

CLASS STRUGGLE

Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain.

Incorporating

Volume 4. Numbers 24 & 25. Dec 11 1980 to Jan 7 1981.

NEW AGE
PAPER OF COMMUNIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

12^p DOUBLE ISSUE

Unemployment Forecasts

3 MILLION BY 1983!

Over three million unemployed. That is the forecast by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) in their latest crop of figures. But that is not all. Three million unemployed by 1983 is, if anything, an underestimate, based on the assumption that production in Britain will fall by 2½% this year. Falling production combined with high productivity - more output per worker - inevitably means a double reason why less workers are employed. But the NIESR figures are wrong. The Tory government and the Treasury expect production to fall by nearly twice as much as the NIESR predicts. And that means far more unemployed than three million.

WILL IT GET BETTER?

No, it won't. Even the NIESR says that by 1985 there will be nearly 4,000,000 out of work. There is no 'light at the end of the tunnel'. There is only more hardship, more poverty, and more struggle.

UNEMPLOYED UNDER ATTACK

More struggle is certainly needed. Not only are so many thrown on the scrap heap. They then have to face a barrage of slander from the press. You are 'dole scroungers' and 'lazy' we are told. And then to top it off, the Tory government has now cut unemployment benefit, social security and pensions for next year. What do they say? They say that there are so many unemployed because life on the dole is too easy! The solution? Attack the unemployed.

And when they are not attacking the unemployed, they attack those in work. After the giant demonstration against unemployment on November 29th. The Sunday Mirror made a big dramatic play of 'supporting' the unemployed. They even went so far as to have a big banner headline "Power to the people!" But why this apparent concern for the unemployed?

The Editorial made it crystal clear. The reason for unemployment, it said is 'greedy' workers. It is high wages that are to blame. That is their cry - simply a device to divide working-class resistance. But can they tell us how the unemployed will benefit if Ford workers, for example, accept a rise less than the rate of inflation. Where will the extra money go? Will it be in bigger profits, or will Henry Ford give it to the unemployed?

Some union leaders have said that the solution is to stop overtime. Yes, it is a method to force some

more jobs. But can they tell us how many how many workers will stop doing overtime - if their wages are being cut at the same time? As long as the union leaders refuse to lead a struggle to defend wages, their proclamations on overtime are nothing more than another way of dividing our class. And the majority of the leaders of the miners' union and the engineering workers' union have shown how little they are going to do. But there is a growing trend to fight back, shown in the large numbers of Leyland workers and miners who opposed the sell-out. And fight we must.

MASSIVE DEMO IN LIVERPOOL



Well over 100,000 workers took to the streets in Liverpool on November 29th in the biggest demonstration ever seen outside London. The crime of massive, and rising, unemployment was the cause, and the people showed their anger in no uncertain terms. The sea of protestors took over 4 hours to pass any given point. Sefton Park, the starting point, was packed solid. Trade union banners showed contingents from every part of Britain, and from every trade. The demonstration showed the strong unity of employed and unemployed against unemployment and the threat of redundancy. WHAT NOW? See Editorial on Page 2.

Editorial — AFTER DEMO — BUILD INDEPENDENT FIGHTING MOVEMENT

The massive march against unemployment in Liverpool at the end of November was a clear demonstration of the people's anger at the high and ever-increasing levels of unemployment in Britain. But what now? Our anger must lead to an organised fight-back at work and in the community on a day-to-day basis.

However, for this struggle to develop and advance it is essential to have a clear understanding of why there is a crisis and unemployment. It is when we don't know the real reasons that quack remedies can gain currency in our class, and lead to wrong and counter-productive demands and to defeat and disillusionment.

CAPITALIST CRISIS

It is part of the general nature of capitalism that its own built-in tendency is for the rate of profit to decline. In 1960 the rate of profit for British capital was 13p for each £1 of capital investment held. In 1965 it was 10p, 1970 - 7½p and now about 4p. This process develops as capitalists desperately compete with each other for markets. Their competition in the drive to make maximum profits leads each to strive to produce as much as possible for as little as possible - until the market is glutted; the goods can no longer be sold; companies crash, factories close down, and working people are thrown on the scrapheap along with old, unwanted machinery. So, alongside the general capitalist problem of the falling rate of profit, there are inevitable periodic crises. And this is what we are experiencing now. The car industry in Britain is presently stockpiling 500,000 cars and its problems are going to get worse yet. The closures, short-time working, redundancies and wage-cuts arise then because the working class has produced "too much". The result of the ability of industry to produce abundance is poverty and want and the whole-scale destruction of productive industry. This social crime does not arise because of "bad government" or "wrong policies"; nor because the boss is a bastard, though he may be. It arises because it is built into the anarchic system of capitalist production.

Past governments, Labour and Tory, have all claimed that with "their policies" they can solve these problems. Throughout the world other imperialist governments have made the same boast. All have failed. Their crisis really is an international one, as the Tories say.

The only fundamental solution to ~~capitalist~~ unemployment is to finish off this rotting system and establish working-class power running the economy on a planned and rational basis in the service of the people. The lunacy of having building workers on the dole, brick factories closed down, derelict areas and thousands in the housing queues can be ended. It can be ended by socialism. Massive increase in production can lead to better standards of living, instead of crises. New technology can lead to better conditions of work, instead of unemployment. But the only possible solution is a fundamental revolutionary one.

BUT WHAT NOW?

Right now we must reject any false claims by Labour or anyone else that they can solve the problems with sparkling new policies. We can fight back. We can and must resist every threat of redundancy, we must fight for jobs, and we must fight all cuts in social security and the dole. We can go on to fight for improvements. That fight will not solve the crisis, but it will force the bosses to carry more of the burden of the crisis. And in this resistance struggle we must consciously build up a mass movement that becomes ever more aware of the necessity of revolutionary change.

On the November 29th mass protest, the message from the Labour Party was "Maggie Out - Labour In". They had nothing to say about the real economic, social and political issues. They want to hijack the struggle into a Vote Labour bandwagon. When they do get in and unemployment continues to rise - as it did from ½ million to 1½ million during the last Labour government - we will not see them so keen to protest. We need an independent fighting mass movement now!

From our postbag

NEW TECHNOLOGY: From a "Class Struggle" study group. We had an interesting discussion centring round the recent article "Unemployment and the new technology". We were very pleased to see this subject discussed at length in CS. Several aspects of the problem were discussed: how the technology would be used differently under socialism, the role of the trade unions and what we can do within them to fight against redundancies, how political economy works - the link between unemployment and inflation, etc. We would like to see more articles on these and similar subjects and were pleased to read that CS is planning some. The study group likes long articles which contain a lot of information and give us something to get our teeth into.

We thought the articles on the H-Block situation were good and that led on to a discussion as to why Irish solidarity gets little support in this country, especially in our town, despite a large percentage of second and third generation Irish people.

Editors' note: "Class Struggle" study groups are held in several towns in Britain. Any reader who would like to come along and

attend one of these should ask his or her CS seller for details, or write to us.

NEW TECHNOLOGY AND THIRD WORLD: From a Birmingham reader I welcomed the article on micro-technology in the recent issue of CS, and I think the analysis should be extended to include the effects on the third world. The local companies in the third world countries cannot afford the investment necessary to develop their own microtechnology. If microtechnology does increase the competitiveness of companies in the Western capitalist countries they will be in a position to further undermine the attempts of the third world countries which are striving for economic independence.

PRINCELY DISDAIN: From a reader Visiting Delhi University recently, Prince Charles was met by a crowd of demonstrators wanting to hand him a letter complaining about virginity tests conducted on Indian women by immigration officials at Heathrow Airport. Prince Charles' reaction? 'Give me the bloody thing', he said. 'now just cool down'. And later, during his speech in a college

hall, he joked about it: 'There's always a demo of some sort for me, but then life is an endless source of variety'.

Some people could do without some of life's variety. It can't be so amusing for the women subjected to the virginity tests, but it seems Prince Charles can't be expected to understand their point of view.

FINANCING DEMOS: From a reader. Tory councillors in Liverpool are furious about the huge bill for policing the demonstration against unemployment which took place on 29th November. They want the Labour Party organisers to pay the bill instead of the ratepayers. I don't remember hearing a similar outcry when 5000 police gave protection to a few hundred National Front marchers in London the previous week. So ratepayers can carry on subsidising the National Front, but not the unemployed!

Why don't you write to Class Struggle. Your experience and views can be useful to others. It need not take long to write, Address: CS Editor, 203, Seven Sisters rd., London N.4.

GARDNERS - GAINS and LESSONS

(Contributed)

The 53-day occupation of Gardners diesel engine workers has ended. Workers have resumed production, having saved more than 340 jobs and having defended their right to unionise. They are now watching carefully to see whether the company honours the agreement which ended the strike.

The workforce had been prepared to accept about 300 voluntary redundancies in the form of 'early retirement', but refused to accept the 700 compulsory redundancies demanded by the management. In a panic the management reduced their demand to 590 sackings, but this was not accepted



so the sit-in-strike began.

The strike revealed much about the true nature of the bosses' system. With the works under occupation the company could not organise scab labour. But a 200 strong picket of management employees was assembled. This was one picket the police didn't want restricted to six! The DHSS also played their part, obstructing the payment of benefits due to the strikers. Even the AUEW bureaucracy used its red tape to hold up the strike pay of many workers.

SOLIDARITY

In contrast was the tremendous solidarity and support received from ordinary trade unionists up and down the country. A delegations committee was organised which sent workers to address rallies and meetings in mines, factories and shipyards. Everywhere they went they were received with tremendous enthusiasm. Generous collections were taken in workplaces on short-time working, thus only a step away from the dole queue themselves. The hardship fund stood at £40,000 when the strike ended and will pay out for the next month. This will help the members to get back on their feet and hopefully be able to give their children a Christmas. In appreciation of the tremendous support they have received from fellow workers, the Delegations Committee will continue to function and send out speakers. Instead of asking for money, they will be spreading the news of their success and encouraging others to follow their example.

The unions in Gardners have taken the position that it is not the role of the Trade Union movement to encourage or organise redundancies. This, they say, is a private matter between the individual and the employer. The severance payments are not good and there is considerable doubt whether this figure of 2075 will be reached. It remains the task of communists to argue that all job losses must be resisted, whether in the form of 'natural wastage', voluntary or compulsory redundancy or 'early retirement'. Many workers feel that after, say, 20 years of exploitation they are entitled to a 'lumper'. We must convince them that all jobs belong to the community and cannot be sold for money. Every such 'early retirement' condemns another school leaver to a life of frustration and misery on the dole.

Unemployed A WORKER'S NOTEBOOK

UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES show that the number of jobless rose by 70,000 in November. 600,000 people have lost their jobs in the last six months. A CBI survey of economic trends shows that the problem is not underproduction, as some bosses claim, but overproduction. Orders remain low and stocks of finished goods excessive, it says.

AN UNEMPLOYED MAN in York was recently fined £30 and ordered to pay back £29.53 benefit to the Department of Employment. What was his crime? Mr Phil Morrissey had been given a few free pints for helping out in a pub! Nine months unemployed, Mr Morrissey said, "It's crazy. If I mend a friend's car and he offers to buy me a pint afterwards, I suppose I'm breaking the law." The effect of such a decision is frightening. Presumably unemployed people are meant to sit and rot in return for their benefit. Nine months ago, a Liverpool tribunal ruled that a man was entitled to benefit although he helped a friend out at a garage in return for some help on his own car. Such an obviously sensible judgement would probably never have been reached if the DHSS had read this York case to the tribunal.

THE LEGAL RIGHT OF A WORKING MOTHER to return to her job after having a baby will be restricted under the new Employment Act. But even such rights as remain will mean very little if there is no one to look after her child. In 1977 it was estimated that there were only 27,472 places for children in local authority day nurseries, with a further 391,610 in private nurseries and 87,841 with registered child minders. In 1975 it was estimated that there were 90 workplace nurseries catering for 2,580 children. Government restrictions on local government spending plus the high level of unemployment allowing employers more freedom to pick and choose who they want to employ will only make matters worse. The trade union movement must be forced by its members to improve its record on maternity rights, which have in the past all-too-often been excluded from local bargaining agreements.

AS A PROTEST AT THE Government's economic policies on jobs, 15 unemployed recently invaded the YMCA building in Halifax and barricaded themselves in, shortly before it was due to open for the local Tories' annual bazaar. Unable to enter, the caretaker phoned the police who requested the fire brigade to assist them in making an entry. But the firemen were working to rule following the Government's refusal to honour their wage settlement, and obviously felt a lot more sympathy with the unemployed than with the Halifax Conservative Party and so refused to help. The police then had to smash windows to get in, but by the time they had entered, the unemployed had gone. There was no damage, other than by the police, and no arrests. That evening the Halifax Courier, usually short of news for its Saturday edition, splashed the story right across its front page.

BLACK YOUNGSTERS face discrimination in 5 out of every 10 clerical jobs for which they apply, a recent survey has shown. In a test in Nottingham, the Commission for Racial Equality monitored applications for 103 jobs by a white, a black and an Asian, each with equal qualifications. In all the 103 cases, the white man was offered an interview. In 48% of the cases the two national minority applicants failed to get interviews. Unemployment is a growing scourge that the whole of the working people face. But unemployment is running at double the rate for black and Asian people than for white people. It is essential to fight the oppression of national minorities at the same time as fighting unemployment, otherwise there is no hope of defeating the ruling class.

3,000 Police protect Nazi marchers

At least 3000 police protected a march by a few hundred followers of the fascist British Movement in London on Sunday November 23rd. The police thwarted attempts by several thousand counter-demonstrators to drive from the streets this vicious insult and threat to the people of various nationalities living in the area of the march.

Comrades of the London District of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain (RCLB) took part in the counter-demonstration, distributing hundreds of copies of a leaflet which exposed the motives of the state in deploying such a large force of its police to protect the fascists. The following remarks are quoted from this leaflet:

BRITAIN NOT IMMUNE FROM FASCIST TERROR

The continued growth of fascist activity in Britain is a direct product of collusion with the open fascist organisations by cynical politicians who provide them with police protection and with facilities to meet, organise and spread their racist poison. The sacrifices made by millions of working people during World War II to forcibly deny fascists the right to organise and to destroy the menace of fascism once and for all have been shamelessly betrayed by the state.

In the summer of 1978 fascist gangs launched a reign of terror in London's East End. This resulted in cold-blooded murders, stabbings and beatings, the smashing up of homes, shops and restaurants, etc. Birmingham, Manchester, Bradford and other areas with national minority communities tell the same story.

Whenever anti-racists and anti-fascists oppose the NF and BM the police turn out to protect these fascist scum. This is because there is a direct relationship between the state and the open fascist organisations. This is clearly shown by the massive protection provided the fascists by the police, courts and successive governments such as at Southall when 342 largely national minority anti-fascists were arrested and railroaded through the courts and when Blair Peach was murdered by the SPG. Leading fascist Webster claims considerable membership and support for the NF among the police and evidence exists proving connections between the armed fascist group Column 88 and the Army.

This relationship is most marked in northern Ireland where members of armed fascist groups such as the Ulster Volunteer Force operate freely in the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the Ulster Defence Regiment of the British Army. Experience in other countries confirms that this protective relationship is standard

practice where fascist groups carry out terror campaigns, including operating murder squads, which the state's forces do not wish to be seen undertaking.

MAIN DANGER OF FASCISM IS FROM RACIST STATE

The most far-sighted reactionaries see the day, and are actively strengthening the state machine in preparation for it, when racism no longer succeeds in splitting the fighting unity of the working class, when parliamentary methods no longer work in forcing the burden of the crisis onto the backs of working people and when control of the trade unions by law fails to restrict the workers' fightback. At this point they will attempt to bring in fascism.

As the British state imposed fascism in the past on colonial peoples in order to extract superprofits and to suppress their resistance so it will attempt to impose fascism at home in defence of the same economic interests that profit from attacks on the livelihood and standard of living of working people.

Some people argue that the threat of fascism is determined by the size and electoral support of the NF and that, therefore, the main blow must be struck against the open fascist organisations. While it is absolutely necessary to counter fascist propaganda and disrupt their public attempts to build a fascist social base we must not lose sight of the fact that the open fascist organisations are the political wing of the growing fascist tendency within the state.

In the struggle to stop the attacks, arson and murders by fascist terror squads the working class must

therefore keep the initiative in their own hands and not rely on the racist state to fight racism and fascism. Only by struggling to unite all who can be united with oppressed national minorities and building a broad multi-national mass movement against racism and fascism can working people defend their democratic rights, counteract increased state repression and forestall the threat of fascism.



Over 100 Filipino workers, members of three of Britain's largest unions - TGWU, GMWU and NUPE, marched through London on 23rd November to protest at racist immigration laws and the threat to deport women workers because they have children. The women, who were brought as cheap labour for hospitals, hotels and private homes, were never told that they had to declare whether or not they had children. Over 70 have already been deported. The march was organised by the Migrants Action Group and organisations of the Filipino community.

COMRADE KATARIA MOURNED

750 men and women attended the funeral of Comrade Arjan Das Kataria in West Bromwich on 28th November. This was a fine tribute to his lifetime of struggle for the working class and oppressed people, and to his immense popularity among all sections of the people.

Comrade Kataria died at the end of the militant demonstration in Rochdale on November 15th, against racist immigration laws and for the campaign to bring Anwar Ditta's children home.

At the funeral his coffin was draped with the banners of the Indian Workers' Association (GB) of which he was an active member and the Indian Republican Group (GB) of which he was National Chairman. Comrade Avtar Joulh quoted Mao Zedong's famous words that, while the death of a react-

ionary is lighter than a feather, the death of a fighter for the people is "heavier than Mount Tai".

Anwar Ditta paid a moving tribute to Comrade Kataria. It is a proof of the unity between the struggling people of different nationalities that Comrade Kataria from India should have given his life in a demonstration to re-unite the family of Anwar, originally from Pakistan. She said that she and her children would always remember Comrade Kataria and all he had done for them.

On Sunday, November 30th, the IWA(GB) held a memorial meeting for Comrade Kataria in Handsworth. Comrade Teja Sahota, President of IWA(GB), and representatives of the Indian Republican Group and the Bharatiya Dalit Mukti (Alliance of the Oppressed of India) spoke.

Nationality Law - Aimed to swell Refugee Camps (Contributed.)

The Nationality Law proposals in the government's White Paper aim to deprive black and Asian people of basic rights of citizenship. They enshrine the racism of the Immigration Laws in the Law of Nationality itself. They provide a basis for a second class citizenship within Britain. They callously abandon clear responsibilities to black and Asian people in countries which British imperialism has oppressed and exploited for centuries. This article deals with one particularly scandalous attack in the proposals - on the people of Hong Kong.

STATELESSNESS FOR PEOPLE OF HONG KONG

"Should Hong Kong cease to be a British colony at any time and for any reason, those who are unhappy with the new arrangement and leave can expect no special treatment from the UK government and must take their place in the queues and camps of the United Nations High Commissioner for refugees like millions of other." This is the conclusion drawn from the new nationality law proposals in a recent pamphlet ("Ducking responsibility" by Walter Easey, Hong Kong Research Project Pamphlet No.4).

The British government whines about the deprivation of human rights in other countries, while itself setting about a wholesale plan to deprive people owing allegiance only to it of the right to live anywhere. The racist nationality law will produce a situation of statelessness, of international untouchability, for many of the 5 million citizens of the UK and colonies, Britain's own nationals.

DEPRIVATION OF CITIZENSHIP

Existing immigration laws prevent such citizens from entering Britain, unless they are 'patrials' ('patrials' are defined as those whose parent was born in the UK, and thus are, with very few exceptions, whites only). The nationality law will take away their citizenship, making them part of a new category, 'Citizens of British Dependent Territories'. Such citizenship gives them no rights at all. Why does the British state think this is necessary at this time?

In its decline, British imperialism has been forced to withdraw from nearly all the colonies it boasted up until the Second World War. Of the handful of colonies left, Hong Kong is different in three ways:

* **Firstly**, Hong Kong is part of China, and British 'ownership' of it is based on illegal treaties with the old, pre-liberation, Government of China. The People's Republic of China has consistently affirmed that it will reclaim this territory when it considers that the time is right.

Treaty of Nanking, 1842.	Hong Kong ceded to Britain.
Convention of Peking, 1860.	Kowloon Island ceded to Britain.
Document for the Extension of Hong Kong, 1898.	'New Territories' leased to Britain for 99 years.

* **Secondly**, because of the massive exploitation of the people of Hong Kong, the British treasury makes an enormous profit out of Hong Kong.

* **Thirdly**, it has a population of at least 5 millions, whereas all other remaining colonies and associated states put together have a population of less than 400,000.

Estimated population of colonies:

Belize	150,000
Bermuda	57,000
British Antarctic Territory	----
British Indian Ocean Territory	----
British Virgin Islands	10,500
Cayman Islands	10,500
Falkland Islands	2,000
Gibraltar	27,000
Hong Kong	5,000,000
(of whom 2,600,000 are citizens of the UK and Cols.)	
Montserrat	11,500
Pitcairn Islands	61
St Helena	5,150
Turks and Caicos Islands	7,000
Associated states	
Antigua	72,000
St Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla	52,000

ILLEGAL AND UNJUST TREATIES

In 1842 and 1860, British imperialism, having defeated China in the two Opium Wars (to force China to allow Britain to sell opium there), forced the Chinese government to cede Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula. By 1898, Britain wanted more land to service the colony, and forced the Chinese government to grant a lease for 99 years on the part of the mainland next to Hong Kong known now as the New Territories. All of these treaties are illegal, unrecognised by the People's Republic of China (PRC) and by the International court of Justice.

Even if the PRC is prepared to wait until 1997, when the 'lease' on the New Territories expires, to reclaim them, British control over the whole of Hong Kong will be at an end. Hong Kong and Kowloon cannot survive without the New Territories. And long before that, the 'get rich quick' economy of Hong Kong will be destroyed, because people will be cautious about investing in a territory where such investment cannot be legally guaranteed beyond a few years. Far from be-

ing an asset to British imperialism, Hong Kong will become a financial drain. And there is no way the British government will part with a penny for Hong Kong for which they will receive no return.

It is possible that Britain will not wait till 1997 to hand back Hong Kong. And it is equally possible that the PRC will be ready to reclaim it sooner. Mr Easey goes as far as to argue in his pamphlet that the British government has already secretly set a date for the resumption of Hong Kong by China.

What will be the result for the people of Hong Kong, and particularly the 2½ million UK and colonies citizens? Undoubtedly the majority will be happy to become Chinese citizens. But for many the transition from capitalist to socialist society will be difficult if not impossible, and they will seek to leave. The PRC cannot be expected to take responsibility for people who are really the responsibility of the British state, and who are reluctant to become Chinese citizens.

BRITISH-PASSPORT-WAVING BOAT PEOPLE

This is where the Nationality Law proposals come in. They make it clear that the British state will not take any responsibility for its citizens in Hong Kong, even if they become refugees and have nowhere else to go. As Martin Palmer, Co-Editor of the Christian Statesman, puts it, we may "witness the terrible spectre of British-passport-waving boat people".

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that a major reason for bringing in the proposed nationality law at this time is precisely to deny responsibility for refugees from Hong Kong. After all, Whitlaw talked of "floods of people from Asia" at the time when the Labour Government's Green Paper (the basis of the Tories' White Paper) was being discussed.

DEFEAT THE NATIONALITY LAW

It is certain that this effect on Hong Kong people is another monstrous racist aspect of the current nationality law proposals. After fleeing third world countries and peoples for centuries, British imperialism turns round and tells them 'we've got all we can out of you. We have no obligations towards you. Sod off.'

National minorities in Britain are organising to defeat the nationality law. Progressive white people are joining them. The Chinese people in Britain are coming forward into the struggle. We welcome them joining this crucial battle against state racism and for democratic rights.

SOVIET UNION GET OUT OF AFGHANISTAN

History of Aggression

The following is the full text of the speech of Mr Wali Moustamandi, representative of the Federation of Afghanistan Students Abroad and the Afghanistan Committee-Belgium that was read out at public meetings in London and Birmingham on 28 and 30 November. Subheads are from the original text.

Dear Friends,

Up to December 1979, as far as direct intervention was concerned, the Soviet Union limited itself to its privileged area of influence in Eastern Europe.

Sinn Fein supports Afghanistan

The following solidarity message was read out at the London meeting on Afghanistan:

Sinn Fein, the Republican Movement, expresses solidarity with the Afghan people in their heroic struggle against Russian imperialism. As a country fighting imperialism for the last 700 years, a fight which continues today and will continue until victory, we appreciate your struggle and support it. It doesn't matter under what flag imperialism goes, for imperialism under any form cannot be tolerated and must be fought. The Afghan people by their courage and determination, their refusal to bend the knee to the imperialists are a great inspiration to liberation movements everywhere.

Nora Connolly on Afghanistan

During her recent visit to Britain, Dr Nora Connolly O'Brien, daughter of the great Irish patriot and revolutionary James Connolly, made the following remarks on the situation in Afghanistan and agreed that they could be used as a message of support to the meetings on Afghanistan. They were read out by Asian comrades in London and Birmingham.

Britain has invaded Ireland and is holding it apart from being a united country. And that is what the Russians are doing to Afghanistan. It is the same position. We must support Afghanistan because it is a small country being invaded by an imperialist.

They have been left to fight with poor weapons, and not all the big weapons the Russians have. But they have blown up many of the Russians' tanks. They have to use the rocky country for their way of fighting. This is very much like our flying columns when we beat the Black and Tans. They must feel, "If the IRA can do it, I can do it."

Perhaps Thatcher has made a protest, but Britain has been 'friendly enemies' with the Russians - you could put it like that. Britain hasn't given any help to Afghanistan. I feel very bitter about it. Of course their troubles are great in Britain, but they still send ammunition and guns to South Africa to put the blacks in Apartheid. But the Afghans have been left to fight with poor weapons.

I suspect the reason why Britain does not give help is that the people of Afghanistan held their independence for so long, and the British, when they had India, tried to get Afghanistan joined on. But time and time again the British were beaten back, and they had to give it up.

The Russians have forgotten what socialism meant. My father said of socialism that, "while it is true that the problems and trials of people the world over are the same, it is equally true that each and every country must set it up in the way most suitable for their own people."

The Russians are looking after themselves. Afghanistan is a very important point for their imperial jumps. It leads them on to Iran, the Middle East, the Mediterranean and on to North Africa. That is what they are after.

The people of Afghanistan have all the sympathy of Ireland. I hope the Afghan speaker can come to Ireland. It would be grand for him to meet a sympathetic country when other countries have not fought against the imperial work of the Russians.

Indeed it had, these last years, been particularly active, essentially in Africa and Asia, through Cuban and Vietnamese intermediaries.

Why then this change of attitude? Why disturb a balance of forces which seemed definitively established since the end of the second world war?

Soviet imperialism, having taken note of the fact that the USA and Europe have, during the last few years, been living through a profound economic and political crisis, has come to the conclusion that this is the most favourable moment to push forward its pawns in the direction of the warm-water seas of the Indian Ocean, in pursuit of world domination. Now Afghanistan, for the USSR, is a natural route to these seas. But, to arrive at the Indian Ocean it is also necessary to cross southern Pakistan, the province of Baluchistan. For years Baluchistan has been shaken by autonomist tendencies, openly encouraged by the Daud government, and supported financially by Soviet imperialism.

Not much is needed for Pakistan to explode into civil war. It would then be easy for the Babrak Karmal regime and its Soviet ally, on the pretext of safeguarding their security, to establish their presence on the sea of Oman; which would enable them to control the lines of transport for petroleum and raw materials.

To arrive at the Indian Ocean, that is, to impose its world hegemony, Soviet imperialism has intervened in Afghanistan through several steps.

FIRST INDIRECT PHASE

In July 1973, by way of a coup d'etat, Daud, cousin of the king, overthrew the monarchy and proclaimed the republic. Daud built around himself a council of the revolution composed of some officers, most of whom were members of the pro-Soviet communist parties, Parcham and Khalq.

From 1974, the Soviet Union proposed that Afghanistan enter its Asian security pact. Since Afghanistan is a member of the non-aligned countries, Daud rejected this proposal. In 1975 the Soviet Union again proposed to the Daud government the project of modernising six military airports in the north of Afghanistan. Daud again rejected this proposition under the excuse that Afghanistan is a poor country which thus cannot invest so much money in the military field.

The Soviet Union was thus unable to realise the schemes which it hoped to have accepted by its ally, Daud.

It thus goes and seeks out its natural allies, the Parcham and Khalq parties. First it proposes the union of these two parties, which would be carried out in the presence of the Soviet ambassador.

SECOND PHASE

On April 27, 1978, by a military coup d'etat in which the Soviet air force played an active part, the government of Daud was overthrown. More than ten thousand people were killed. Khalq and Parcham take power, Taraki becomes president of the republic, Babrak Karmal vice-president, Amin foreign minister.

Faced with this puppet regime, the question was to see whether the Afghan people would accept or reject it. This is exactly what happened when the English colonialists placed on the throne of Kabul their vassal king Shah Sodja.

AFGHANISTAN

When the people took up arms against the Taraki regime, Soviet imperialism and its Parcham and Khalq hangers-on found no better argument than to say that this was a revolt of feudalists against the democratic and popular reforms.

It is incredible to think that for 25 years the Soviets were present in Afghanistan in all fields: military, industrial, agricultural: their economic and technical advisers never said that with the existing feudal structure the industrialisation of Afghanistan was a failure. Which proves that Soviet imperialism had been preparing its invasion for 25 years.

For the fact is, which Afghan feudalist has, in the space of 2½ years, killed more than 1½ million Afghans?

Which Afghan feudalist has hounded 2 million people from their lands and their native regions?

Which feudalist has sacrificed two of his faithful vassals in the space of 19 months?

For the Afghan people there is no other feudalist but Soviet imperialism!

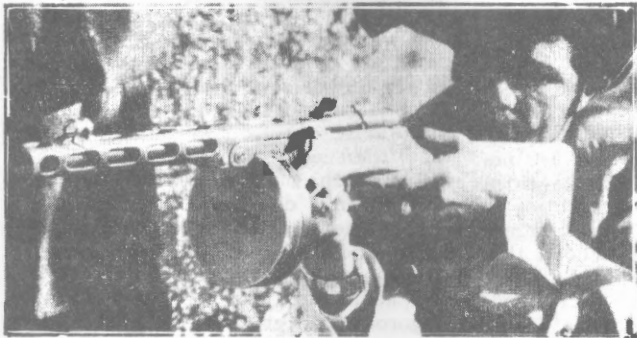
Faced with the general rising of the Afghan people in order to avoid losing what it had gained hitherto; the Soviet Union went through several alternatives: Parcham expelled from power, Taraki assassinated by Amin. Despite this ring of the changes, the Afghan people were not fooled. From April 27, 1978 up to the arrival of the Soviet troops there were 36 popular uprisings, not counting army mutinies. 24 out of 28 provinces of Afghanistan were liberated.

THIRD PHASE

Direct invasion of Afghanistan by Soviet imperialism. On 27th December 1979 the Soviet Union intervenes directly in Afghanistan using its own troops. Amin and his 3000 guards are crushed.

Babrak Karmal had, at the time of Taraki and Amin, asked for political asylum in Czechoslovakia; from there, the Russians brought him in to become president of the republic.

Babrak Karmal, in his first declaration, accused his predecessor Amin of being a criminal and an



agent of US imperialism, responsible for the murder of 1½ million Afghans.

It is true that Amin massacred 1½ million Afghans, but with the support of 15,000 Soviet advisers. Now Amin is accused by the Babrak Karmal regime and its Soviet ally of being a CIA agent. It is purely and simply unbelievable that a CIA agent should have been supported by the Soviet army.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

By this intervention, the Soviet Union has shown in what contempt it holds international legal acts,

MEETINGS SUPPORT AFGHANISTAN

Public meetings were held in London and Birmingham on 28th and 30th November to support the struggle of the people of Afghanistan. The London meeting was organised by the Revolutionary Communist League and the Bangladesh Workers' Association. The Birmingham meeting was organised by the Kashmiri Workers' Association. An invited speaker from Afghanistan was unable to be present owing to obstructions by the British government in the granting of a visa. However, his speech, which had been sent in advance for translation was read out to the meetings (see full text on this page).

LONDON MEETING

At the London meeting, attended by about 60 people, the speaker from the RCLB said that all countries and peoples in the world today faced the common task of opposing hegemonism and safeguarding world peace. Standing in the frontline are the peoples of Kampuchea, Afghanistan and Eritrea.

"The Soviet invasion serves not only to prop up the puppet regime and oppress the people of Afghanistan, not only to plunder the natural gas of Afghanistan, but forms part of its relentless drive towards access to the Middle East region and the vital sea lanes and warm water ports in that region. The invasion therefore represents a further attempt of the Soviet Union to outflank the United States and Western Europe which is a crucial part of their strategy of marching towards world domination."

The speaker from the Bangladesh Workers' Association attacked those on the 'left' who claimed that the Russians were bringing socialism to Afghanistan. 250 years ago British imperialism said that it was bringing democracy to India. Today, the peoples of India and Bangladesh still have to fight to achieve it. "No people can emancipate another people," said the BWA comrade.

The New Era Singers performed anti-imperialist songs in support of the peoples of Kampuchea, Afghanistan and Ireland.

BIRMINGHAM MEETING

100 people attended the meeting called by the Kashmiri Workers Association (UK) on Sunday November 30th in Birmingham. It began with the reading of a revolutionary poem written by the late General Secretary of the Indian Workers' Association (GB), Comrade Jagmohan Joshi. The National Chairman of the KWA, Comrade Mohammed Younus, pointed out that the KWA stood against both superpowers, for the national liberation struggle of the people of Afghanistan against Soviet social-imperialism, and for the right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination.

Speakers from the IWA and BWA showed how Soviet imperialism threatened their countries and peoples and how the invasion fitted into the Soviets' South Asian strategy. The speakers stressed that all peoples in South Asia as well as British workers and national minorities must oppose Russian expansion which the IWA comrade compared to the expansion of Hitler's Germany.

A speaker from the over 400 Pushtoon Organisation stated that his organisation stood firmly with the struggle of the Afghan people. He said he understood that communism stood for the freedom of the people everywhere, and by destroying the freedom of the people of Afghanistan, Russia had proved it is not a communist country but an imperialist one.

An Afghan refugee, once a government official in Afghanistan, made a plea for the people of his country. He told of a schoolgirl demonstrator who was shot down by a Russian soldier in Kabul, and how another girl dipped her finger in the blood of her fallen comrade and wrote, "Long live freedom" on the wall.

An RCLB speaker said the ordinary members of left organisations must oppose their leaders' wavering, which serves Russian imperialism, and support the struggle of the Afghan people. By contrast, the revolutionary national liberation forces in Ireland, fighting British imperialism, did not waver. As the Sinn Fein President stated at their Ard Fheis in February, "Sinn Fein condemns with all the strength and sincerity at its disposal this latest violation of the national sovereignty of a small nation by a superpower."

acts which the USSR itself contributed to having adopted.

The Soviet intervention violated the Helsinki agreement. Certain clauses of the final Act of the Conference on European Security and Cooperation signed on 1st August 1975 at the initiative of the USSR, apply not only to participating states but to all states.

✦ Con't on Page 8 ✦

Afghanistan - History

Con't from page 7

Violations of the principles of non-alignment

Afghanistan is one of the 25 member states of the Bandung Conference held April 18-24 1955. In this capacity it thus subscribes, from the outset, to the ten principles of peaceful co-existence.

Violations of the United Nations Charter: Article 1 and Article 2.

This Soviet intervention has also called forth severe reprisals from several international organisations

The General Assembly of the United Nations, meeting in an extraordinary emergency session on the situation in Afghanistan, voted on January 14, 1980 by 104 votes "the immediate, unconditional and total withdrawal of all foreign troops from Afghanistan."

The reprisal of the European Community

On January 15 of this year the foreign ministers of the nine member states of the Community published a declaration concerning the intervention. They declared that this intervention constitutes in their opinion a flagrant interference in a non-aligned country of the Islamic world. Thus, "following the measures decided by the USA regarding the delivery of agricultural produce to the USSR, the Community has set forth the principle that Community exports must not substitute themselves for US exports in the Soviet market."

But it is very sad to note that the European Community has turned its back on its own decisions.

In the same way, other international organisations have condemned this intervention. But the governments of the so-called free countries content themselves with condemnation in words. The Soviet Union has very well understood the weakness of world politics. The most striking proof is that it has internationalised its intervention. At present, alongside the Soviet Union in Afghanistan there are Czech soldiers, soldiers from East Germany, Vietnamese and Cuban advisers...

Dear friends, if you are upholders of human rights, of liberty and world peace, you must not stop short at condemnation in words. If you do not wish to have moral complicity in genocide; in a policy which not only threatens detente but also directly threatens world peace, I call on you to support the Afghan people in its just and lawful struggle against the Soviet aggressor. Otherwise, Afghanistan today will be Pakistan and Iran tomorrow and Europe the day after.

Page 8

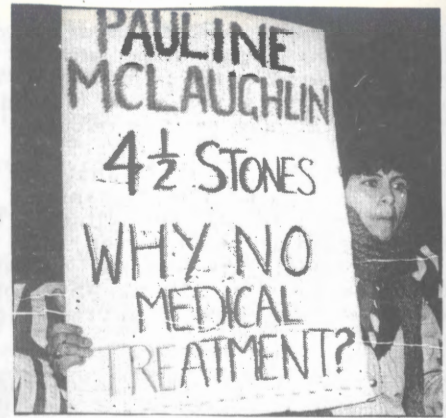
WOMEN JOIN HUNGER STRIKE

On Monday December 1st three patriotic women political prisoners in Armagh Jail - Mairead Farrell, 23, Mairead Nugent, 21, and Mary Doyle, 24, - joined their seven comrades in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh Concentration Camp, who had already gone without food for 36 days, on hunger strike as part of their own campaign to be recognised as political prisoners and prisoners of war by British imperialism. In a statement the three declared, "We are prepared to fast to death if necessary..."

All the hunger strikers are going through terrible agony in their struggle to defeat the criminalisation strategy of British imperialism, all have suffered losses of weight, and they have now been moved to the prison hospital. Recently, 19-year-old political prisoner Peter Kavanagh completed his sentence, having been 'on the blanket' since the age of 16. He was released from H-3 Block of Long Kesh where the seven hunger strikers were being held and he reported that, despite their terrible sufferings, "They are very determined, and their morale is fantastic."

PAULINE McLAUGHLIN

The most dangerously ill political prisoner in Ireland is one not on the hunger strike, 23-year-old Pauline McLaughlin, who despite being unable to read or write was convicted solely on the basis of a signed confession in October 1976. When convicted she weighed 9½ stone. Today she weighs 4½ stone and is believed not to have long to live. She is unable to keep food down and is so thin that she cannot be fed intravenously because the needle hits the bone... she has suffered two heart attacks... her hair is grey... all her teeth have fallen out - yet she has been subjected to the same brutality as the other prisoners... has not received proper medical care... and her illness has not even been diagnosed! All this is due in no small measure to the cruel tactics of the prison doctor, Dr Cole a disgrace to the medical profession and a vicious sadist whom the prisoners call Dr Mingle, after the Nazi doctor who specialised in carrying out 'scientific' experiments on political prisoners.



SOLIDARITY GROWS

Throughout both parts of Ireland thousands of people are coming forward to support the just demands of the hunger strikers. Despite pressure from their respective leaderships men and women from all the Irish political parties, together with local councillors, are taking a just stand. In an important statement a number of the main surviving veterans of the War of Independence in the 1920s have declared their support for the hunger strikers, showing the historical continuity of the revolutionary republican struggle.

On Saturday November 22nd, Dublin city centre came to a standstill as around 40,000 people from across the country demonstrated in support of the incarcerated patriots. Amongst the speakers was former blanketman, Liam Carlin. Liam had recently been deported from the United States where he had gone to explain to American public opinion, Irish Americans in particular, the situation in the H-Blocks and Armagh. Liam was held in an American prison for five days before being deported, not to Ireland but to ... England! Liam was then arrested by armed Special Branch men at Heathrow. Before being deported he was held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and frequently interrogated, for a week. Whilst he was held in Rochester Row police station vigorous pickets were held in his support.



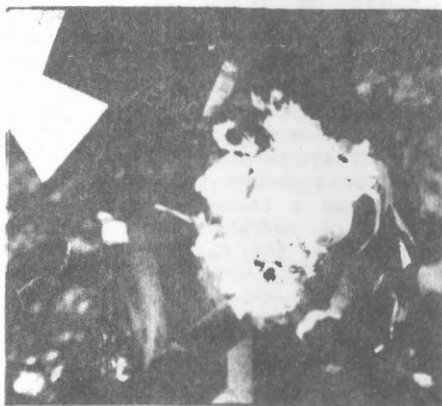
THE SEVEN LONG KESH HUNGER STRIKERS

The next major protests will be a march to the British Embassy in Dublin on December 6th and a major march in London on December 7th.

Solidarity more vital than ever

Further support - although by no means enough - is being won in Britain. The executive of Coventry Trades Council and a number of trade union bodies in Birmingham have declared their support for the prisoners' demands. At their recent annual conference the National Union of Students in Wales passed a motion of support.

130 Iranian and Turkish students held a meeting at Sussex University on 20th November to support the hunger strikers and resolved to work with the local Troops Out Movement. Also declaring his support has been veteran Scottish communist, Harry MacShane.



Union Jack burnt in Dublin

In the last week of November two exiled East European socialists - Rudolf Bahro from East Germany and Zhores Medvedev from the Soviet Union issued a statement in London expressing strong support for the Irish political prisoners.

The H-Block prisoners are receiving more and more extensive international support. Amongst the more important declarations have been those from the Czech civil rights group, Charter 77, ZANU in Zimbabwe, and from exiled Polish socialist Edmund Balucka.

The period leading up to Christmas is the most critical and the prospect of one or more prisoners dying an agonising death on hunger strike grows daily. Thatcher has said that even if men die there will be no concessions. She must be made to eat her words - and preferably choke on them!

James Daly remembered

The sixtieth anniversary of the death of James Daly was marked by the local branch of Sinn Fein at a wreath-laying ceremony at Tyrrellspass on 2nd November. Daly was executed by firing squad on November 2nd, 1920 at Dagshai prison in India for his part in the Connaught Rangers mutiny. The mutiny, embraced hundreds of Irish soldiers stationed in India, who were protesting against British Black and Tan atrocities in Ireland at the time. These Irishmen refused to do the dirty work of suppressing the Indian people on behalf of British imperialism. Daly's body was brought home from India in 1970.

The Scottish Marxist, John

McLean, described this refusal of Irish soldiers in England's army to fire on rebellious Indians as "the greatest deed in British history".

Today, Indian workers in Britain are playing an active part in solidarity work for the Irish patriot hunger strikers, building on the longstanding and deeply rooted solidarity between the Irish people and the other oppressed nations and peoples of the world. The Indian Workers' Association is translating H-Block material into a number of Indian languages for distribution in the community and in Birmingham the local IWA branch is playing an active part in the local hunger strike action group.

Welsh socialists oppose ban

Every year, Provisional Sinn Fein (Britain) organises a march in January or February to commemorate the 14 innocent people murdered in Derry by British paratroopers on January 30th 1972, 'Bloody Sunday'. In 1981 the march will be held in Cardiff. Local Tory councillors are organising a petition to try and have the march banned. A similar demagogic campaign was waged earlier this year in Birmingham - the object being to whip up hysteria and provoke small bands of fascist thugs to cause trouble.

The Cardiff Welsh Socialist Republican Club is circulating a leaflet, printed in English and Welsh, calling on people to oppose the threatened ban and demanding the right of free speech on Ireland. The leaflet concludes by asking, "Why should working

class Welsh boys be sent to kill - and be killed - in another people's country."

* * * * *

The Students Union at Swansea University has made an official complaint about an armed police raid in the middle of the night of Friday 28th November on a students' hall of residence. About 20 members of the Special Branch and the Anti-Terrorist Squad, armed with handguns and rifles, forced their way in by breaking down doors and smashing windows. 18 students from Britain, Italy and the Middle East were forced from their beds at gunpoint and made to lie on the floor or stand in the freezing cold whilst their rooms were ransacked. One Palestinian student was questioned for three hours. There were no arrests.

London Troops Out meeting

Meetings have been held throughout the country during recent days to express solidarity with the hunger strikers and demand, Troops Out Now!

At one meeting of the Troops Out Movement in East London on Friday December 5th, the mother of Mairead Nugent, one of the hunger strikers at Armagh Women's Jail, made a moving appeal for support for the prisoners' demands. Expressing great admiration for her daughter, she said, "My daughter has thought hard about things. Our generation sat back and enjoyed themselves a bit, but young people these days have seen what has to be done. I think some of the hunger strikers in H-Block have only a week to live, so the main thing tonight is the men. But my

daughter is also prepared to die. I support my daughter."

Ann Rossiter of Armagh Coordinating Committee put the case for urgent solidarity action. Even those who could not stomach the political status issue could come out in support of Pauline McLaughlin, who now weighs only 4½ stone and should clearly be released on humanitarian grounds. Surely there could be few people who couldn't be reached by such an appeal!

Ann Rossiter stressed that, just as Ireland faces the task of achieving national liberation as a precondition for socialist advance, so also the working class of Britain could not take any real step towards socialism so long as they allowed their ruling class to rule Ireland or any other colony.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES



CHINA: The trial is taking place in Beijing of the ten main surviving members of two counter-revolutionary cliques - those organised by Lin Biao and Jiang Qing. Their trial, according to legal procedures with the full right to defend themselves, stands in stark contrast to their own fascist methods of beatings, torture and executions without trial. Their indictment lists four main charges: frame-up and persecution of Party and State leaders and plotting to overthrow the political power of the dictatorship of the proletariat; persecution and suppression of large numbers of cadres and masses; plotting to assassinate Chairman Mao Zedong and engineer and armed counter-revolutionary coup d'etat; and plotting armed rebellion in Shanghai. Amongst the Party and state leaders the defendants are alleged to have framed or attempted to frame are Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi. So far the trial has revealed a wealth of detail on the plot to murder Chairman Mao in 1971 and the role played by Zhou Enlai in thwarting this. The court has also heard how, in 1974, the Gang of Four had laid false charges against Zhou and attempted to prevent Chairman Mao from nominating Comrade Deng Xiaoping to the post of First Vice Premier. One of the Gang, Wang Hongwen, has testified that Jiang Qing sent him to see Chairman Mao, without informing other leading comrades, in order that he could lay false charges against Zhou and Deng as well as Comrades Ye Jianying and Li Xiannian. The gang correctly saw that the move by Chairman Mao to make Deng First Vice Premier would constitute a serious blow to their attempts to seize power. Chairman Mao refused to listen to Wang's suggestions and told him not to gang up with Jiang Qing but to talk more with Zhou Enlai and Ye Jianying - advice ignored by Wang. The trial is continuing.

SOUTH AFRICA: The Financial Times newspaper has recently revealed evidence of extensive collusion between the Soviet Union and South Africa in the marketing of gold, diamonds, platinum and other precious metals. Recently, Moscow played host to Gordon Waddell, a former son-in-law of Harry Oppenheimer, the boss of the Anglo-American corporation (producers of 27% of the world's gold from outside the Soviet bloc) and De Beers Consolidated Mines (who dominate world diamond production). Waddell is a member of the four man Anglo-American operating committee which supervises even small decisions made by the Group and is shortly to be made chairman of Johannesburg Consolidated Investment, 41% owned by Anglo-American and the major shareholder in the world's largest platinum mine. For many years Soviet rough gem diamonds have been sold to a small London company where they are then automatically bought by De Beers Central Selling organisation for world marketing. There is also evidence that the Soviets and South Africans collude on the Antwerp Market as regards diamond pricing and there is a belief in business circles that the Soviet Union and South Africa are planning an informal cartel on platinum pricing. (They are the world's two top platinum producers.) Waddell's Moscow visit is leading to rumours in business circles that the two countries are hatching a covert deal on pricing and marketing of a wide range of precious minerals on the world market.

SOVIET UNION: A Soviet miner, Vladimir Klebanov, founder of the Association of Free Trade Unions of Workers, is being forcibly given injections of powerful drugs that have seriously damaged his health. Klebanov has spent the last two and a half years imprisoned in the Dnepropetrovsk Special Psychiatric Hospital and Amnesty International has information that he is being given drugs meant for paranoids and schizophrenics. This has led to a swollen face, dis-

torted speech and difficulties in walking. He is kept isolated 23 hours a day. Klebanov helped to found the Free Trade Union early in 1978 and appealed to the International Labour Organisation for recognition. A number of Western trade unions gave their support but support has been refused by the leaders of the British National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) who have no wish to upset their cosy relationship with their fellow bureaucrats in the Soviet empire. The NUM have accepted and propagated a statement made to Joe Gormley by the President of the Soviet State miners 'trade union', Efremenko, that Klebanov was a drunk, a womaniser and a Jew with rich relatives in Israel - which is supposed to 'prove' the Soviet contention that he is mad. British workers who fight for class struggle trade unions under the next Labour government will know what to expect from the 'left wing' trade union leaders!

BANGLADESH: In a press statement, the Bangladesh Workers' Association (London) has denounced the Khulna jail massacre (see "Class Struggle" volume 4, no. 23) and demanded severe punishment for those responsible as well as reform of the jail system. The statement says that, "Jail killing is one of the manifestations of the oppressive character of the ruling class. This cannot be judged in isolation from the economic, political and social injustice done to the vast masses of the people in the country... 80% of the inmates who come to prison for minor crimes, would under a just social system never go there. The irony of the fact is that the majority of those who commit real crimes come from the rural and urban upper classes and can easily get away with them."

EL SALVADOR: The revolutionary war being waged by the people of El Salvador to overthrow the fascist regime which is propped up by U.S. imperialism, including by U.S. military advisers, is intensifying. In a vain attempt to defeat the popular insurrection the regime is resorting to more and more brutal repression including saturation bombing of villages considered 'rebellious'. Six leaders of the Revolutionary Democratic Front were abducted, tortured and murdered on November 27 by fascists linked to the government. Those killed included the Front's Secretary General as well as a leader of the Popular Liberation Movement and the Secretary General of the People's Revolutionary Bloc. The funeral of the six martyrs was held in San Salvador cathedral on December 3 with a large crowd braving repression to mourn their leaders.

The new leadership of the Revolutionary Democratic Front issued a Statement saying that the murderers "will be punished without fail". The revolutionary government in Nicaragua and a number of other Latin American governments condemned the murders.

In a recent interview, Ruben Zamora Secretary of the External Commission of the Front said, "we see the war process as a long one, with various stages. In this sense, the revolutionary war already began quite some time ago. What must be pointed out now is that we have entered a new stage in the war process, the stage of generalised harassment of the regular forces.

"We might say that the objective of this is to tie down the enemy, to immobilise the regular army and the security forces by means of the systematic harassment that the people's army is carrying out."

SYRIA: The Syrian regime has been engaged in provocations against its neighbour, Jordan. Recently it amassed upwards of 30,000 troops on the border between the two countries and threatened to cross the border unless Jordan agreed to certain demands which were purely the internal affair of the Jordanian government and people. The Palestine Liberation Organisation and a number of Arab governments have called on the two countries to preserve peace saying that all Arab guns should be turned on Zionism and imperialism. When the Syrian troops were massing, the Soviet First Vice Premier arrived to finalise the Soviet-Syrian Friendship and Co-operation Treaty. Familiar?

SOCIALIST FEMINIST CONFERENCE

NOTES OF A DELEGATE

Editor's Note

We are pleased to publish the following contribution from a delegate to the recent important Socialist Feminist Conference on the theme of Women's Oppression and Imperialism. We have omitted the majority of the comrade's remarks on Ireland as this aspect of the Conference has already been extensively covered in 'Class Struggle', volume 4 number 22.

Over a thousand women met to discuss the theme of women's oppression and imperialism and its implications for their activity, on the weekend of 25/26 October. The choice of the theme was itself a step forward: it arose from the impact on the women's movement of the struggle in Ireland against British imperialism, represented by "Women against Imperialism" and "Women and Ireland" groups; from the realisation of the women's movement's irrelevance to national minority women here and national liberation movements abroad; and also from a reassessment of the value of reformist campaigns, the shortcomings of which are obvious in times of crisis.

SOME POINTS FROM THE DISCUSSION POPULATION CONTROL AN IMPERIALIST STRATEGY

The idea that population growth is the cause of poverty in the third world, "the most serious threat to the world's future" as Prince Philip recently put it - is an idea hawked by imperialism: the attempts to curb it, by the cheapest and simplest (to the imperialists) methods will only become more intense as the levels of unemployment in the world rise. Puerto Rico for example, is abortion isle for central America, precisely as a result of American imperialism's policy. Therefore to raise the demand for "abortion on demand" there would be not only laughable but downright reactionary.

Women of the third world have long been guinea pigs for the drug companies. A Chilean sister spoke of how her doctor in Chile had recommended Depo Provera to her as "the latest and best thing from Europe". When she arrived in Britain as a political refugee, she found it had never been heard of by her doctor, and that her womb had atrophied.

Such experiences have demonstrated that demands around reproductive rights must be based on the conditions in each country. These points have already been learnt from by many women active in the National Abortion Campaign,

Campaign against Depo Provera and Campaign for Contraception and Abortion Rights and against forced Sterilisation (ICASC).

A further point raised was that the widespread use of abortion as a method of contraception in the Soviet Union (pills of a very high dosage with accompanying unpleasant side effects) was a punitive method to enforce population growth, a declared aim of the Soviet Union, complementary to its expansionist strategy.

WOMEN AND ISLAM

"This is my gun", a Mujahideen woman was quoted as saying of the scarf - it is a symbol of the revolution, and further, when worn you get rid of Western stereotyping and forget about make-up. Information of this kind made participants see the need to overcome western chauvinism in understanding and supporting the demands of women engaged in national liberation struggle.

Palestinian women underlined the fact that the more deeply women have participated in the armed struggle, the further their emancipation has progressed.

BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND MATERIAL BENEFITS

There was widespread discussion of the fact that British imperialism has invested some of its superprofits in buying off sections of the British people with a better standard of living; but the extent to which this had benefited which strata was not deeply gone into. There was little support for pro-Labour Party ideas at the Conference and there was sharp criticism of racist and chauvinist attitudes.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

That over 1,000 women - mainly white, middle class and in the 20-40 age group get together to discuss such a vital theme in a non-sectarian atmosphere is positive: but the ultra democracy - all ideas equally valid, no pressing of discussions to conclusions, a passive attitude towards preparing for the conference and the refusal to acknowledge the need for any leadership - means that for results of the conference in terms of action, we'll have to wait and see. The national conference itself has no relationship of authority to the women who attend.

A concerted effort by IMG, a Trotskyist group, to change the conference agenda so as to attend the CND demo on Sunday was firmly squashed by the planning group. In the past similar ploys have succeeded. Perhaps lessons on the tyranny of ultra democracy are being learnt.

However, the realisation of the danger of war, and also in

some quarters a recognition that the Soviet Union is an imperialist power points to the need for the socialist feminist current to deepen ideas on this.

LIVELY PLENARY

Anwar Ditta moved everyone by her speech and a collection of £170 was made for her campaign to get her three children reunited with her. The contributions of the Irish sisters were the sharpest and liveliest. They demanded unconditional support for the anti imperialist struggle and solidarity with the hunger strikers' demand for political status.

The mood of the conference was taken by a show of hands: support was expressed for a national campaign around political status focussing on Pauline McLaughlin in Armagh gaol who now weighs only 4½ stone owing to brutal treatment and lack of medical care for an undiagnosed illness; for work against army recruitment; taking militant action to expose press bias on Ireland (e.g. picketing or occupation of newspaper or radio offices); and for the socialist feminist current to organise its own meetings to educate ourselves on Ireland.

Greetings were also sent to the Nicaraguan women's movement, expressing support for their building of a mass organisation of women against the threat of US interference; support was extended to the struggles in El Salvador and Bolivia, and an appeal was made for books to be sent to Chile. (The collection point is the Latin American Bookshop, Carila, 29 Islington Park St, London, N1).

WOMEN IN CHINA

A recent meeting of the All-China Women's Federation noted that despite the achievements scored since liberation there were still immense difficulties to be overcome in the struggle for the complete equality of women. Speaking at the opening session of the meeting, Comrade Kang Keqing, Chairwoman of the All-China Women's Federation said, "In handling problems of immediate concern to women, we should not fear giving offence or taking some risks; we must dare to speak and be good at speaking in support of women".

The Editorial Committee of Class Struggle welcomes articles contributed by readers. You have the experience in struggle, we can spread it.

HANDS OFF POLAND!

As "Class Struggle" goes to press the situation on Poland has reached a critical point, with the Soviet imperialists actively preparing to invade the country if they feel that they need to and if they think that they can get away with it.

The prospect of the people of a Soviet colony struggling for and winning democratic rights is one that profoundly worries the Kremlin warlords - what the Polish workers seize will be demanded by the workers of Hungary (who have staged a number of strikes this year), of Bulgaria, of Czechoslovakia... That is why the Soviets are not only making military preparations but also ideological attacks and why the Czech and East German authorities are preventing their citizens from travelling to Poland.

However, certain things are holding back Soviet aggression. Firstly, they and their puppets are already, to a certain extent, pinned down by the peoples' wars in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Also, they know that the political, diplomatic and economic reprisals from the United States, western Europe and much of the third world will hurt them badly.

But most importantly they know that Poland will be no walkover. The Polish people have long been victims of the great powers in Europe and so they are imbued with deep patriotism. This extends even to large sections of the ruling revisionist party. Whilst the Central Committee was meeting in Warsaw, 60 Generals and 200 Staff Officers of the Polish Army sent them a message saying that any Soviet aggression would be considered as an act of war that they would resist to the end. Any invasion would undoubtedly meet fierce guerilla resistance and in the estimation of Soviet 'dissident' and Socialist Roy Medvedev would require an army of occupation ten times the size of that in Afghanistan.

Most importantly, the Soviet occupiers would meet 10 million united and determined workers in the Solidarity Free Trade Union movement who are determined to keep the democratic gains they have won.

Having said all that, we still need to be on our guard. At Christmas 1978, Kampuchea was invaded. In 1979 - Afghanistan. Will it be Poland 1980? The Labour Movement and all progressive people must take a stand - for the Polish work-

people must take a stand - For the Polish workers! For Polish independence! Against the threat of Russian aggression! And we must be prepared to unite with anybody who will share these demands, no matter how reactionary they may be on other questions.

HANDS OFF THE POLISH WORKERS!
HANDS OFF POLAND!



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CLASS STRUGGLE - DOUBLE ISSUE

This issue of "Class Struggle" is a double issue to cover the Christmas and New Year period. The next issue will appear on 8th January 1981.

All comrades who work on "Class Struggle" would like to take this opportunity to thank our readers for their support in 1980 and to extend our best wishes to them for Christmas and the New Year. We look forward to your continued support in 1981. Donations, articles, letters, comments and criticisms are always welcome.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SUPPORT THE HUNGER STRIKERS

For details of forthcoming solidarity events in London and around the country phone the Toops Our Movement on 01-267-2004.

Sunday January 25th.

FREE NAMIBIA, BRITAIN'S NUCLEAR COLONY

Half of Britain's uranium comes from Namibia. The contracts are due for renewal in 1981. Campaigns against Namibian Uranium Contracts Conference to plan work with films, workshops and speakers from the Labour and anti-nuclear movements.

11.30 a.m. Africa Centre, 38 King St., London WC2.

Further details - phone 01-388-2089.