

REPUBLICANS ON THE MARCH



The Republican Club has at last emerged as a unit worthy of serious attention. Our first open meeting, held on Nov. 3rd, was successful enough to last for two solid hours, and Nan Milton's talk has been recorded on tape. It is hoped to reproduce extracts from this tape in leaflet form and any person wishing to hear it can do so on application to Norman Easton.

Stirling Republicans participated in the Irish Solidarity marches in Glasgow and London last month and the Club banner aroused gasps from the crowd in Piccadilly and Trafalgar Square. The Scots contingent increased the crowd's incredulity by chanting "Ireland today, Scotland tomorrow" and enjoying the British, sorry English, reaction.

The London march had an overwhelming sense of unreality. Anyone could demonstrate there without any risk to themselves. A united Pakistan (Yahya Khan's men) demonstration moved off as we assembled. Our march was huge and enthusiastic (1500 could be a conservative estimate) but I felt those marchers would not have appeared in Glasgow still less in Ireland. Their knowledge of Scotland in general, and the political situation in particular, was nil. The October 16th Glasgow march faced the reality of Ireland. 300 marchers assembled to be surrounded by, in toto, nearing 1000 of Pastor Glass's Orangemen. One marcher had his throat cut and others were attacked with meat cleavers. Our London friends would have dwindled in numbers in the face of this situation. Scotland, and within Scotland - Glasgow, is the potential trouble centre in Britain.

Note : NAN MILTON, John MacLean's daughter, left an original first edition of the 3rd (Communist) International in the custody of the Republican Party. If any of our Socialist friends who did not attend our meeting wish to consult it, or the electoral address of MacLean when he fought Gorbals for the Scottish Workers Republican Party, they too can apply to N. Easton.

ANGELA DAVIS

On-wednesday night Alan Silverstone, former Exec. member of the American Communist Party, addressed a meeting on the theme "Save Angela Davis."

He gave an informative talk on the background of Angela's case which gave important insights on the prison system in America and of the importance of the fight to save her. The speaker was present during the attack by National Guardsmen on Attica State Prison and was instrumental in recording the horror of the massacre for a West coast radio station.

The comparison was drawn between Lt. Calley who was guilty of mass murder and allowed freedom to campaign throughout the States in his defence, and Angela Davis who has now been in prison for more than ten months in bad conditions and solitary confinement. The Court even withdrawing bail, set at \$1m. after the money was to be given by Aretha Franklin and Muhammed Ali. At the end of the talk a collection was taken for the Angela Davis defence fund.

PAUL FOOT

Paul Foot, a member of the executive committee of International Socialism, the writer of the "Footnotes" section in PRIVATE EYE, author of several books including WHO KILLED HANRATTY?, THE RISE OF ENOCH POWELL and THE POLITICS OF HAROLD WILSON, addressed a meeting organised by I.S. in Alangrange last Thursday. His topic was "Law and Order" and most of his talk was spent on giving examples of "one law for the rich and another for the poor". He gave as instances closely detailed accounts of how Dangerous Drugs Act were introduced to deal with the "menace" of drug taking, and large amounts of power and money were allocated to drug squads to stamp out dope, and particularly dope dealing, while the real peddlers of dangerous drugs - the large drug companies and distillers - are free to seek ever greater profits by marketing drugs which have not been tested and are in fact potentially or actually dangerous, the Thalidomide affair is an example of this; the manufacturers of the drug were not brought to court for their part in the death and mutilation of countless babies. Other drugs, dangerous if taken at the same time as common foods such as cheese, Marmite or yogurt, are still widely marketed, with little attention paid to making sure that the public is informed of the possible dangers.

Foot also pointed out that while supporters of law and order press for increased penalties for murder, employers whose negligence results in the accidental death or injury of their employees, are rarely brought to court, and in the few cases where they are, the amount of compensation awarded to an employee is usually pitifully low. After the meeting, Foot had time to answer a few questions for BRIG.

BRIG: Some people have expressed surprise that you work for PRIVATE EYE, which is sometimes thought of as a counter-revolutionary publication.

FOOT: I think about 10% of PRIVATE EYE is reactionary, but it is really a question of alternatives for a journalist in a capitalist society. In the past I have worked for the capitalist press and I found it totally unacceptable. The important point about PRIVATE EYE is it's not dependent on big business or advertising for its existence and the people who work are much freer to tell the truth as they see it. Ideally I would like to work fulltime for a paper like Socialist Worker, which is where my first loyalties lie.

BRIG: Why do you go programmes like Any Questions

FOOT: For the money.

BRIG: Why did you join International Socialism?

FOOT: Because I saw a development crisis in capitalism, and recognised the need to build a strong working class revolutionary party. I was faced with the alternatives of the Labour Party and the Communist Party. The Labour Party seems to me to be particularly degenerate, it's an organisation without any foundation in the working class, and it's not the party that the working class will turn to in times of crisis. Also of course, its record in office has shown that it is as much committed to the capitalist system as any other agency of the ruling class. The Communist Party I see as being tied to the State capitalist bureaucracy of Russia, and as supporting Stalinism and the repression in Eastern Europe - particularly in Hungary in 1956 and East Germany in 1953. Meanwhile on the domestic front, "The British Road to Socialism" shows it is firmly committed to Parliamentary democracy and seems to be following in the footsteps of the Labour Party. Faced with these alternatives I decided to join what was then a very small revolutionary group firmly committed to policies in support of the working class, which I saw as the only method of building a worthwhile working class organisation.

Friday, November 19, at 8 p.m.,

SOFT MACHINE

in the Refectory, Pathfoot 60p