

COPY OF PARTS OF INTENDED TELEX TO SOCIALIST WORKER. MARCH THE FIRST.

This week (last week) the seventy factory inspectors in the Lisbon region refused to visit the factories. They are refusing because 26 of them have not been granted recognition by the ministry that employs them. These 26 are all those who were employed after the 25th of April, when fascism was overthrown, and it is no surprise that they are among the ones who are keenest to change the filthy and stinking factories they visit day in and out.

As one told SW, "I always make a point of visiting the workplaces accompanied by members of the elected workers commission and not just shown a guided tour by the management. Indeed, it has got to the stage where the managements won't recognise and that is why we are fighting for the ministry to give us the diplomas."

Industrial capitalism is still young in Portugal. There is very little tradition of fighting for better health and safety conditions. That is why the inspectors wanted copies of Pat Kindersley's book, 'Hazards at Work' as soon as possible. And also they have asked members of the forthcoming 'Rank and File' trip to have a meeting with them on the subject.

Support is coming in for their struggle from other factory inspectors and also from workers' commissions. They are members of the public employees union, and they would welcome any messages of support and news of struggle, from civil servants and public employees in England.

This is just one example of struggle going on in Portugal. There are many other examples. Often they involve small numbers of workers. Often they are isolated. Even now some sections are being drawn into the class battle for the first time, for example, the workers who make sweets. They recently had an assembly and resolved to use all forms of action, if necessary, to win their new wage claim. And often the struggles are little publicised. Take for example the struggle of the Setubal tenants (enclosed).

The government wage freeze, imposed after the 25th of November, has expired (at the end of February). The metal workers had a two hour strike to celebrate their preparedness to enter battle. The metalworkers staged a two hour stoppage to show their readiness to take up the struggle. Although an estimated 80% of the workforce struck, many wanted more action.

A construction worker told SW "the two hour strike we had, and the stoppage of the metal workers, was merely symbolic. Many building workers are tired of stoppages which have no economic significance, and therefore no real political significance. Therefore, yesterday, a representative committee of the unions and the workers' commissions decided that we must be prepared to make a general strike in this round of re-negotiations, and the delegates are committed to going back to their members and arguing for the idea."