \* WORK SHARING

In factories where lay-offs are on the cards, the call should be made for dividing the existing amount of work among the existing workforce.

#### \* OPEN THE BOOKS

Employers who refuse to concede work-sharing - and insist on the necessity for cut-backs - must be called upon, at local and national level, to open their secret accounts to workers' representatives.

#### \* NATIONALISE UNDER WORKERS CONTROL

If employers refuse to open the books - or 'prove' thereby the case for lay-offs - the demand must be raised for nationalisation under workers' control. Unlike the TUC's proposal for increased subsidies for firms obviously incapable of managing their own affairs, they should be nationalised as part of a workers' plan for production.

#### \* PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAMME

In order to absorb the thousands of unemployed, a bold public works programme should be called for. All cuts in social expenditure should be opposed and the labour and material at present standing idly by used to improve housing

### Opposition

In March 1974, the Heath government was swept out of office by the miners' strike. It was the climax in a whole series of defeats suffered by the Tories as they tried to implement their three-pronged attack upon the labour movement: through the Industrial Relations Act, unemployment and incomes policy.

It is ironical that what the Tory government could not achieve, despite its confrontation policies, the Wilson government has achieved in little less than two years without a murmur of real opposition. The reason for this lies, of course, in the connivance of the trade union leaders with the government's pro-capitalist strategy, cynically prepared to watch living standards plummet as the dole queues lengthen.

At no time during the past period have the TUC leaders (or the Labour 'lefts') attempted to challenge Wilson's policies by putting forward a viable alternative based on the need to defend jobs and living standards, and mobilising the labour movement to fight for it. The massive majority Wilson won for his disastrous policy at the Labour Party conference, supported even by 'lefts' such as Foot, is proof of this.

Even now, when the dole queues are longer than for the past 30 years, the most they have done is to mouth a few 'concerned' phrases, hinting to the government that it may be difficult for them to continue selling the Social Contract without a few token anti-unemployment safeguards. The latest TUC package, presented to Healey for consideration, includes demands for 'import controls' and increased subsidies for firms to maintain manning levels.

While Healey has accepted some of these proposals, his real attitude can be detected in his comment that there can, in the period ahead, be no 'massive decrease in unemployment'!

### Campaign

Over the past few years, militancy in

# PORTUGAL

## LESSONS OF THE COUP by T. Roberts

The abortive coup by left-wing army units in Lisbon last November marks a major set-back in the ongoing struggle in Portugal. Reporting only a few days after the last rebel units had surrendered, the Guardian wrote that 'non-Communist ministers were jubilant. They felt the main obstacle to orderly progress - the chronic disunity in the armed forces - had at last been removed.

The Azevedo government has reason to be jubilant. The coup, sparked off by ultra-left groups such as the MES & PRP, has played into their hands. It has given them a long-awaited excuse to re-establish their crumbling power through a series of repressive moves they would never have dared undertake in the preceding weeks.

By purging over a hundred left-wing officers and dissolving all rank-and-file opposition - as in the SAVs - they have already gained monopoly control in the armed forces. Guaranteeing a 'loyal' army is a vital first step in altering the balance of class forces in Portugal.

It provides the government with a key lever in beginning to curb the upsurge in the workers' movement which reduced it to near paralysis in November - an upsurge culminating in the mass metal workers' strike or the seige of the government by the construction workers calling for a national minimum wage.

Although this will be no easy task, the Azevedo government has already begun to erode democratic rights won since the April 1974 coup. A curfew has been imposed in Lisbon, left-wing leaders hunted and the press is being censored as left-wing sympathisers are purged from editorial boards of papers in Lisbon and in Oporto.

### CP Demagogy

Whatever the pretext offered for the coup - the government's provocation, for example, in dismissing Carvalho - the military 'adventure' has allowed the right, at a time when it was on the retreat, to take the initiative again. Responsibility for this set-back lies clearly with such ultra-left groups as the MES and PRP who had been agitating for an 'immediate insurrection'.



Colonel Neves: put down coup.

Such groups no doubt hoped that the uprising of military units in the capital would spread, like a spark, in the armed forces and the workers' movement. They probably based this assumption on the growing anti-government campaign launched by the Stalinists, in alliance with them, since last August. Such a campaign, which had led to increasingly adventurous acts such as the disastrous 'occupation' in Faro last October, specialised in demagogic appeals to 'peoples' power'.

What the ultra-left didn't realise - or realised too late - was that the Stalinists' campaign was merely... demagogy. It was designed purely as a cover to pressurise the military into granting them those positions in the government from which they had been ousted, last August, by the Socialist Party.

While prepared to go along with certain adventurist acts - which increased their bargaining power with the AFM - they were never prepared to directly challenge them. After all, denunciations of the 'rightists' within the government were always accompanied by calls for the re-instatement of 'revolutionary officers' sympathetic to the Communist Party, such as General Concalves.

This is the reason why, when the coup took place, the Stalinists quickly disassociated themselves from it to the extent of distributing leaflets in the capital appealing for calm. Their guilt was twofold since, while encouraging this type of adventure, they left the other groups to take the consequences alone.

The Stalinists' true line was noted shortly afterwards in the New York Times which wrote that 'Mr Cunhal made it clear that even though most of the known leftists in the military have been purged, he still felt that the military must lead the revolution'.

### Popular Front

The groups engaged in the coup didn't realise that, although the Stalinists appeared more radical than the Socialist Party which had organised mass rallies in the north in support of the Azevedo regime, there was in reality very little to choose between them politically. Both parties were merely manoeuvring to curry favour with the military - the true government in Portugal since the April 1974 coup - in order to boost their own number of portfolios.

The left's inability to grasp this is surprising since such squabbling over gaining portfolios in a capitalist government is not new. It can be traced back to the period just after the Spínola coup in 1974 when both parties rushed to pledge support to the new Provisional government.

In the early days, of course, it was the Communist Party which was prepared to make the most concessions to the AFM in its attempt to curb 'economic anarchy'. To curry favour with the military, it was ready to support anti-strike laws (calling the postal workers strike a 'provocation'), drop all economic demands on behalf of the workers in the 'battle for production' and back the AFM's neo-colonial policies towards Mozambique and Angola.

It was this role of the Stalinists as the tool of the AFM in the labour movement which brought about their growing unpopularity. Alienating large layers of workers, they thrust them towards Soares' Socialist Party (which made great play about defending democracy) and contributed towards the latter's election success in April 1975.

Sensing this lack of support, the AFM realised that the Stalinists were less effective in curbing the upsurge in the workers' movement than the Socialist Party which was, after its election success, manoeuvring for greater representation. It was this recognition that eventually led to the downfall of the Concalves government, relying on the CP, in favour of the Azevedo one which represented a major concession to Soares.

### Obstacle

It has been this constant vying with each other to gain an alliance with the military which has proved the major stumbling block in Portugal to finding a socialist solution to the ongoing crisis.

From the April 1974 coup to the April 1975 Constituent Assembly elections, it was the Stalinists who denounced the Socialists for 'suspicious alliances with ultra-left groups'. Since the downfall of Concalves, it has been the Socialists who have criticised the CP for its 'leftist demagogy'.

Seeking an alliance with the military - or sections of it - means that both parties have consciously sought to contain the upsurge in the workers' movement within limits acceptable to the AFM which remains the major force for capitalist stability in Portugal.

They have acted, in this sense, as a civilian facade for the military which has sought at every stage to oppose the workers' movement in its struggle for economic demands or the liberation movement in the colonies seeking independence. Any concessions it has made - such as the nationalisation of the banks in March last year - have been wrung from it through mass pressure.

More importantly still, by vying for the favour of the military, the workers parties have split the labour movement and left the AFM in the enviable position of being able to play one off against the other. The danger of such a division has been dramatically revealed recently where the Communist Party's sectarian campaign against the Socialists created the climate for a 'coup' whereby the military were able to intervene to roll back the gains of



the entire movement.

### Alternative

One of the key tasks for socialists, within such a situation, would have been to call upon the workers parties to unite against the military (to which they have pandered) and cease their sectarian squabbles. The fact that in the April elections last year almost 60% of the electors supported the two main workers' parties would seem to indicate that there would be a great deal of popular support for such a position.

Unfortunately, those groups to the left of the Communist and Socialist parties were totally unable to offer such a perspective. Far from trying to break the workers' parties from collaboration with the military, they were themselves captivated by the demagogy of 'left' leaders such as Carvalho. Groups such as the MES and PRP totally supported the sectarian campaign launched, last July, by the 'lefts' of the AFM against the Constituent Assembly and in favour of 'revolutionary councils', dominated of course by the AFM.

Far from trying to create a united front of the workers' parties, they themselves became increasingly instrumental in deepening the split between them. The creation of the FUR last August (the Revolutionary United Front involving groups from the MES to the LCI) was essentially a tool in the hands of the Communist Party in their sectarian campaign against the Socialists who were soon designated as 'social fascists'.

The coup towards the end of November represented the impasse of such a political line which has helped to set back the entire workers' movement.

### United Front

Far from tying the workers movement to the AFM, as the left groups have tried to do by boosting figures

like Carvalho, the main thrust ought to have been to fight to break the workers' parties from the military by calling on them to form a workers' government. This thrust is even more important today as the military use the excuse of the 'coup' to clamp down on the workers' movement.

The way to implement such a government is by centering all attention on the right of the Constituent Assembly - reduced in the past to a rubber stamp by the military - to exist and function as the sole democratically elected body by the populace. Calling for a workers' government, based on the Constituent Assembly, gives a focal point to the workers' movement independent of the military and unites it in opposition to any further acts of repression.

The neighbourhood and workers' commissions that exist in various parts of the country - enthusiastically endorsed by the ultra-left as part of the CP/AFM 'Peoples' Power' scheme of last April - offer no alternative at this stage. These commissions, small, fragmented and often dominated by small groups, have alienated large layers of workers who see them as undemocratically trying to impose the will of a minority.

By using these organs to institute adventurist acts - such as the coup itself - the ultra-left have sought to avoid the central question in Portugal today: how break the allegiance of the masses to Cunhal or Soares? Calling for a workers' government, based on the Constituent Assembly, to defend the democratic rights and economic interests of the workers & their allies could begin to do just that.

It could begin to show increasing layers the bankruptcy of both parties in practice and, thereby, open up the way for a real socialist solution. Up to the present, instead of putting the reformist leaders on the spot, they have been allowed to get away with their class-collaborationist policies almost scot-free.

## SPAIN: (CONT.)

will assume an 'uncontrollable political shape' or whether they can be defused in time by the granting of concessions. Certainly, governments throughout Europe have been unanimously urging such concessions on the Carlos regime to avoid a social explosion on the scale of Portugal.

The latter is also the fear of the major opposition parties in Spain who, while putting their hats into the political arena, are only too fearful of being overtaken by the mass movement. Forces such as the Christian Democrats or the Junta Democrática, representing tendencies from the Social Democrats to the monarchist supporters of Don Juan, have all offered their services in effecting a 'smooth path' from dictatorship to democracy.

Such forces seeking, as Le Monde put it, a 'more modern, liberal regime for their country, adapted to the conditions of the Europe of the Common Market', are not alone in this course. They are supported by the Spanish Communist Party which equally sees its role as participating in what Carrillo recently called '... a broad coalition government of national reconciliation which would include forces of the right, centre and left on the basis of re-establishing freedoms...'

The Spanish CP's willingness to sell itself as a reliable prop to capitalist order is no doubt based on the role of its sister party in Portugal which participated in Spínola's coalition government in 1974. The Spanish CP is willing to go even further to preserve its alliance with the Liberals, however, by even contemplating support for a monarchy.

### Reckoning

The smooth transfer to 'democracy' the Communist Party and its allies hope for is, however, by no means likely. The new regime finds itself in a dilemma. Carlos is only too aware that tardiness in granting reforms can only further increase the discontent of a combative working class which undoubtedly saw Franco's demise as a real opportunity for social change.

He is also aware that the worsening economic situation - as unemployment and inflation begin to bite - will add extra fuel to demands for change.

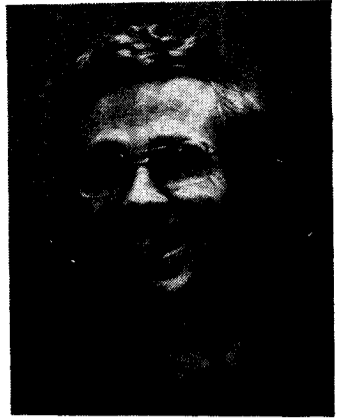
On the other hand, he is also aware that to initiate a process of 'liberalisation' would not only alienate the 'right' - the old fascists from the days of the civil war well represented in the government and army, such as General Angel Campano, to whom he has pledged support. It could also open the sluice gates to popular demands and action which could threaten to engulf the regime, as happened across the border in Portugal.

Whichever way Carlos turns, the prospects are bleak. Whatever path he takes, he seems unlikely in the long term to stave off the day of reckoning the working class has with a regime which, for 36 years, has suppressed its most elementary rights.

It would seem unlikely, when that day arrives, that the working masses, aroused to dismantle the dictatorship, will be trapped in the 'coalition government' formula of the Communist Party. Certainly, neither can satisfy their needs or aspirations.

# REPEAL THE IMMIGRATION ACT

by BOB SWART



An estimated 300 people are, at present, being detained - without trial - in detention centres near Heathrow Airport. Kept imprisoned by Securicor 'bullies', they are the latest victims of the Tories' 1971 Immigration Act.

The fact that many of them possess British passports is irrelevant. They suffer from one major drawback; they are black. The 1971 Immigration Act, the most vicious in a long series of such Acts, was specifically designed to curb black immigration into the country.

Under the Act's 'patrial' clause, specific clampdowns are placed on all immigrants whose ancestors were not born in the United Kingdom. Whereas white, Commonwealth citizens have freer access than ever under such an Act - over two million (kith and kin) being granted virtually unlimited entry rights - black immigrants are immediately disenfranchised.

To enter the country, they must have obtained a work permit for a specific job with a specific employer. They have no right to settle here or to bring in dependents.

They are subject, at immigration control, to vicious interrogations and humiliating delays for the slightest irregularity in their papers. After all, the job of immigration officers, implementing government policy, is to keep blacks out, isn't it?

## Colour Bar

These openly racist aspects of immigration control are by no means new. Robert Moore, in his study 'Racism and Black Resistance' explains how, as early as the Tories' 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act, immigration control had become synonymous with 'colour bar'.

The 1962 Act, which made entry into Britain dependent upon the 'voucher system', was obviously intended to benefit from the racial prejudice developing in areas such as the Midlands in response to high black immigration in the previous decade. The fact that it was the Tories themselves who had actually encouraged such migration - to compensate for a labour shortage in the service industries - was, quite naturally, glossed over.

The precedent set by the 1962 Act, with hardly any opposition at all from Labour, despite its former pledge to oppose any restriction in Commonwealth immigration, laid the basis for ever more vicious Acts. Once it was conceded that black

people were a 'problem', successive governments vied with each other in introducing stricter controls.

The 1962 Act was followed by the Labour government's 1965 White Paper, the 1968 Immigration Act and, finally, by the present one enacted by Heath in 1971. Clearly, such Acts, which have reduced black Commonwealth immigrants to 'aliens' dependent upon a 'work permit', have their economic advantages. They provide employers with a ready supply of cheap labour for the most menial jobs which can be dismissed at a moment's notice by refusal to renew the contract.

## Basic Rights

Undoubtedly, such acts have done more to foster racial tension than all of Powell's speeches about 'gutters running with blood'. Their racist bias is not limited to immigration control but permeates the very lives of those few blacks who do manage to gain a work permit to enter the country. They reduce them to second-class citizens, thrust into dead-end jobs, & denied the most elementary rights.

When Roy Jenkins' Prevention of Terrorism Act was passed earlier this year, it was widely seen as a savage inroad into civil liberties. As far as the Home Secretary or police were concerned, it meant little more than the application of powers they already possessed under the 1971 Act. The licence given to them under this Act is one that assumes civil liberties are confined to whites - blacks being considered a second class sub-group.

If you are considered 'undesirable' (or, as the Act specifies, a threat to the 'public good'), you can be taken to a special detention centre near Heathrow and deported overnight. You have no right of appeal. What the Home Secretary considers a 'threat' can be clearly seen in the case of Franco Caprino earlier this year, threatened with deportation simply for trying to unionise fellow workers. Through a mass campaign, Caprino won the right to stay. Many others have not been so lucky.

If the police suspect you of being an illegal immigrant, you can be picked up off the streets, taken to the police station and asked to prove you have a 'right' to be in Britain. If you can't prove it at once, you may well be on your way to deportation or sent to Pentonville where you may be kept for months while 'investigations' are made.

Of course, there are a hundred variations on police harassment of this sort. You may be dragged out of your bed at night, picked up in a club or arrested at your place of work, as happened to Abdul Malik. The fact that such intimidation is 'legally' condoned explains the constant tension and suspicion that surrounds the black communities in places such as Bradford or Southall.

## Scapegoats

Far from being a legal 'odddity', therefore, the 1971 Immigration Act has become the legal 'cover' for racial prejudice. After all, if it is accepted that black people can be denied entry due to their colour - and denied basic rights on the same grounds if they do enter - racism has received official approval. All the Race Relations Boards in the world cannot alter this fact.

It is the racist aspects of such acts which have helped create the climate for demagogues such as Powell. The latter merely seeks, with his calls for 'tighter immigration controls' and for 'voluntary repatriation', to carry them to a logical extreme.

No political party, including the Labour Party, has been able to

own attempts to curb immigration, that it is black people who create the 'problem'. The debate has been reduced to an exercise in the 'numbers game'. And, as Robert Moore points out, 'if you play the numbers' game, then black people already here, and every black child born here, is a problem, and the discussion shifts to questions of deportation'.

Powell is only too aware that the ball is in his court. By carefully playing on the racial prejudice created by such acts in the years ahead, he no doubt hopes to be able to divide and confuse the workers' movement as to the real cause of unemployment, poor housing and cut-backs in social services. The fact that the labour movement has not challenged this process of legalised racism - but actually, in the form of Labour governments, helped promote it - no doubt gives him and his ilk good cause for such hope.

## Climb-down

Despite the fact that, in 1961, the Labour Party was opposed to any cut-back in Commonwealth immigration, it has increasingly been drawn into the argument that black people are, in some way, at the root of social problems. It has led to the gruesome picture of Labour leaders trying to out-compete the Tories in reducing the numbers of black immigrants.

The sharp shift in attitude was, no doubt, due to the startling defeat of Patrick Gordon Walker in 1964 by a Smethwick candidate who adopted a strong anti-black immigration policy. Instead of launching a strong anti-racist campaign to explain the real issues, the Labour leaders, ever watchful of the polls, were panicked into accepting the racist premises of their opponents.

This led to the Labour government's 1965 White Paper, which proposed restricting black immigrants to 8500 a year, and to the 1968 Immigration Act which Callaghan defended against Powell by saying it had done more to keep blacks out than any piece of Tory legislation! Such acts were introduced with hardly any opposition within the Labour Party or trade union movement - or, at least, any

active opposition.

It is true that certain trade unions such as the T&GWU are on record as being against all forms of racist immigration control. Very little has been done, however, over the years, to translate this verbal opposition into a real struggle against the 1971 Act.

By refusing to challenge such laws in a head-on way, the labour leaders have created a situation in which large layers of workers could, in the coming period, fall victim to Powell's demagoguery and see blacks not as allies but as a threat to jobs and wages.

## Repeal the Act

It was mainly because of the failure of the labour movement to lead a struggle on this issue that the Campaign to Repeal the Immigration Act (CRIA) was launched last year at a 200-strong public meeting. The main aim of the campaign, which has already won support from trades councils, Labour MPs such as Joan Maynard and immigrant groups, is to build a mass campaign to repeal the 1971 Immigration Act.

The importance of such a campaign lies not only in its attempt to win for black people elementary human rights. It also lies in reaching into the labour movement and tackling, head-on, those prejudices built up over centuries of colonial rule. These prejudices will not go away. Unless they are combatted today, they could form the basis tomorrow for a right-wing backlash that could seriously divide the workers' movement.

In order to combat such prejudices, it is not enough to campaign against racism 'in general'. Everyone, from Harold Wilson to the socialist left, is against racism 'in general'. The task is to mount a campaign against: one of its key forms, the 1971 Act, which legally justifies the racism black people suffer in every aspect of their lives.

## BRAZIL: 55 KILLED



Geisel: claimed tortured prisoners were shot while trying to escape.

Brazilian political prisoners have accused the Geisel regime of torturing to death at least 55 political prisoners since 1969, the Reuters news agency reported from Rio de Janeiro last December.

In a signed statement smuggled out of prison, 35 political prisoners in Sao Paulo said they themselves had witnessed the torture of 16 victims. They gave details of more than 24 forms of torture they had been subjected to and cited the names of 133 torturers.

According to Reuters, 'The 35 prisoners said they themselves had suffered beatings, electric shocks, the 'ice box', a tiny cubicle with temperatures changing from searing heat to freezing cold, immersions in water and sexual abuse'.

The prisoners said that the government tried to disguise most of the deaths by claiming that the

## Interview With

# VISHNU SHARMA

## of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

Q. Is the Act racially discriminatory?

A. I would go farther than that and say the Act was based on racial discrimination. It was not, of course, the first but the 'patriality' clause specifically discriminates against black people. It turns them into second-class citizens in trying to gain entry into the country.

Q. How are dependents of people already here affected by the Act?

A. Dependents, as you know, cannot enter without first gaining an 'entry certificate' from the British consulate overseas. In many cases, these people have to wait over 2 years just to get an interview - and then they can be turned down! Appealing can, to my knowledge, take up to 5 years.

Q. How does the Act infringe civil liberties?

A. Well, in the first place, 'non-patrials' can only come here if they have obtained a work permit for a specific job with a specific employer. The work permit is renewed only on a reference by the employer which means immigrants are very much under their thumb. I believe this contravenes the ILO convention for workers.

On entry, many immigrant workers have to register with the police who are granted, under the Act, wide-ranging powers. They can search premises without a warrant, take anyone suspected of being an illegal immigrant to the station and - on the decision of the Home Secretary - deport without right of appeal anyone considered a threat to the 'public good'.

Q. How important do you think a campaign to repeal the Act is?

A. I think it is essential. Many people are unaware of exactly what this Act contains and would be horrified to discover the extent to which it discriminates against black people and violates basic rights. The campaign is essential in highlighting these questions and beginning to draw ever-wider layers into a fight against the Act.

Q. What perspective do you think the campaign should have?

A. Well, we in the JCWI would like to co-operate with you in getting rid of this Act. It is important, however, that the campaign should not get bogged down in an academic discussion but should unite as many people as possible on the basis of action. The main task is to build a mass movement to pressurise the government to repeal

# SOCIALIST ACTION

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## EDITORIAL

### For a sliding scale of wages

Commenting on the Labour Party conference last year, the Guardian wrote that the purpose of the incomes policy 'in reducing living standards is no longer questioned'.

The tinsel surrounding the £6 limit has, indeed, long gone. Labour leaders did not even try to disguise the burden they are seeking to impose on workers. Figures from Healey to Foot, the 'darling of the left', all mounted the rostrum to justify Callaghan's point that British families 'will suffer a sharp decrease in their standard of living'.

### Decline

Backing the £6 limit means, in effect, that the average industrial wage cannot increase by more than 10% at a time when prices are escalating at more than 26% annually. No wonder ASTMS predict a 6% decline in most workers' real disposable incomes before August. Workers do not, of course, need to be told this. Increased charges in food, electricity, gas, rents and rates bring it home in more concrete terms than any statistics. Massive social service cuts, as money is channelled away from schools and hospitals to 'bail out' ailing firms such as Chrysler, only further erode living standards.

### Confusion

The fact that figures from Healey to the 'traditional' left have come out in favour of such pro-capitalist policies has seriously disoriented the rank-and-file in the labour movement. This was reflected at conference where, apart from NUPE's attack against cuts in the NHS, very little real opposition was mounted.

It has also seriously disoriented the left who have found themselves unable to champion demands to unite the labour movement in safeguarding wages against the inflationary spiral. Calls for more rank-and-file militancy - made by the International Socialists - are quite inadequate.

### Militancy

Militant action to gain flat-rate increases, while important, is no answer to long-term inflationary trends which begin eroding wage increases as soon as they have been won. Continued struggles merely to 'stand still' can, over a period of time, lead to demoralisation. This is partly the reason why there was so little rank-and-file opposition to the TUC's acceptance of the £6 limit. They could see no perspective.

More than this, militant action on its own may allow stronger unions to make gains but only leaves weaker ones, confronted with the government, falling ever more behind. This was one of the ways that Wilson managed to get the £6 accepted - by 'guaranteeing' a fair deal for weaker unions.

### Sliding Scale

What is needed in the coming period is a campaign that will unite workers - the weaker sectors alongside the stronger - in a common struggle to defend living standards against permanent erosion by inflation. The call for a sliding scale of wages - automatic compensation for increases in the cost of living - is a central demand to be raised in all trade union and Labour Party branches.

Such a demand is not counterposed to struggles for a 'flat-rate' increase. On the contrary, it ensures that such struggles, when they do occur, are motivated not merely by the need to chase an escalating cost of living but to gain real increases in purchasing power.

Its real significance is that it challenges, head-on, the Labour leaders' attempt to make workers bear the brunt of the crisis through falling living standards. By demanding that there should be immediate compensation for every point increase in the cost of living, the labour movement as a whole can be united in a common fight against the government's pro-capitalist policies.

## LSA PAMPHLETS

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### Abortion - a Woman's Right 17p

The key nature of abortion rights, in the struggle by women for their liberation, and defence of the mass-action perspective of NAC in winning them.

### The EEC - Does it matter? 12p

An analysis of the EEC and the ongoing debate it has provoked within the labour movement.

# ABORTION

## A KEY ISSUE

Despite the thousands who marched last June - and the resolutions of support since gained from the TUC and Labour Party conferences - women's abortion rights are still under attack. James White's Bill may no longer be a direct threat but its restrictive proposals are very much in the air.

Already, the recommendations of the Select Committee (set up to examine it) are being implemented by Barbara Castle who congratulated it on its 'very useful work'. This 'useful work' includes curbs on the number of foreign women allowed abortions in this country and what amounts to a decrease (from 24 to 20 weeks) in the time limit on abortions.

More curbs are in the pipeline. In January, an 'open vote' is being held in the Commons as to whether the Select Cttee should be re-convened. The government, which has already gone on record as being opposed to the 'abuses' of the 1967 Act, is not limited to the Select Committee for implementing further restrictions.

It could pass its own legislation or it could be presented with another 'private member's Bill on the lines of the late, lamented White model. Whatever the precise form such restrictions may take, one thing is clear: women's abortion rights have already been curtailed and plans are afoot to curb them further still.

### SPUC Pressure

The roots of this offensive do not stem - as some suggest - from the government's policy of cutting back social services. Curbing abortion rights to save a few million on NHS 'out-patient' facilities is not behind this long-term attempt to turn the clock back. These roots have to be seen in the wider context of an on-going struggle by a mass lobby to roll back the limited rights women have won over the past period.

Wilson's decision to hold a 'free vote' in the Commons on the re-convening of the Select Cttee took place, let us recall, in the shadow of a mass SPUC demonstration of over 60,000 launched by an amalgam of Tory back-benchers and Church dignitaries to repeal the Abortion Act of 1967. It was the climax of an eight-year long campaign.

SPUC's persistence, over the years, in whipping up anti-abortion hysteria is by no means accidental. It stems from their awareness of the dangers of women winning the right to control their own bodies which has become - throughout the world - symbolic in challenging the shackles of centuries.

They are only too aware that access to safe, legal abortion begins to undermine women's traditional role as 'child-bearer' tied to the home and economically dependent upon the man. It begins to break through the cocoon into which society has thrust her and opens up before her a role as an independent figure in her own right. The implications of this are, as SPUC realises, far-reaching since it slowly erodes the role of the family both as an economic and ideological prop for class society. At a time of economic crisis, when the family is needed more than ever as a 'stabilising' influence, any threats to it assume dangerous proportions.

### SPUC's Allies

The recent moves by the government to curb the 'abuses' of the 1967 Act represent - in this sense - a major concession to the mass anti-abortion pressure SPUC has created. This is what lies behind the recommendations of the Select Cttee being implemented with Wilson's blessing and the decision to hold a 'free vote' on its re-convening.

In spite of the Labour Party and TUC coming out clearly for free abortion on request, the government appears more anxious to satisfy this right-wing lobby than its own base and sees fit to assist this lobby in sending women - particularly working class women - to back-street abortionists again.

There can be little doubt that such moves on its part dovetail neatly into its present economic strategy. Restricting abortion rights undermines women's independence and limits them further 'to the home'. The more they are tied to the home, the more easily will the government be able to get away with mass redundancies among women workers and use the family as a 'cushion' against the effects of savage welfare cuts.

While suiting government strategy, however, it would be a mistake to see the roots of this offensive as primarily 'economic'. They are not. They stem from the mass pressure placed on the government by SPUC which has been gathering support over eight years and which has made substantial inroads into the Parliamentary Labour Party itself.

### Challenge

It was NAC's ability to recognise the attack upon women's rights posed by SPUC that enabled it to gain mass support so quickly. Apart from a few, small counter-demonstrations by the women's movement, NAC was the first serious attempt to meet the challenge of SPUC head-on by asserting boldly a woman's right to choose whether or not to terminate her pregnancy.

Within a few months, the campaign was able to create local groups all over the country and mobilise, on June 21st, a mass demonstration which drew over 25,000. This combination of mass action around a clear-cut issue (a woman's right to choose) allowed it to begin to alter the balance of forces on the question.

This was most noticeably shown in its ability, recently, to force both the TUC and Labour Party conferences to pass resolutions in support of a woman's right to abortion on



# DN:

request. This was a significant victory and, although the resolutions are still on paper, poses the possibility of building a mass campaign rooted in the labour movement and ready to challenge any government back-down under SPUC pressure.

Unfortunately, in spite of these possibilities opening up, NAC has recently allowed the initiative to slip between its fingers and the ball is once again back in the anti-abortionists' court. This was shown most dramatically last October when SPUC managed to mobilise 60,000 on the streets while NAC was unable to make any response, thus giving Wilson a free hand to propose a 'free vote' on the re-convening of the Select Committee.

## NHS Cuts

The reason for this paralysis, at a time when the anti-abortionists were stepping up their pressure, is due to the inability of certain left tendencies - notably the IMG - to grasp the dynamic of the present situation.

For many months now, the IMG has attempted to turn NAC from a mass campaign over women's rights - the right to choose - into one opposing the 'cuts' in the NHS. As early as last June, Berry Beaumont (leading IMG spokesperson in NAC) was writing that only by 'linking up with such campaigns (as MCAPP) can supporters of free abortion on demand have a real prospect of success'.

No-one would doubt that fighting cuts in abortion facilities on the NHS is important. What the IMG cannot grasp, however, is that there is not much point campaigning against cuts in the NHS to achieve better abortion facilities if women are not allowed to use them because of legal restrictions. It is the struggle to win the right to abortion - by defeating any restrictive laws first of all - that is the main task facing NAC at present.

It is the IMG's inability to grasp this, attempting to turn NAC into a subsidiary of MCAPP, that has led to NAC's paralysis over the past 6 months. Once the focal point of the campaign becomes a struggle against the cuts, then mobilising mass action against the government around the right to choose becomes unimportant besides local, fragmented activities around hospitals.

This is why, despite the fact it was obvious last June that SPUC were preparing a mass rally to influence government thinking on the Select Committee, the IMG has constantly opposed a mass demonstration. It fought the LSA's proposals, on the Steering Cttee, for a demonstration in November and, later, at the National Conference, fought against a similar action in December, though mass rallies were being held world-wide on abortion at the time.

The fruit of the IMG's 'stalling tactics' was simply that it allowed the anti-abortionists to seize the initiative and, robbing NAC of any focal point for six months, caused it to lose much of the support it had built up.

## Perspective

Despite this set-back, however, NAC has serious possibilities for growth. To take advantage of them - particularly the avenues opening up in the labour movement - NAC needs a clear perspective of where it is going.

The first task is to combat any attempts to 'dissolve' NAC into a general campaign 'against the cuts'. Any attempt to link NAC with other issues, at this stage, only blurs over the real issues involved and limits its appeal to wide layers who may support the right to choose but who are not ready to support a variety of other issues.

The second task is to centralise the campaign - thereby giving a real focal point to local activities - by building seriously for the mass demonstration called for April 3rd. The focus of such a demonstration can

be a source of discussion within NAC depending, as it will, on whether the Select Committee is re-convened or not this January.

The possibility for building NAC into a mass-action campaign, able to challenge any attempts to put the clock back, are enormous. They have only to be tapped.



Sabina Roberts, LSA representative on the NAC Steering Cttee.

**"Only mass action can show the government that we will not tolerate any restrictions to our abortion rights"**

Q. Are abortion restrictions still a threat?

Well, the most immediate danger is obviously the Select Committee. The Select Committee was set up specifically to study White's Bill in the attempt to tighten up the 'abuses' of the 1967 Act. This was its brief and it has already come out with restrictive proposals the government is implementing. This means women's abortion rights have already been eroded. If the Select Committee is reconvened, therefore, within the same terms of reference, it is bound to come up with even more restrictive proposals. Certainly, the Committee itself has made it clear that it wishes to continue studying the White Bill so that it can 'report without delay'.

## Labour and DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS

Accompanied by a wave of anti-Irish hysteria, Roy Jenkins rammed the Prevention of Terrorism Act through Parliament in 1974 after only seven hours' debate. He did not even bother with a vote as only two Labour MPs said, at the time, that they were opposed to it.

The PTA is a symptom of the deep inroads against democratic rights being made by the Labour government. It blatantly warns all Irish people living in Britain, and anyone else who dares to support their rights, that opposition to imperialist oppression in Ireland is punishable by deportation, imprisonment, financial hardship or a week's 'grilling' by the police.

### Victimisation

Certainly, the Act's undemocratic nature is far-reaching. It gives the Home Secretary the power to deport any citizen of Northern Ireland who has not been resident in Britain for at least 20 years without charges or a trial. The figures released for last October show that 69 people have been issued with 'exclusion orders' since the Act became law.

It further allows the home secretary to ban any organisation that appears to him to be 'concerned with terrorism' or that is, supposedly, 'promoting or encouraging it'. Since terrorism is vaguely defined as 'the use of violence for political ends', it could just as easily be used against strike pickets as terrorist bombers.

In addition, the PTA allows the police to detain people without charge or trial for up to 7 days. Only 44 of the 946 persons detained so far have had any charges laid against them. The purpose of this is clearly to allow the police to use 'blanket arrests' and interrogations to intimidate the Irish population.

### Spearhead

The PTA is not the only measure

# INTERVIEW WITH SABINA ROBERTS

Q. Do you think SPUC's demo last October influenced MPs?

We have to realise that the SPUC demo was not a one-off effort but part of a long-term campaign. SPUC have been mobilising on the streets ever since 1967 to get the Abortion Act repealed. They have been unceasing in their pressure upon MPs and, in the absence of any visible alternative until last year, they've been able to claim that majority opinion is on their side. The 60,000 strong demo a few months back will certainly reinforce their arguments. Even if the Select Cttee is not reconvened, which seems unlikely, we can be sure that SPUC will continue with their campaign to restrict abortion rights.

Q. What should be NAC's main thrust in the next period?

We must first recognise that lack of a national focus over the past 6 months or so has taken its toll. It has dissipated the forces of NAC - in purely local activities - and allowed SPUC to regain the initiative. If we are now going to pull NAC out of its 'lethargy', we must begin building seriously for the mass demonstration called for April 3rd by the National Planning Meeting. Only mass action of this kind can show the government that women in this country will not tolerate any restrictions to their abortion rights.

Q. Why do you think NAC let the initiative pass away?

Well, the LSA argued in local NAC groups and at the Steering Committee since last July that it was necessary to centralise the campaign around a national focus to combat any anti-abortion moves. One of the forces most violently opposed to any national demonstration has been the IMG. They argued against a demonstration last November - when it was well known SPUC were organising a mass rally - and even opposed, on the Steering Committee, our call for a mass demo in late March or early April later overwhelmingly accepted by the National Planning Meeting.

Q. What were IMG's reasons?

I think the main reason the IMG has opposed such actions is simply that they are against 'single-issue' campaigns and have been trying, for some time now, to dissolve NAC into a struggle at local level against cuts in the NHS.

Q. How should NAC orient to the labour movement?

Both the TUC and Labour Party conferences recently came out in support of a woman's right to abortion on request. This should make it easier to gain support for NAC activities such as the April 3rd demo. We should also call upon the labour movement to demand the government implement those decisions democratically reached at conference. Up to now, the government, while in favour of curbing 'abuses', has tried to get off the hook by treating abortion as a moral issue up to the individual conscience. We need to put them on the spot. Local Labour Party wards should inform their MPs that they are expected to abide by conference decisions and, if not, that the action taken by the Newham CLP is not limited to Newham!

Q. Is there a real potential for building NAC today?

If you look back over NAC's short history, it has probably been one of the most successful campaigns built to date. Within two months, literally, it managed to mobilise over 25,000 on the streets. This success was due to the fact that it took up a real concrete issue of women's rights and fought for it boldly on the streets. We need to learn from this and, with the new avenues of support opening up in the labour movement, I have every confidence we can go forward and build a mass movement in the coming period. Certainly, it is only by bringing masses out into the streets that we can stop the government in its tracks from sending thousands of women back to back-street abortions.



Roy Jenkins - introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

being used to stem opposition to the government's oppressive policies in Northern Ireland. It has been backed up by frame-up trials against 'bombers' and by charges, under the Incitement and Disaffection Act, against BWNIC members whose 'crime' was handing out leaflets to British soldiers containing information for those who wished to leave the army.

While such measures are primarily being used, at present, to cow the Irish community and prevent a mass movement building up challenging government intervention in Northern Ireland, their ultimate aim is much broader. They are the first steps in eroding the democratic rights of all working people since they can, quite easily, be 'extended' to trade unionists and militants in Britain.

Already, some Irish trade unionists have been deported in circumstances that indicate their role as militant workers was the main factor in provoking the government's move and not their connection with any form of 'terrorist' activity.

### Prejudices

The government has been able to ram through laws such as this, or the 1971 Immigration Act, by playing upon workers' anti-Irish or anti-black prejudices. It has thereby been able to create a climate where it will be much easier, in the period ahead, to act directly against those rights it has taken the labour movement centuries to build up.

A direct attack is, even now, being made upon the right to picket. While forced by mass pressure to repeal the Tories' Industrial Relations Act, the Labour leaders have not released Des Warren, imprisoned in December 1973 for 'conspiracy to intimidate' during the 1972 building workers' strike. The refusal to release Warren fits in with their refusal to alter the present picketing laws whereby it is illegal for pickets to stop a truck approaching a strike-bound factory for the purpose of

peacefully persuading the driver not to cross the picket line.

Further curbs may be in the pipeline if the government decides to accept the recommendations of the Law Commission in a working paper last June. These proposals - that trespass and remaining on property after being asked to leave should become a criminal offence - are clearly designed to arm the state against factory occupations, student sit-ins and 'squatting'.

### Mass Action

It is clear that the deepening economic crisis will accelerate this attack upon democratic rights. The precedent has already been set in the inability of the labour movement to date to fight the violation of the basic rights of minorities, such as the Irish or black communities, failing to grasp the implications for all workers contained within such an offensive.

The most effective way to offset any further attacks is to begin now to struggle against those violations that exist. Mass action campaigns, such as that which CRIA\* is attempting to build, should take up concrete examples of such violations. Such campaigns, demanding that the Labour leaders fight to repeal those acts infringing basic rights, are the best way of beating back the attacks of the present government.

## EDUCATION

# FIGHT THE CUTS

by  
DAVE  
PICTON



Dave Picton stood as Vice-Presidential candidate of the NUT last year.

Oversized classes, old buildings, inadequate facilities and teacher unemployment - this is the meaning of the Labour government's policies for education in the period ahead.

Despite the call by the Labour Party conference to reduce classes to a maximum of 15 by 1980, Crosland has recently sent a circular to all local authorities freezing social expenditure. Such a move, at a time of rapidly rising inflation, will mean drastic cuts in all directions.

The 5000 unemployed teachers will grow to 15000, it is estimated, by this time next year. Class sizes will climb upwards. Building programmes will grind to a halt and many school leavers, returning due to poor job prospects, will face inadequate material resources.

In face of such attacks, the leaders of the NUT - the largest union representing 200,000 members - have virtually no answer. Although formally opposing the cuts, as indeed has the TUC, the most they have concretely done to combat them is to call upon teachers, in highly 'selective' circumstances, not to cover for absent members.

Their policy can best be summed up in the words of Fred Jarvis (NUT General Secretary) that 'the union is not looking for a fight'.

## Changing Times

As the cuts begin to bite, however, it is unlikely that the Executive will be able to get away with its policy of inactivity. The situation has changed drastically from the early sixties when a gradual increase in the proportion of the national income devoted to education meant expanding jobs, promotion opportunities and better working conditions.

The situation of an expanding education service, which served only to reinforce the traditions deep within the NUT of co-operation with the employers, of public relations campaigns and conferences designed to influence 'top people', are quickly disappearing.

This was already true in the late sixties with the gradual depression of teachers' wages. For many years, the relative earning power of teachers had declined since education is labour intensive and 'speed-up' and productivity deals (used to reduce labour costs in industry) were not possible in the schools.

This trend eventually gave rise to the 1969-70 strikes as it began to be recognised that advances could no longer be won by depending on years of economic expansion but only by collective effort.

This is not to deny that 'professionalism' is still not strong among older members who still seek to prevent discussion on any motion with a political content - on the grounds that it contravenes the aims of the union. It is merely to suggest that

an appreciation of trade-unionism has spread to a wider layer of the membership.

## Militant Action

This changing attitude - which has found a general reflection in the growth of white-collar unionism - has been reinforced by the entry into teaching of a new generation influenced by the student radicalisation of the late sixties. The new generation, in particular, was not hampered by 'professional' attitudes and was prepared to question traditional educational values and the teacher's 'role'.

Many of these newer members were to found the Rank and File teachers Group which grew in strength because of the failure of the 'old left' (mainly Labour and Communist Party supporters) to mobilise the membership against the Executive's inability to fight worsening living standards.

The impact of the younger teachers could be seen most dramatically in the mounting opposition within the union to the Executive's acceptance, in 1969, of a two-year agreement that would have further hit living standards. Having obtained backing from the Annual Conference for a fresh wage claim, they forced the Executive, the following winter, to bring out over half the union's members in some form of strike action.

Since the NUT had not engaged in any strike since the early twenties - and since the struggle resulted in the biggest increase many teachers

union was wound up because it supported Rank and File and new rules, which hamstrung local branches of the union more tightly than Heath's Industrial Relations Act, were pushed through.

Even the 'orthodox' left in the union joined in the hysteria. A recent issue of the union journal 'The Teacher' featured an article by CP Max Morris which employed the same red 'smear' tactics against Rank and File that the national press has used against the Communist Party recently in the AEUW elections.

The union leadership is, of course, right to fear the young militants of Rank and File. Not so much for what the latter represents at present - it has made mistakes and has shown certain sectarian tendencies - but because it continues to act as the focus for those who wish to hammer out an alternative to the collaborationist policies of the NUT leaders.

## Future

This will become doubly true in the coming period when the objective conditions which have strengthened right-wing attitudes among teachers disappear ever more rapidly. The era of expansion is drawing fast to a close and teachers, like workers in other industries, will be faced with growing unemployment, worse working conditions and the beginning of an ideological backlash in educational thinking.

If no coherent alternative is provided



John Sturrock (Report)

had ever seen - this was of profound significance in indicating changing attitudes.

## Counter-attack

The employers, sensing the dangers of a new generation of young teachers ready to take militant action, counter-attacked the following year by moving against the basic salary scale which had - hitherto - formed the major element in the salary of all teachers.

A system of separate scales was imposed through the compulsory arbitration process written into the Teachers' Remuneration Act, with increased differentials for those at the top of the school hierarchy. The recent Houghton award, which gave increases of over £2000 to head teachers but only £200 plus to those at the bottom of the scales, consolidated this new structure.

Its aim was self-evident. It was carefully designed to convince most teachers that the solution to their economic problems lay in individual promotion rather than in collective effort. Through such atomisation, it particularly aimed at 'splitting' the union and segregating the young militants from older teachers.

## Victimisation

The NUT leaders, who had at first opposed the idea of separate scales, quickly accommodated to it. It offered them, as well, the possibility of consolidating support among older teachers for their collaborationist policies and isolating the younger ones, many of whom were supporters of Rank and File which continued to struggle against the separate scales.

This conflict has dominated NUT politics ever since. The Young Teachers' organisation within the

to the policies of the present leaders, such a situation could lead to further division and demoralisation. Rank and File could begin to fill the gap by building opposition around a clear programme of action to defend teachers' jobs, salaries & working conditions.

One of the main thrusts of such a tendency must be to fight for the Executive to launch a real struggle against all cuts which could, in the future, be linked with that of other trade unionists in the public sector. ILTA has already given a lead in this by calling for a recall of the SE Region TUC Conference against the cuts.

One of the major demands stemming from this should be that the local authorities be made to 'open their books' and reveal their plans both for education and for the other public services.

Demands should also centre around key issues facing teachers in the schools, such as unemployment and inflation. Opposition should be mounted against redundancies, the compulsory transfer of teachers and for smaller classes which will create more jobs for students soon to complete their teacher training.

Inevitably, in an era of galloping inflation, wages becomes a central issue. Large flat-rate increases, with automatic protection against rises in the cost of living, must be a key demand. At the same time, a common basic scale and reduced differentials is the essence of the wage structure that can further unite teachers.

It is by building opposition around such demands - and around broader ones such as those ending discrimination against women - that a growing number of teachers can be involved in struggle.

## TRANSPORT:

# THE AXEMAN COMETH

by A.F.

When Labour took office in 1974, they did so on a clear pledge to rebuild a public transport axed almost to death. The Manifesto promises were none too soon. Previous governments, trying to run transport as a profitable concern and not as a public service, had implemented a spiralling round of fare increases, staff redundancies and service cuts.

Such a policy, creating chronic road congestion as passengers 'deserted' to cars in droves, has not, of course, led to 'solvency'. A DOE survey (after the 1958 Beeching cuts) pointed out that no transport system could be profitable and that 'cuts of 20-30% would leave British Rail losing even more money'.

Despite the truth of this predicament, the chase for 'profitability' has led to ever more cuts in road and rail services, turning public transport into a shadow of its former self.

## Pledges

Despite the Manifesto promises, Labour's brief spell in office is accelerating this trend. Crosland's transport policy seems summed up in the 'right of every person to own a car'. The true meaning of such a policy is glaringly revealed in the break-down of local authorities' transport grants which allocates only 26% to 'public transport'.

Such a policy, that will force local authorities to further axe services already on their last legs, is doubly stringent when it is realised that, in line with general cut-backs in social expenditure, transport grants are being reduced this year from £191m to a mere £75m. The situation whereby many rural areas are fast being depleted of any public transport at all will become widespread.

Crosland has even gone so far as to threaten withdrawing the grant from local authorities - such as the West Midlands - who refuse to 'pay their way' by introducing further cuts and fare increases.

## Worsening

The fare increases and service cuts Crosland's policy calls for - on a more drastic scale than in the past - will not ensure 'solvency'. It will only drive more passengers off the buses and trains, decreasing revenue and preparing the ground for ever more savage inroads into public transport. The vicious circle will continue.

This is the history of London Transport over the past ten years or so where deteriorating services and rapid fare increases have resulted in a drop in the numbers of passengers carried by just over 20%.

Worsening transport services will not only drive people to the car, thus adding to a record road congestion. It also penalises those who are least able to find alternative transport: those on low incomes, the aged, sick and mothers with young children.

Already it is estimated that 50% of all users of British Rail are in the top 20% incomes' bracket. Further increases will only deepen such a trend.

## Stop the Cuts

The present Labour government was not elected to pursue Crosland's pro-Tory policies of making transport 'pay its way'. It was elected to reverse the suicidal trend of the past years which has meant redundancies for transport workers and deteriorating living standards for millions.

Labour must be held to its promises. If the transport unions were to lead a head-on struggle against the cuts - in defence of their members' jobs - they would find a broad response in the labour movement. They could, in particular, find common cause with other public sector workers who are also effected by cut-backs in social expenditure.

Such a struggle could be the first step in demanding that Labour implement a nationally co-ordinated transport plan based not on the myth of profitability but upon serving the community.

## STRANGE FRIENDS

The Chilean military junta, increasingly isolated and beleaguered at home and abroad, has recently found a hand of friendship extended it.

Commandant Gaston Frez, head of Codelco, the Chilean State Copper Corporation, announced last week that China would increase its imports of Chilean copper from 8,000 tons in 1975 to 34,000 tons in 1976.

China, it seems, has maintained diplomatic relations with the Pinochet regime since the coup d'etat in 1973.

Peking's moves towards Chile come at a moment of extremely strained relations between General Pinochet and the Roman Catholic Church at home, and amid signs that the United States Secretary of State, Dr Kissinger, is about to dump the junta as a 'troublesome & embarrassing liability', as the Observer put it.

So this is what they mean by 'peaceful co-existence'!

# ANGOLA: VORSTER'S AIM

A. SCOTT

While the South African government has admitted carrying out operations against SWAPO guerrillas in South Angola, it has repeatedly denied that its troops are involved in the fighting between the three rival nationalist groups - the MPLA, UNITA and the FNLA.\*

As late as November 23rd, Foreign Minister Hilgard Muller stated that 'South Africa does not intend getting involved in the civil war in Angola'.

In reality, of course, South African troops had already entered the country and begun fighting the Moscow-backed MPLA before the Portuguese army had been withdrawn and independence granted.

Since the last week in October, in particular, the MPLA has lost a number of important cities it had occupied in central and southern Angola. Their troops were driven back by a heavily armed military column composed of South African troops and units from the FNLA and UNITA. The military column swept hundreds of miles through Angola, taking in rapid succession Sa da Bandeira, Mocamedes, Benguela, Lobito and Novo Redondo.

## Vorster's aim

The South African invasion is not, as it might appear on the surface, inconsistent with its recent 'detente' line towards neighbouring black states but is, on the contrary, designed to promote it.

South African Prime Minister Vorster has calculated that intervention by his army at this stage can tip the balance in favour of those political forces who are firmly committed to collaboration with South Africa. UNITA's strong pro-detente line, for example, has been spelled out on numerous occasions in interviews granted with foreign journalists.

In an interview with the Luanda publication Portuguese Africa, UNITA's leader Jonas Savimbi states on April 28th that '...economic co-operation with South Africa is only realism however much we may be opposed to



## U.S. INTERVENE

South Africa is not alone in its intervention in Angola. The crows are gathering. US Imperialism, obviously fearing the consequences of an MPLA victory, has begun to step up arms shipments & publicly endorse South Africa's 'stand' against Moscow.

Over the past 3 months, the US has already supplied \$25m worth of equipment and, according to the New York Times, another \$25m is in the pipeline. That such aid will increase has already been indicated by Kissinger who pointed out the US 'will try to prevent one party, by means of massive introduction of outside equipment, from achieving dominance'.

Kissinger obviously fears that an MPLA victory could increase the bargaining power of Moscow vis-a-vis Washington within the terms of the 'detente'. While Kissinger's policy is not unanimously accepted in US ruling circles - many fearing the consequences of a serious commitment in Angola - the parallel with Vietnam is only too obvious.

The argument that if Angola 'falls' to the Communists it would knock down 'dominoes' the length and breadth of Africa is highly reminiscent of that used to justify intervention in Vietnam. Already, besides military aid, the CIA is busy aiding the FNLA, headed by Holden Roberto. The danger signals are clear.

the inhumanity and injustice of apartheid'. The May 2nd issue went on to say that Dr Savimbi 'did not believe, in the present Southern African context, that armed liberation wars were necessarily the solution for the problems of Namibia and Zimbabwe'.

Prime Minister Vorster must also have welcomed Savimbi's espousal of the virtues of a free enterprise economy. In the same interview, Savimbi favoured a state that would 'leave as much as possible of the economy to private enterprise' and went on to welcome 'any source of foreign investment'.

## Moscow

This is not to suggest that the policies of the FNLA or UNITA, which have been prepared to collaborate with South African forces against the rival nationalist group MPLA, are necessarily more pro-capitalist than the latter's.

Certainly, leaders of the MPLA have clearly admitted that they intend pursuing a 'non-aligned' course and, despite demagogic denunciations of 'fascists' and 'puppets of international imperialism', have guaranteed private property 'including that of foreigners so long as it benefits the economy of the country...'

South African leaders, however, probably consider the MPLA to be a less reliable tool than the other two groups in safeguarding their economic interests. They possibly fear that MPLA leaders may be forced into adopting certain radical anti-imperialist stances by the radical aspirations of their own supporters in the Luanda region.

A more important consideration may be South Africa's desire to prevent the Soviet Union, which backs the MPLA, from gaining strong political influence in a country bordering on South African-occupied Namibia. Although Moscow's aim in its support for the MPLA is not to encourage a struggle against capitalism, a pro-Soviet government could give it a useful bargaining power in its deals with the West.

Angola's vast deposits of oil and minerals would make it a particularly powerful bargaining counter for more favourable terms with the West within the framework of 'detente'.

## Detente

South Africa certainly knew that its dispatch of troops to Angola would meet with little response from the neo-colonial African states and the OAU (Organisation for African Unity). MPLA president, Agostinho Neto, has charged recently that 'most African states are betraying us by remaining silent in such a situation...'

Vorster's 'verligte' policy - luring neighbouring black states into diplomatic and trade links by injecting massive financial aid into them - is bearing fruit. This is particularly true of Zambia which has played a key role in promoting 'detente' with South Africa and has issued no protest at all at the invasion of Angola.

Kaunda, who has described Vorster's policies as the 'voice of reason', is probably out to woo UNITA to which he has transmitted a large amount of material supplies. His aim is to get the opening of the strategic Benguela railway (now controlled by UNITA except in the extreme north-east) which has been used in the past to export over 45% of Zambia's annual copper production of around 700,000 tons.

By refusing to condemn Vorster's military intervention in Angola, both nationalist groups such as UNITA - and their backers such as Kaunda - are seriously endangering the struggle for independence. Although that intervention is at present directed against the MPLA, it threatens the gains of the entire nationalist movement.

The South African involvement could, moreover, serve as a pretext for further intervention by the imperialist powers as they jockey for position in the mineral-rich country. Already, the United States is stepping up its military support for the anti-MPLA forces.

## Labour's role

South Africa's 'verligte' policy

depends upon two major planks: the amount of capital it can inject into the neighbouring states and a strong military presence to act as a deterrent against any liberation movement. Britain plays a major role in this strategy with its supply of arms and trade.

Despite the election of a Labour government, this aid continues unabated. The South African government continues to receive spare

parts for military equipment and to enjoy joint trading schemes between British and South African personnel.

One of the most concrete ways in which British socialists can help the independence struggle in Angola - besides demanding the withdrawal of all imperialist forces - is to demand that the Labour government end all economic and military support for the Vorster regime.

# CHRYSLER NATIONALISE NOW P. Brain.



Chris Davies (Report)

Last year, after meeting Chrysler's chief executive, Wilson hinted that Riccardo was 'pointing a gun at my head'. The 'gun' referred to was, of course, Chrysler's threat to shut up shop in Britain, causing mass redundancies, unless the government was prepared to ransom it through massive subsidies.

Chrysler's threat has born fruit. It has recently been announced that figures in the region of £162m, more than the company's world-wide losses last year, have been agreed.

With sales dwindling to a mere 6.8% of the British car market, which is itself expected to shrink in the coming period from 1.2 to just over 1m car sales (according to the Financial Times), Chrysler was obviously prepared to cut and run unless aid was forthcoming. The fact that over 25,000 jobs were at stake, not to mention the thousands more in component firms, was obviously of little or no concern.

## Redundancies

It was also of little concern to the Labour government. Certainly, the main meat of those 'secret meetings' with Riccardo has not been how to protect those jobs at present in the firing line. It could have done that by giving Chrysler its marching orders and taking over the company lock, stock and barrel as demanded by the 6,000 workers of the Linwood plant.

On the contrary, the main debate has been how, granting subsidies, it can put over to the Chrysler workforce the large-scale redundancies, speed-up and rationalisation that will have to occur to make the firm 'viable' again. Any difference that has occurred between Varley and Riccardo has essentially been a difference over what is the best path to take in 'streamlining' the company at the expense of thousands of jobs which will not lead to mass occupations.

No doubt the government hopes that, by appearing as the 'saviour' of a smaller company, it will be able to appeal to the workforce to play their part in accepting limited redundancies and cut-backs in working conditions. The Chrysler workers are in for essentially the same treatment as British Leyland where, last year, massive subsidies of over £1000m were dependent upon redundancies of over 20,000 men.

## Responsibility

Such a policy, which accepts the 'viability' of private enterprise as its starting point, is not limited to the government. It is also the trademark of union leaders such as Jack Jones who have made no attempt to force Wilson to nationalise Chrysler. They, like the Labour 'lefts', have

seen their main role as pressurising the government to grant a large enough subsidy to keep the Chrysler flag flying in Britain.

Such a policy will prove disastrous in the fight for jobs that will grow in the coming period. Suggesting that labour has a vested interest in preserving the 'viability' of private enterprise suggests, logically enough, that it has a partial responsibility for its survival.

To begin to admit 'responsibility' for the problems of Chrysler - or any private industry - leads inevitably to accepting the need for cut-backs in wages, working conditions and even manning levels to make the firm viable. It leads to accepting redundancies and a 'fragmentation' of the workforce as unity crumbles and workers compete with each other to retain their positions.

Chrysler workers, by refusing to fall for the government's proposals which throw 9000 men on the dole, could help now to spearhead a mass campaign for the right to work. The case should be taken up in the broad labour movement - popularising the demands of worksharing, opening the books and nationalisation under workers' control - as part of a real struggle against the government which is, at present, more responsible to 'big business' than to its social base.

## Alternative

Any responsibility the Chrysler workers should feel should not be towards a company which is prepared to throw 9,000 on the dole queues but to fellow workers in protecting jobs. Stewards from the Linwood plant, Scotland, seem only too aware of this and have called for mass occupations if redundancies are carried through.

This call should be supported throughout the Chrysler plants. It should be made clear that no redundancies are acceptable and that the amount of work should be shared out among the existing workforce. If management argue that it is financially impossible to keep present manning levels, workers' representatives should have access to the company's books to gain an accurate picture of its accounts (plans for investment, sales etc).

It is possible, of course, that as happened at the Cowley plant of British Leyland, the company will be prepared to 'open the books' to 'prove' their case for large-scale redundancies. If, as seems clear, Chrysler is unable to handle its own affairs without causing widespread social havoc in the lives of working people, this will only further back up the Linwood stewards' demand for it to be nationalised without compensation.

IRELAND

# WITHDRAW THE TROOPS!

Dave MacLeod

“ The British left has fallen into one of three camps. They either have taken the position that there are excesses within the British army; or they move to critical support of the Irish struggle; or they move to a position of victory to then IRA with a complete lack of understanding as to the reality of the situation. And I think it can be said that the British left's attitude to Ireland has been opportunistic.

Having worked with IS and the IMG the objective test is to ask whether either organisation has succeeded in making, in any section of the British working class, a contribution to any understanding of the Irish problem. The answer is that they have not.

” Bernadette McAliskey

attempt to woo the minority in the ghettos, through minimal concessions, into a sham 'power-sharing' so that the IRA could be isolated and crushed. The UUUC, with the notable exception of Craig who has become converted to a formula along Rees' lines, are pushing firmly for a confrontation with nationalist forces. This is the meaning of Paisley's call to the army to 'get tough'.

The debate within the unionist block is obviously not finished and will continue in the months ahead. Craig's position of a sham coalition (granting a few token seats to SDLP leaders in a future cabinet) has already gained some ground. It is obviously supported as the 'voice of reason' by Westminster who fear the policies of the hard-liners could push the minority back into the arms of the IRA.

While supporting Craig, and hoping that time will allow him to convince the majority of the UUUC of the need for a more 'sensitive' approach, Rees has meantime been forced to make concessions to hard-line opinion to ward off a potential backlash. The 'incident' centres (a means of communication with the Provisionals during the truce) have been closed, the right to political status by republican prisoners withdrawn and harassment of the nationalist areas stepped up.

### Order

In making concessions to hard-line Unionists, Rees is, of course, merely treading the well-worn track of his predecessors from Whitelaw back to Callaghan who introduced the troops in 1969.

Rees may talk about wishing to restore 'order' but the order that he and his predecessors have tried to restore is that based on the bigotry and privileges of the Loyalist state which has discriminated against the nationalist minority for over 50 years.

This has inevitably turned the army into the main repressive force against the nationalist community which is forced, by the very nature of its struggle for democratic rights, to challenge the status quo in the Six Counties. The constant arrests, murder and torture - and, more recently, open collaboration of the army with Loyalist para-military groups - has burnt this indelibly on the minds of the nationalist community.

It has also burnt it on the minds of the unionist block which is only too aware that the British government will not challenge their allies head-on without undermining the status quo they are there to uphold. The back-down of Wilson before the Ulster Workers strike in March last year was a concrete example of this.

Such knowledge obviously gives the Unionists increased confidence in pressing to defend their caste privileges.

### Troops Out

In this sense, the presence of the British army in the Six Counties has always been the lynchpin of the situation. By acting as the main repressive force against the struggle by the minority for their democratic rights, it constantly encourages the Unionist block to ever more sectarian positions and threatens the possibility of a right-wing back-lash.

The fact that it is the British army

places a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of British socialists. It means that by championing the right of the Irish people to determine their own future - concretised in the demand for the withdrawal of British troops - they can seriously contribute to the outcome of the struggle.

Building a mass campaign calling for the immediate withdrawal of the British army would have a major impact. It would help undermine the morale of the army and give renewed courage to the oppressed minority who, more recently, have undergone increasing demoralisation and lack of perspective.

Such a campaign should set itself the task of forcing the government to withdraw the troops - or of bringing it down - as did the mass anti-Vietnam war movement in the USA.

### Responsibility

It is a major condemnation of the British left that, six years after the entry of British troops onto the streets of Derry and Belfast, there still exists no mass campaign calling for their withdrawal.

The failure of the left to unite in building such a movement is not only an example of their failure to give concrete aid to an oppressed nation fighting for its rights. It is also a failure to grasp the self-evident fact that this struggle has a direct effect upon the class struggle in Britain itself.

It should not have to be pointed out that the repressive laws against the minority are made and enacted by Westminster. They are therefore a direct threat to the civil liberties of the British people as Roy Jenkins' Anti-Terrorist Act proves. A real campaign in defence of the right of the Irish people to determine their own future is, in this sense, an integral part of defending democratic rights in Britain.

It is true that such a campaign will have to confront the decades of anti-Irish propaganda deeply rooted in the labour movement. This struggle cannot be avoided or skirted around. If the British labour movement passively tolerates its own government's brutal oppression of the Irish people today, it will just as passively tolerate, tomorrow, the victimisation of blacks or discrimination against women.

It is for this reason that building the Troops Out Movement (TOM) into a mass campaign remains a central task for British socialists.

# OVERSEAS STUDENTS UNDER ATTACK

M.D.

Ever since the introduction of the present Immigration Act, in 1973, overseas students have been faced with ever stricter control on entry into Britain.

To get past immigration officers, they have to provide evidence of both high academic ability and of their financial situation stretching back for years.

Even when they provide the required evidence, they can still be rejected by the immigration officers who are vested with the power to deny them entry despite their lack of competence to make 'academic' judgements.

### Supervision

For those who do manage to enter Britain or who entered before the 1973 Act was enforced - totalling perhaps 100,000 at present - they are rigorously supervised in a way totally unknown to British students.

Apart from the fact that they are liable to deportation on the grounds of conduct, character or even 'association', they are also compelled to study for a minimum of 15 hours a week, excluding library time.

Failure to meet these requirements can lead to revocation of their visa even if they have a valid excuse such as a medically certified illness.

### Grants

The recent rise in overseas students' fees to £320 a year only adds to their problems. Nearly 75% of all overseas students depend upon private funds raised by their families. The increase in fees, coupled with present inflation rates, is making it impossible for many to continue their courses in Britain - with the exception, of course, of the very rich.

Since overseas students are forbidden to take holiday jobs without permission from their College and the Department of Employment, it is tantamount to slamming the door in many of their faces.

It could mean that some of them will be forced to leave the country with their courses half-completed.

In face of these mounting attacks the NUS - in association with the JCWI and NCCL - recently launched a campaign to defend overseas students' rights.

Overseas student groups are being formed in many colleges around the country and, on November 20th, a protest demonstration of over 3000 was held in London.

While continuing to build this campaign, the NUS should also begin to realise how closely it relates to that calling for the repeal of the 1973 Immigration Act and pledge support for its activities.

### Reaction

The 'concessions' involved in Rees' policy were expressly designed to isolate the IRA and prepare the ground for a coalition government able to re-establish 'law and order'. At the same time as carrots were being dangled, the RUC was being built up and was beginning to infiltrate the 'no go' areas where, due to Republican feuding, resistance was considerably lessened.

Even these minor concessions were, however, too much for the Unionist block to stomach. Apart from Craig, they were viewed as an attempt to undermine Loyalist supremacy summed up in Paisley's words (just prior to the May elections for the convention) as 'no power-sharing, no Irish dimension and the return of the B-specials'.

The escalation in sectarian murders by the Loyalist para-military groups such as the UVF were a clear warning to Rees that a 'soft' line would not be tolerated. The formal rejection of 'power-sharing' by the UUUC in its convention report was merely an expression of this confident mood.

'Confident' because the Loyalists were no doubt aware that Rees would be unable to challenge them head-on without, at the same time, challenging the very existence of the Six Counties which the government is in there to uphold.

### Differences

The differences that have emerged between Rees and figures such as Paisley are not, of course, basic. They represent merely a clash on the most effective way of crushing the nationalist upsurge and re-imposing the status quo within the Six Counties. Tactically, however, they are a serious set-back to British government policy.

The Rees initiative was a careful

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