

More people join in 18/7/73 protests over Caetano visit

By Christopher Walker

Anti-Portuguese demonstrators yesterday maintained their hostile pickets outside the functions attended by Dr Caetano, the Portuguese Prime Minister, on the second day of his official visit.

Both Dr Caetano and his daughter, Ana Maria, appeared completely unmoved by the abusive chanting and were securely protected by scores of policemen. But some guests attending the Anglo-Portuguese Society's cocktail party looked visibly shaken as cries of "fascist scum" echoed around the glass-covered rear entrance of the Savoy hotel.

At lunchtime hundreds of city workers looked on bemused as demonstrators picketed outside the Mansion House where Dr Caetano was a guest of the Lord Mayor.

The number of demonstrators at the daytime functions had increased markedly from those present outside the Portuguese Embassy when the Prime Minister arrived on Monday.

More than 150 policemen were deployed at both the Mansion House and the Savoy to keep the hundred protesters clear of the official motorcade. A number of detectives were noticed mingling with the crowd but there were no major incidents.

As the guests arrived for the luncheon and the cocktail party they were treated to loud jeering and booing. Miss Polly Gaster, one of the organizers of the anti-Portuguese campaign said last night: "I am very pleased with the way things have turned out, we have achieved our objective. The only people who will regard the demonstrations as an anti-climax are those who were hoping to see blood in the streets."

In spite of the lack of violence the police are maintaining some of the strictest security ever seen for the visit of an overseas statesman.

Amnesty International yesterday sent a cable to Dr Caetano requesting permission to visit the two priests reported to have been detained without trial over an alleged massacre of villagers in Mozambique 18 months ago.

Mr Sean MacBride, chairman of Amnesty's executive committee, asked to see the two priests, Father Martin Robles and Father Alfonso Leon "as a matter of urgency". The priests, reported to have been in Machava Prison, Mozambique, since trying to publicize the massacre, were adopted as "prisoners of conscience" by Amnesty last November.

Mr MacBride, the former Irish Minister of External Affairs, has twice requested meetings with the Portuguese authorities this year to discuss allegations about the ill-treatment of political prisoners in Portugal and her African colonies. So far he has received no replies.

An Amnesty spokesman said last night: "The reports, which still come in regularly to our London headquarters, say that the use of torture and appalling conditions are especially rife in Machava and other prisons in Portuguese-ruled Africa."

Mr Keith Raffan, national chairman of Pest, the Progressive Tory Pressure Group, which has strongly criticized the visit of Dr Caetano, issued the following statement about Dr Caetano's dinner last night at Buckingham Palace:

"It's absolutely disgraceful as well as farcical that Dr Caetano should have dined with the Queen at Buckingham Palace. No man has done more to aid and abet the breaking of sanctions against Rhodesia than the Portuguese dictator. He has collaborated and given his support to the rebel regime in Rhodesia which has committed treason against the Crown. Surely it is ridiculous that this man, who has aided and abetted this country's and our ruler's enemies, should be entertained by Her Majesty. It is nauseating and shameful that the Government should have permitted this insult and humiliation."