

THE LABOUR PARTY

TRANSPORT HOUSE, SMITH SQUARE, LONDON, S.W.1.

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Solidarity with Spanish Workers

Mr. Len Williams, General Secretary of the Labour Party, issued the following statement on 10th May 1962:

On behalf of the members of the Labour Party I want to pay tribute to the courage of the many thousands of Spanish miners, chemical, shipyard and foundry workers now on strike in Asturias, Biscay, Guipuzoa, Leon Province and elsewhere. Their action is the biggest popular demonstration against Franco since the Spanish civil war. It has evoked public support from professional organisations, students and young workers in Madrid and many other parts of Spain.

We want to demonstrate our wholehearted solidarity with the strikers in their bitter struggle against intolerably low wages and living conditions. As usual, every effort is being made by the Communists to exploit the strike movement; at the same time Franco is seeking to discredit the strikes as a Communist manoeuvre. In fact, the vast majority of the strikers are inspired by the principles of free democratic trade unionism to which we subscribe and which have for so long been trampled underfoot by the Franco regime, despite its membership of the International Labour Organisation.

Reports indicate that Franco has declared a "state of emergency" in the strike areas tantamount to martial law, and that at least 200 strikers and sympathisers have already been arrested. On behalf of Party members I want to register a protest against these repressive measures and to call for the immediate release of the prisoners, and the establishment of negotiating machinery through which strikers' demands can be met.