

# CLASS STRUGGLE



Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

VOL.11 NO.7 SEPTEMBER 1987

25P

# NOW IS THE HOUR!

Friday, 28th August, at least 13,000 Azanian (South African) miners were sacked for striking by the Anglo-American Corporation, one of the biggest South African mining houses. The miners' strike had lasted nearly three weeks and had hit at the heart of the economy.

Over 300,000 miners - more than half the total workforce in mining - joined the strike, called by the five-year old National Union of Mineworkers. They faced shootings and whippings, arrests and sackings from the mine-owners backed up by the racist state.

The strike began on 9th August. Its central demand is for a 30% pay rise. An NUM spokesman explained: "Employers like the Chamber (of Mines) and other national monopolies are making record profits. Yet they persistently and unashamedly continue to force down the real wages of workers."

A headline in the NUM paper gave the same message: "The bosses get richer. The workers get poorer. Now is the hour!"

The mining industry accounts for 60% of South Africa's export earnings and some experts calculate that in the first two weeks of the strike alone, three of the biggest companies had lost £62 million in profits.

In 1985, profits of the gold mines were £2,625,000,000 and for the coal mines £309,062,500. In the same year, a black gold miner earned £1,602 and a coal miner, £1,800: barely subsistence wages.

One estimate is that 48,000 black miners have been killed in the mines this century. Last year, 300,000 miners stopped work for a day after 177 were killed in an accident at the Kinross mine.

Other demands made by the NUM relate to safety, holidays and the appalling working conditions of most miners who live in crowded hostels separated from their families for most of the year.

The strike has hit hardest the giant Anglo-American corporation which has been trying to promote a "liberal" image by recognising the NUM. Its response to the strike has shown, once again, that apartheid cannot be reformed but has to be destroyed along with the whole structure of the racist state of South Africa.



The racist state has responded with contemptuous threats and violence. One spokesman, F.W. Klerk said that the state would not "stand idly by and watch the country's economy destroyed by outsiders."

### ULTIMATE GOAL: LIBERATION

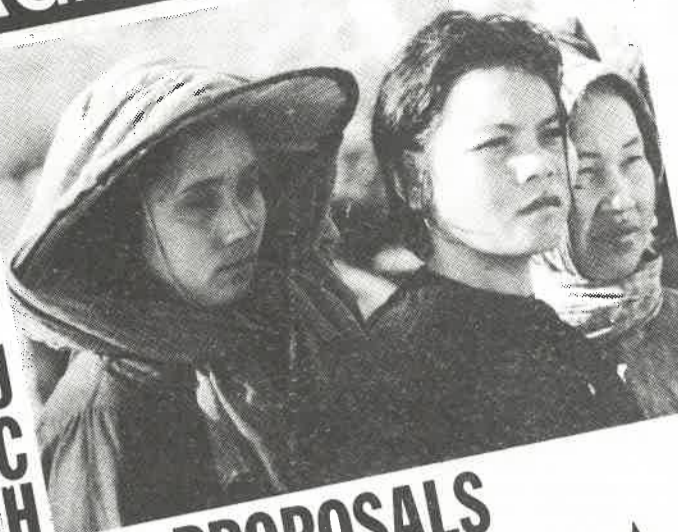
As we go to press, there are reports that the NUM will call off the strike. Whether the miners return to work now or later, what is clear is that

their struggle is not only about the 30% pay rise, although this has been the rallying point for the biggest show of strength by the NUM so far.

Cyril Ramaphosa, General Secretary of the NUM, expressed it this way: "The struggle we are involved in on the mines is a training ground for our people, for the ultimate goal is liberation. And it is in pursuit of that struggle that the union has declared 1987 as the year the NUM takes over the mines."

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Azanian Miners strike







# MOPPING UP THE NHS

by **es. correspondent**

The selling off state-owned companies and the public (state-run) services is a central part of the Tories' strategy to try and save British imperialism.

In this article, we look at the effect privatisation is having on the NHS. We have to be clear that the NHS is not, and never has been, a socialist institution. But, at the same time, we do have to recognise that its setting up was a reform which brought some benefits for ordinary people, and in this sense only, we should fight to defend it.

There are two questions that privatisation raises:

Firstly, is the Tory claim that privatisation will increase efficiency and benefit patients. All the evidence shows that this is not true.

Secondly, does it really matter whether a service is provided by private companies or by the state? In general, we take the view that nationalised industries and services are part of the imperialist system and as such, are not in the long-term interests of ordinary people. However, the situation is not so clearcut within the NHS. All recent evidence shows that private companies are only interested in the most profitable parts of the service and their involvement reduces the service available to ordinary people. This is why we argue that the state should be forced to maintain and develop the NHS.

## THE EFFECT ON THE SERVICE

"Trust House Forte, Britain's biggest catering and hotel group, is to boycott government plans to privatise hospital meals, claiming that the terms laid down by ministers are dangerous to patients and damaging to the staff. The group has also withdrawn from a large NHS contract it already holds." (Sunday Times, 23.9.87)

Up and down the country, there have been many cases of private companies failing to do the work they were paid for:

In Cheltenham, only 15% of pillowcases and 23% of sheets washed by Sunlight Services Group were up to DHSS standard.

In the Croydon, Kingston and Merton and Sutton Health Authorities, the trade unions collected evidence of a flood of complaints about stained material, crumpled clothes and laundry still damp. A company called Advanced Services was responsible.

Home Counties lost their contract for cleaning High Royds Hospital (Leeds) after complaints about the quality of cleaning.

Lesters Health Care Services Ltd were heavily criticised at Hinchinbrooke Hospital (Huntingdon) where poor quality cleaning was followed by an increase in staphylococci (bacteria) infested babies.

It is not just these dramatic examples (of which there are many more) that are the problem.

Dividing up the staff of a hospital amongst different employers breaks up the important teamwork that is necessary to run a hospital.

There is also a high turnover amongst contractors' employees. The bosses expect their workers to work at impossible speeds. Pay is very bad (80% of women ancillary workers earn less than the official poverty line). 75% of contract cleaners are women working less than 16 hours a week and are not usually entitled to sick pay, holiday pay, pension or maternity benefits. Shift systems mean that weekends and bank holidays

are considered normal working days at basic rates of pay. It is not surprising that many workers never stay long enough to learn the job properly. The privatisation of services is seen by other health service workers as part of the breaking up of the NHS and demoralises those not directly affected.

## SAVING MONEY?

In 1986, it was claimed that privatisation had saved £72.7 million. This was less than 1% of NHS spending. The figure does not take account of other costs created by the exercise.

Organising and monitoring privatisation costs a lot of money. There are the redundancy payments for sacked NHS workers. (These cost one health authority £70,000.) Sacked workers receive dole money and social security payments. The state also loses their tax payments.



Getting the message across: On strike at Addenbrookes Hospital in Cambridge, 1985.

## COMPETING FOR JOBS

The process of competing for jobs begins when the health authority puts out a tender for various services. This means that private companies and the existing workforce have to compete to provide the cheapest service.

The rumours start. This or that group of workers is next. When management announce their plans the months of complicated negotiations about what work is now needed begins. The workers have to work out (through their unions) what bid to put in themselves (the in-house tender). Already they are into the ball game of competing for their own jobs.

It soon becomes clear to the workforce that they cannot win. Either they lose and end up on the dole (a private company gets the contract) or they cut their

working conditions so that some of them stand a chance of keeping their jobs (the in-house tender wins). In some cases, they become demoralised and decide not to bother. "Let them privatise the lot. After all, our pay is so bad, we may as well be on the dole any way. We've had enough." Or they dig their heels in and put in a tender with no job losses, no cut in bonus pay and conditions, even if they will be undercut by a private contractor.

Management have the workers on the run. They try and browbeat them into cutting jobs and conditions. They play worker against worker by offering to keep bonus payments for some but not others. The whole process involves endless meetings about the details of tenders. Good shop stewards spend all their time in these boring meetings and end up with less and less time to rally their members. This effectively undermines independent trade union activity.

Those who are lucky leave and get jobs elsewhere. Sickness and absenteeism increase. After years of loyal service to the patients, increasing numbers of workers reluctantly give up and start doing the minimum at work to get by.

Even if the in-house tender wins and some workers keep their jobs, it is not business as usual. More work is done by fewer people and no longer is it a full-time job. All the workers have "won", is a three year contract. Then the whole thing begins again.

## THE UNIONS' RESPONSE

From the very start, the unions were in a weak position. The unity and militancy of the late 1970s and early 1980s had been defeated. The government were confident having recently won the big national pay battle. Also high unemployment was becoming a regular feature of the economy.

In 1982, the Institute of Directors produced a document which advocated privatisation as the obvious and most desirable strategy for breaking the strength of the public sector unions, by reducing union membership and making bargaining arrangements more localised.

But the union leadership had no real strategy. Their hopes and efforts were pinned on a Labour party victory in 1983. They did not really try and rally the potential strength of their membership. Indeed, during the previous years the growing militancy of the membership had frightened the leadership.

Meetings of activists were called up and down the country. All the local officials could

The cleaning industry is now big business as both private companies and governments contract out an increasing amount of their activities. A small number of transnational companies have been able to make very large profits with little capital outlay and by a ruthless attack on any trade union organisation. They have succeeded in pushing down wages, worsening working conditions and terms of employment and now dominate the industry internationally.

The Pritchards Services Group, for example, operates through 70 subsidiaries in 20 countries. Last year, it was taken over by the Hawley Group, one of the world's top three cleaning companies with 30,000 customers in Britain. Together with British Electric Traction (BET), they control 25% of the country's cleaning market.

offer was to help the workforce play the privatisation game: taking on the bosses' terms.

Admittedly, it was difficult to see what alternative approach there was. There was industrial action in places such as Cambridge and Barking. But despite the local militancy, little was achieved. The union leadership made no attempt to broaden the action or win wider support.

Parts of the labour movement actually helped the Tories' privatisation. Labour party councillors and individual trade unionists on health authorities (the local bosses) actually voted in favour of privatisation programmes and even voted in favour of work going out to private contractors.

Management could pick and choose which section of the workforce to attack. Unlike a national pay dispute, privatisation attacks only a small group in individual hospitals - one at a time. This splitting process even works to the extent that not all cleaners in one hospital are threatened at the same time.

After the national pay dispute, there were active joint union committees in most hospitals. They gave what support they could but there were very few attempts to give active support.

By 1986, once again the message came down the union structures: work hard for a Labour party election victory. Nothing had been learnt from the 1983 experience.

## THE FUTURE

The involvement of private contractors in hospital catering, laundry and cleaning has slowed down. Initially, there were some 40 companies involved. The number is down to about 16 now. Some have withdrawn; others taken over in the competition for profits. More contracts are staying in house.

## BEYOND THE PAIL

A report on transnational cleaning companies in Europe and their workers.

Transnational Information Centre (London)  
9 Poland St. London W1V 3DG.  
Available for £1. 1986

## THE INVISIBLE WORKERS

International Cleaning Workers Conference

To be held on Sunday, 22nd November, 1987, 10 - 6.

Lambeth Town Hall  
London

For more information, contact:  
Tower Hamlets International Solidarity (THIS),  
Oxford Hse, Derbyshire St.,  
London E2 6HG. Tel:01-739-9007

(Between November 1985 and April 1986 85% of cleaning contracts remained in-house.) Already 75% of those services have been subject to privatisation so there is not much of the potential service left.

Despite the failure, the government is not discouraged.

The new Minister of Health and Social Security, John Moore, was known as "Mr Privatisation" during his time at the Treasury.

In the Wirral area, there is already an attempt to widen privatisation to other parts of hospitals. It is rumoured that another national directive on extending privatisation is being prepared.

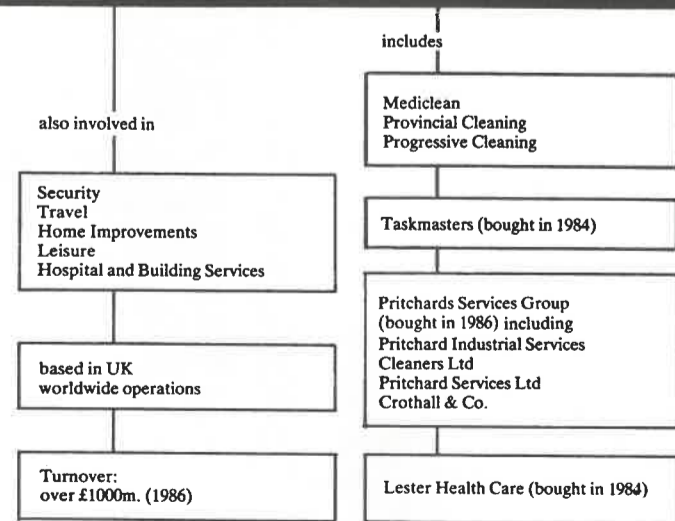
There is growing evidence that the crisis in the cervical cancer screening service is going to be "solved" by privatisation.

The new Griffiths management approach, which means very little to those outside the NHS, can result in a form of privatisation in everything but name. Each part of a hospital is to be put on a narrow cost-effective footing. Each part will have to buy services from other parts. It is possible that there will be competition between different hospitals. Some will provide cheaper services than others. Patients will be encouraged to shop around to find the shortest waiting lists.

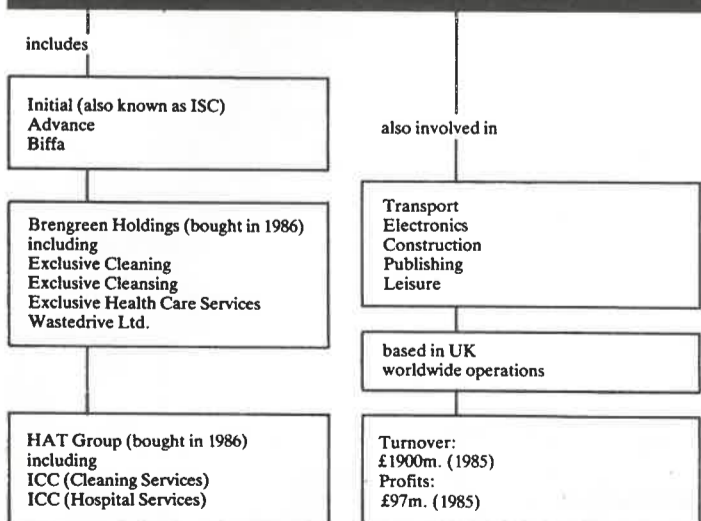
Whatever the outcome, it is clear that the service will continue to get worse. The majority of ordinary people will suffer as a two-tier health system becomes reality.

Trade unionists have to face up to the experience of the last few years. We cannot carry on in the old way. We have to break with the misleadership of the Labour Party. We have to build unions that can really begin to defend the interests of their members.

## HAWLEY GROUP



## BET



Both BET and the Hawley Group (through Pritchards) are heavily involved in South Africa. BET employs 7,328 workers in South Africa — 699 of them black workers paid below the EEC minimum rate; Pritchard employs 2,145, of whom 1,860 are black workers paid below the EEC rate. Between them, they account for one-third of all black South Africans employed by British companies at below EEC rates.



# DEATH IN CUSTODY

# BLACK I

C.S. correspondent

## C.S. CORRESPONDENT

On 10th August, the banned Channel 4 documentary, 'Death in Custody', was given its first public showing in Bradford. The screening was organised by 'Creation For Liberation' (North) and was attended by members of Wolverhampton's Black Community Action Group. The film, produced by Bandung File, is about the death, in police hands, of Clinton McCurbin, in Wolverhampton on 20th February. Channel 4 has banned the film on legal advice, as it might "prejudice the course of justice" before an inquest is held.

The 30-minute film outlines the circumstances of Clinton's death and the police attempt to criminalise him to cover up his murder by two of their officers. Clinton died when police were called to the 'Next' store in Wolverhampton, after an assistant had reported "a black youth who looked like he was on drugs and was shopping with a credit card which might have been stolen". Eye-witnesses then told how the police officers PC's Hobday and Thomas, assisted by a customer, used excessive force upon Clinton. He was held on the floor, the officer at the front pulling Clinton's head and neck back, which ultimately led to his death from asphyxiation. The eye-witnesses said that Clinton only struggled because he was in pain from being forcibly restrained.

### POLICE COVER UP

The police cover up began even before an autopsy was carried out. The police made a statement that Clinton had died of a heart attack, partly caused by drug abuse. This was a swiftly-constructed lie to cover up the real cause of his death, later revealed by the autopsy (the police have never apologised for their "mistake"). However, as is usual, the national media reported Clinton as being "a Rasta drug addict" who died from a heart attack. This building of a racist stereotype was used to criminalise Clinton (who was neither a Rastafarian nor a drug addict), thereby easing the conscience of the police and the scandal sheets. However, the local black community was determined to let the truth be known, and a march was held on March 6th, to protest against the murder and demand justice (see 'Class Struggle, April 1987'). The Black Community Action Group (BCAG) coordinated the march and is still continuing the campaign.

### BLACK COMMUNITY ORGANISE

After the film, Brother Roland and Brother Gamba, from the BCAG discussed their campaign to get justice for Clinton's family. They pointed out that whilst the film has been banned from national TV screening because of the effect it might have on the inquest, the press and media were quite free to propagate racist lies about the incident in the week after Clinton's death. They went on to highlight the fact that attacks on black people by the police are not the result of a few racist individuals but of the racist nature of the police as a whole. On the afternoon of Clinton's death, they point out that:

\*1\* An ambulance was not called to the scene until two hours after the police arrived at the 'Next' store.

\*2\* Whilst the crowd was gathered after Clinton's death, there were no disturbances and no trouble. Brother Roland, who was present that afternoon, described how the crowd dispersed after Clinton's body was taken away. It was only then that

the riot squad began intimidating and attacking people indiscriminately. It is obvious that the riot police were intent on creating a riot situation where one did not exist.

\*3\* The fact that Buxton, PR man for West Midlands police, who made the original statement about Clinton's death, was sure that "the man who died" had a heart condition and was abusing drugs. However, when he was subsequently questioned, he did not know Clinton's name.

Roland and Gamba went on to state how there was a complete distrust of the police by the black community in Wolverhampton and a feeling that the police are completely outside accountability to the community who pay for their existence.

Clinton's family has also suffered from racism in the Wolverhampton area, from the local press and the local (Labour controlled) council. When five year old John Shorthouse was shot and killed by the police, the local council in that area of Birmingham offered his family financial assistance with legal costs. When similar help was offered to Mrs McCurbin, the Wolverhampton 'Express and Star' whipped up local opposition to this move, and as it was in the run up to the local elections, the Labour council dropped the offer.

### CALL FOR SUPPORT

In the face of this state racism, both local and national, the BCAG calls for support across the country to build a campaign to expose the police cover up of Clinton's murder on the national level.

Roland and Gamba stated that much could be done to escalate and broaden the campaign:

1. A BOYCOTT OF 'NEXT' STORES NATIONALLY. In Wolverhampton, the black community is already carrying out a successful boycott of the store where Clinton died.

2. LETTERS AND PETITIONS to MP's and councillors expressing concern about the circumstances of Clinton's death.

3. A NATIONAL MOBILISATION for the forthcoming inquest.

The BCAG also demand:

"The police officers involved in Clinton's death be charged for murder". (These officers have been suspended on full pay until the DPP makes a decision based on the Police Complaints Authority report.) (see below).

"The resignation of Police Inspector Geoffrey Dear over the handling of the murder inquiry and for making wicked and malicious statements.

"A full and public inquiry."

The murder of Clinton McCurbin is not an isolated incident. It is only the latest in a series of police murders and cover ups against the black community: from the New Cross massacre of 1981, to the cases of Winston Rose, Colin Roach, Cynthia Jarrett, Cherry Groce and the Tottenham 3. These are only the most well-publicised victims of Britain's brutal and racist police force, who remain virtually unaccountable for their actions against both individuals and whole communities, such as Handsworth, Broadwater Farm and, most recently, Chapeltown in Leeds. The BCAG calls for the unity of all progressive people, black and white, to support the black community in its fight for justice and police accountability.

**WANTED BY THE BCAG FOR MURDER**

**MICHAEL HOBDAY**  
AGE: 29  
HEIGHT: 6'  
WEIGHT: 250 pounds  
BUILD: Heavy  
NATIONALITY: British

**NEIL THOMAS**  
AGE: 23  
HEIGHT: 5'11"  
WEIGHT: 245 pounds  
BUILD: Heavy  
NATIONALITY: British

**CAUTION!** BOTH MEN ARE EXTREMELY DANGEROUS ALREADY MORE THAN 50 COMPLAINTS HAVE BEEN MADE AGAINST HOBDAY  
**A COMMUNITY WARRANT IS ISSUED 20th MARCH 1987 IN WOLVERHAMPTON CHARGING HOBDAY & THOMAS WITH MURDER AND COVER-UP TO AVOID PROSECUTION.**  
IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION CONCERNING THESE PERSONS PLEASE NOTIFY US OR CONTACT YOUR LOCAL POLICE. Issued by the BCAG. Tel 712209

Do Not Throw This Away!

**CAN WE LIVE WITH THIS?**

**BRITISH JUSTICE NO JUSTICE**

**BRITISH JUSTICE BREAKS YOUR HEART**

**CLINTON McCURBIN - MURDERED**

**KILLERS - REWARDED With Long Holidays**

**POLICE - REJECTS Demand For PUBLIC INQUIRY**

**SHAM INQUIRY - Set Up By The Police - To Clear The Police**

**COVER UP STARTED**

**WITHIN HOURS OF THE MURDER BEING COMMITTED, THE POLICE STARTED THEIR COVER-UP OF THE TRUTH THEY STATED THAT CLINTON DIED OF A HEART ATTACK COMPLICATED BY THE ABUSE OF DRUGS.**

**INDISCRIMINATE ARREST**

**BLACK PEOPLE WERE INDISCRIMINATELY ARRESTED IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY THE POLICE ACTIONS AND FURTHER CRIMINALISE THE BLACK COMMUNITY.**

**POLICE INCITE RIOT**

**THE POLICE RAGED TO TEST THEIR NEW RIOT EQUIPMENT LAUNCHED ATTACK AFTER ATTACK ON INNOCENT BLACK BYSTANDERS, WHILE VAGUE YOUTHS WHO WERE BREAKING WINDOWS AND LOOTING WERE IGNORED.**

**B.C.A.G DEMAND**

**THE POLICE OFFICERS INVOLVED IN CLINTON'S DEATH TO BE CHARGED FOR MURDER. THE RESIGNATION OF GEOFFREY DEAR OVER THE HANDLING OF THE MURDER INQUIRY AND FOR MAKING WICKED AND MALICIOUS STATEMENTS. A FULL AND PUBLIC INQUIRY**

**THE NEXT MURDERED COULD BE YOU OR ONE OF YOUR FAMILY!**

**BLACK COMMUNITY ACTION GROUP.**  
C/o 125 Waterloo Rd Tele 712209



Wolverhampton march in protest at the murder of Clinton McCurbin.

## PCs not blamed for death

By Shyama Perera  
No action is to be taken against two police officers involved in the arrest of a Rastafarian man who choked and died, it was announced last night.

The Independent Police Complaints Authority said it was happy that a report into the circumstances surrounding the death of 23-year-old Clinton McCurbin in the Mander shopping centre, Wolverhampton, last February, absolved the constables concerned from blame.

Mr McCurbin choked and died during a violent struggle with PCs Neil Thomas and Michael Mobbday after they tried to arrest him for allegedly using a stolen credit card in a branch of the clothes shop Next.

A post-mortem found that his death was "consistent with restraint during the violent struggle." Although both officers had then tried to revive him, their attempts failed and Mr McCurbin died.

After the incident there were violent clashes between blacks and police in the shopping centre and the two officers involved were put on sick leave because they were deeply distressed.

The following article from 'The Guardian' of 21st August, makes a fitting postscript to this article:

The recent conviction of five police officers for beating up five schoolboys in the street in Holloway, provides clear evidence of the depravity of the police, especially towards black people. But it does not mean that black people can expect justice when attacked by the police from now on. On the contrary, it was such a blatant case that even the British judicial system could not ignore it.

The five Metropolitan police officers, Sgt. Edwards and PCs Main, Wise, Gavin and Parr, were jailed for between 18 months and 4 years. Edwards and Parr were convicted of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice by covering up the attack. The others were convicted of assault as well as conspiracy. The officers had leapt out of a police van in August 1983, armed with truncheons, and kneed, kicked, punched and beaten the five youths, aged between 13 and 16. A black youth sustained a fractured nose and another was kicked above the eye and required stitches in the wound.

The long cover-up was described by prosecuting counsel as a "solid barrier of silence and deceit". The judge told the jury that they would have to find their way through a "morass of lies". These elements of violence and dishonesty from the police, especially towards black people, come as no surprise. Essentially, police tactics can be described as brutalisation and criminalisation.

### BLACK PEOPLE ATTACKED

#### CLINTON McCURBIN

There was, for instance, the killing of Clinton McCurbin, a 23 year old black man, in Wolverhampton's Mander shopping centre in February. (See separate article)

#### NENNETH JELLOH

In London, an African woman, Nenneth Jelloh, fell to her death from Marylebone Police Station while being questioned on a shoplifting charge in April.

#### MOHAMMED PARKIT

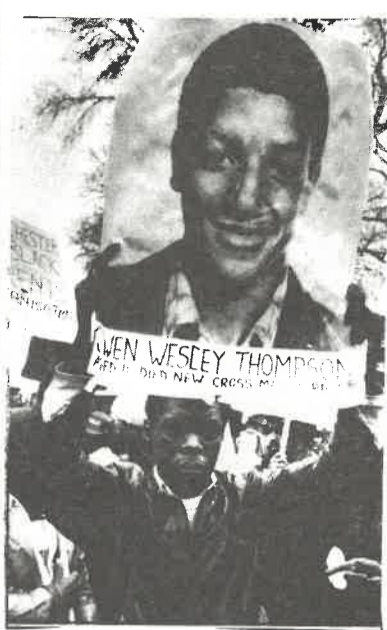
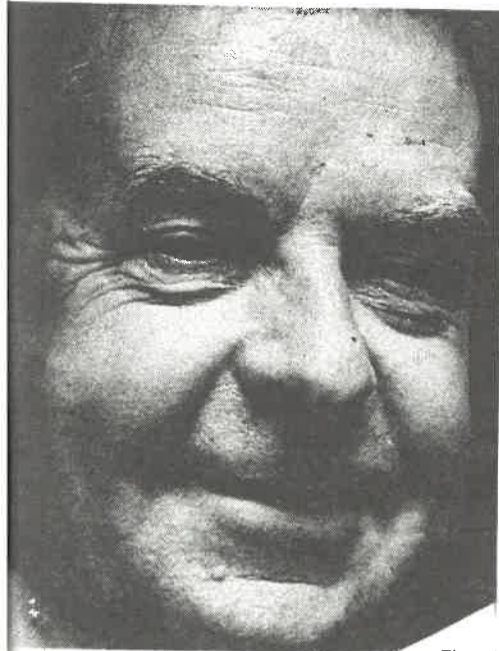
A week after her death, Mohammed Parkit, a 50 year old Bangladeshi man, was arrested by police and immigration officers and taken to Marylebone Police Station. After being held for four hours, Parkit was found on the doorstep of his home, breathless and unable to speak. He suffered repeated heart attacks (although he had no history of heart trouble) and died the next day. An inquest jury returned an open verdict on his death.

#### MICHAEL CAMPBELL

In Notting Hill, the Complaints Authority have been forced to investigate a series of complaints that a group of police officers, known locally as the "Black Watch" have been deliberately provoking the black community into confrontation. Particular incidents include the arrest of Michael Campbell in May. After being punched and kicked by officers in a police van, Michael sustained two sprained wrists, a fractured cheekbone and extensive injuries to his arms and legs. He was taken straight from police custody to hospital and discharged in a wheel-chair. Notting Hill police attacked a young black chauffeur later in the same month. He was set



# PEOPLE AND THE POLICE



Angry demonstrators marching to Notting Hill police station yesterday to protest over the death in custody of Anthony Lemard.

by several officers as he left his grandmother's house and beaten with truncheons.

## PAMELA BERTRAND

In Lewisham, in August, Pamela Bertrand, an 18 year old black girl, was attacked by six police officers. Unable to pay her taxi fare, she was frogmarched by the taxi driver and a police officer into Lewisham Police Station. There, she was held down by three women police officers who demanded to strip her. A police officer held her down with her foot placed heavily on her arm.

## CRIMINALISATION

Criminalisation mainly consists of getting black people convicted on false evidence, usually false or illegally obtained confessions. These attempts do not always succeed. Russell Christie was arrested in 1985 on a charge of threatening to kill his neighbour, Special Constable Roger Turner. He spent seven months in custody before being acquitted by jury after only 13 minutes deliberation. In January 1986, Christie was again accused by Turner of threatening to kill him. Again, bail was refused and Christie spent three months in prison before the jury acquitted him after a 10 minute trial. The judge ordered an inquiry. But there is no sign of compensation yet.

Greg Gordon of Hockley, in Birmingham, has already received £10,000 compensation from West Midlands police. He was arrested in April 1984 on a charge of stabbing a local publican to death. After Gordon had spent nine months in custody, the police charged another man with the murder and released Gordon. The other man was subsequently convicted. The main evidence against Gordon was a confession to a crime which he could not possibly have committed.

The Broadwater Farm trials are riddled with frame-ups of the same kind. Judge Margaret Burnham, the distinguished black judge from the USA, who observed the trial of the men and boys charged with PC Blakelock's murder, has condemned the police behaviour and the conduct of the trial. She points out that the police extracted "dangerous confessions" from five out of six of the defendants without allowing them to see a solicitor. While this was the most appalling feature, Judge Burnham describes all the police interrogations as "lengthy, dishonest and otherwise oppressive". The police took advantage of the youth and inexperience of some of the detainees and created a "climate of fear throughout the whole of the community."

The trial judge was obliged to throw out the case against three of the defendants because of the way these "confessions" were obtained. But he allowed the case against the others to proceed, and they were convicted. The conviction of Winston Silcott, in particular, was completely unjustified. The only evidence against him was a single phrase attributed to him by the police, which Judge Burnham describes as "extremely ambiguous". She concludes that the evidence against Silcott did not provide sufficient basis for the guilty verdict.

False confessions have been rejected by juries in a number of the other Broadwater Farm trials. Alan Chance was acquitted of riot, affray, arson and explosives charges. Five witnesses told the court that he had not been near the scene. He said he had confessed to the police because he was "terrified, disoriented, beaten and refused permission to see lawyers or his family". Andrew Campbell was acquitted on similar charges. He told the court that the police had put pressure on him to make a confession. Winston James and Trevor Carnegie were acquitted despite the alleged confessions which the police produced in evidence against them.

## RACIST ATTACKS

When it comes to racist attacks by civilians, the police are generally unwilling to provide any protection to black people. The usual response is to deny that attacks had any "racial motive". Pressure from various sources has forced the police to review their policy in this area. Officers have apparently been instructed to take tougher action against people responsible for racist attacks. The head of the community relations branch of the Metropolitan Police, Commander Boreham, has said: "We are determined to enhance the service we provide to anyone who has been assaulted or harassed merely because of the colour of their skin."

Time will tell whether there is to be any real change. In the meantime, the racist attacks continue, many resulting in death like that of Abdus Sattar, murdered by white men in Hampstead in May. Shortly before he left the Metropolitan Police, Commissioner Newman said there had been a "genuine overall reduction" in the level of racial violence in London. Police statistics for a period between 1985 and 1986 showed a decline of 12 per cent. But the figures of the Newham Monitoring Project for the same period showed that racist attacks in Newham (where more than a quarter of the incidents reported to the police in London occur) had more than doubled.

Far left: Peter Imbert, new Met. Police Commissioner. Left: Kenneth Newman: recently retired as Commissioner. Black people fight back - above: protest at the New Cross Massacre. Right: Anthony Lemard died in police custody, October 1986.

## "ETHNIC RECRUITMENT"

As well as saying that they will take a tougher line against racist attacks, police chiefs are also trying to dispel the police force's racist image by "ethnic recruitment". There have been propaganda campaigns to persuade young men and women from the national minorities to join the police. West Midlands police boast of success in this effort and the Metropolitan Police are trying to follow suit. Apart from achieving a non-racist image, the police chiefs hope to penetrate black communities in order to obtain information and tighten their control.

This policy is already beginning to founder on the inbuilt racism among serving officers. Nick Booth, a black probationary constable in Bradford, left the force after being called a "black bastard" and nicknamed "Toby" after the slave character who appeared in the TV drama 'Roots'. Dennis Edgehill was an officer in the Metropolitan Police who appeared in a video aimed at recruiting black police. He was forced to leave the force in June because of the racism he encountered. Krishna Lall, also in the Met., was beaten up by three constables and a sergeant on a police outing to France in April. The four white officers hit Lall with bottles and kept calling him "Paki". He had to spend four days in hospital with a severed ear, a black eye and head wounds.

The national minority communities in Britain have a deep and justified suspicion of these police recruiting drives. Experience has taught them who the enemy is. The presence of African and Asian police officers will do nothing to diminish police racism, nor to protect the black communities from racist attacks. The only effective means of protection at present are the self-defence groups formed by the black people themselves in response to racist attacks. In the longer term, the only solution is for areas where national minority people are concentrated to be defended by their own national minority police forces. These will be police forces of a new kind, not part of the British state machine, but democratically controlled by the national minority people in the area themselves.

repression..



..and resistance



## THE TOTTENHAM 3 ARE INNOCENT

Engin Raghip, Winston Silcott and Mark Braithwaite have been scapegoated by the state over the death of PC Blakelock and given life imprisonment despite a total lack of evidence. This has been achieved using the police to torture and terrorise prisoners; the courts to legitimise the police's actions; and the media using racism and distortion to totally discredit state attacks upon our communities - the killings of Cynthia Jarrett, Clinton McCurbin, John Micklethorpe, the brutalising of Cherry Crook, Viraj Mendis, Trevor Manerville, Paul Davis etc, that cannot be resisted effectively in an isolated way. The broadest possible principled unity is now required if we are to go forward.

## PUBLIC MEETING

WEDNESDAY 29th JULY at 7.30pm  
at the TRADE UNION CENTRE,  
BRABANT ROAD,  
WOOD GREEN, N22  
TUBE: WOOD GREEN

**NO SCAPEGOATS**

**NO FRAME UPS**

Further info: The Tottenham 3 are Innocent Campaign  
13-17 Morval Road, London SW2  
Tel: (01)-326-1397

'The Tottenham 3 are Innocent' campaign has been launched to expose the frameup of Engin Raghip, Winston Silcott and Mark Braithwaite by the British state. It is also campaigning to defend all those defendants of the 85 uprising in Tottenham and "lay the foundations to resist future similar state attacks."

A leaflet from the campaign points out: "Despite the lack of any photographic or forensic evidence or indeed any witnesses at the scene, Silcott, Raghip and Braithwaite were targeted for revenge by the state. Earlier in the trial, the credibility of the police evidence submitted was proven to be unreliable (with regard to the statements implicating three youths on the same charge being ruled inadmissible in court since they had been gained illegally). Yet it is the word of the police alone which had convicted these three innocent young men. This collaboration between the police and judiciary will continue to frame and abuse

us unless we unite and defend ourselves."

The leaflet links the situation in Britain with international trends: "What occurred at Broadwater Farm and later in the police cells and the Old Bailey was and will not be unrelated to the systematic suppression of working class people and the black community in particular. The capitalist state continues to murder and incarcerate oppressed people, both in the UK and abroad (e.g. sanctioning the South African regime and backing American aggression in South and Central America), in order to maintain economic superiority. This forces the masses into poverty and as pressures mount abroad we see a direct effect in terms of greater militarisation here. The overthrow of the imperialist state depends on the collective action of oppressed people world-wide."

The Campaign can be contacted at 13-17 Morval Road, London SW2. Tel: 01-326-1397.



# Africa

## A period of great hope and optimism

Dan Nabudere, the widely respected theoretician of the liberation struggle against imperialism, packed the Third World Centre in London when he spoke there in July about Africa and the current world crisis.

### THE SLAVE TRADE

Stressing that it was necessary to go back at least as far as the slave trade to discover the roots of the crisis, Professor Nabudere pointed out that people of African descent have always shown an ability to survive through resistance at the point of production. Black people in the USA have produced a culture of struggle which has had a world-wide impact. Africa has profound human resources and many of the things reactionaries stigmatise as "problems" - the multiplicity of languages, the rising birth rate - are, in fact, manifestations of the African people's vitality!

At the moment, there is a tragic situation characterised by starvation and death of many people in parts of Africa. But this is also a period of great hope and optimism, precisely because it marks the crisis of the old setup and the start of something new. "And the revolutionary forces of the future are already there if we look," he said.

### FROM EGYPT TO ZIMBABWE

The first wave of revolutions, beginning in the 1950s, has spread like a shock wave through Africa, starting from Egypt in the north and culminating in Zimbabwe in the south. These movements scored important successes.

The ideology of Pan-Africanism is still flourishing and institutions like the Organisation for African Unity, for all their limitations, express this to some extent. The first wave of revolutions did not fail. But they had inbuilt limitations: the class which led them wanted power for

Africans (themselves!). But the inability of the regimes to solve the problems of the current crisis has led to the emergence of forces demanding a genuine democratisation of resources and decision-making.

### SELF-RELIANCE

Everywhere the mood of the masses reflects these demands, according to Comrade Nabudere. But the harbingers of the new revolutionary wave can already

be found concretely in the self-reliant armed struggles in the Horn of Africa (Eritrea and Tigray), and in the rise of the working class revolutionary movement in Azania (South Africa). Even the frantic attacks of the South African racists are contributing indirectly to the cause of revolution by destabilising the neo-colonial regimes. Throughout his talk, Nabudere stressed the important contribution of Africa

and Africans to humanity as a whole, a contribution which will be greater than ever in the current revolutionary period.

This talk, an antidote to the defeatism spread by the bourgeoisie about Africa, was warmly received by the audience. It was followed by a discussion in which many new ideas came to light.

The discussion was marked by a spirit of frank, serious and constructive criticism, a very encouraging and positive feature of the new mood among the anti-imperialist forces in this country which has been reflected in a number of other recent meetings.

For example, Nabudere expressed the view that nations at present do not exist in Africa because of the artificiality of colonial boundaries and the inability of current rulers to go beyond the "ethnic" politics inherited from colonialism.

### NATIONS IN AFRICA

This idea was roundly criticised by a number of those present, who argued that the European experience was not the criterion for determining what is a nation. Nations existed in Africa long before they were consolidated in Europe: the national liberation movements thus have profound roots and cannot be said to have begun at this or that moment of the 1950s or whenever.

### IMPORTANCE OF WOMEN

There was also a heated discussion about some concrete problems of contemporary Africa, such as the question of the correct analysis to make of the present regime in Uganda headed by Yoweri Museveni, which came to power through armed struggle against the previous neo-colonial government. Both Nabudere and the chairman of the meeting were also sharply, though supportively, criticised for being dismissive and patronising towards women. It is im-

possible to talk about the revolutionary movement in Africa without stressing the crucial importance of the women's movement, it was pointed out.

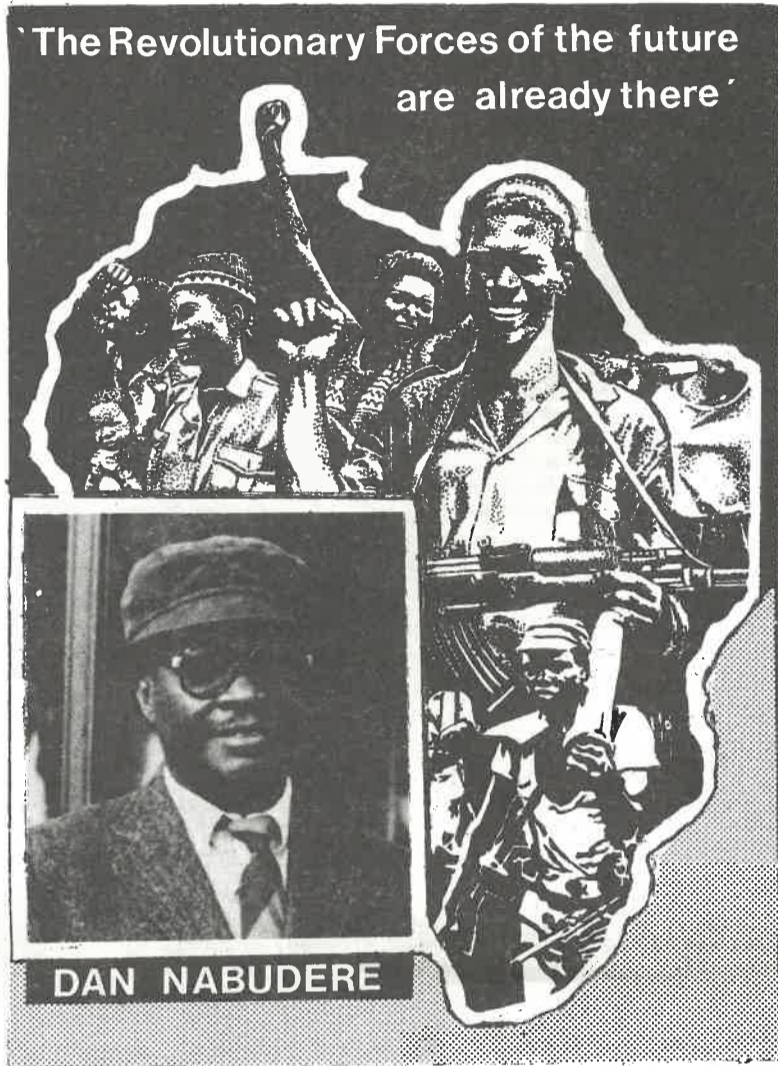
The meeting did not have time to go into some other key questions. For instance, in his writing Nabudere has explicitly rejected the concepts of unequal exchange, dependency and the centre-periphery relationship. However, in this correspondent's opinion, these concepts are absolutely essential to a meaningful analysis of national oppression and resistance in the era of imperialism. So the debate will have to be an ongoing one.

### GLASNOST

In response to a question about the Soviet Union, Nabudere pointed out that the current Soviet leadership is talking about 'glasnost' (open debate), but they are anything but open with the peoples of the oppressed nations! They are proposing to discuss so-called regional problems with the US leadership, i.e. spheres of influence, over the heads of the people. The Russians are still supporting reactionary cliques in the name of pseudo Marxism-Leninism, so the struggles of the future need to be independent of both superpowers, as in Eritrea and Tigray. These remarks were loudly applauded.

### MAO'S THEORY CONFIRMED

Nabudere expressed revolutionary optimism about the future of the Marxist-Leninist movement. He said that the Philippines and Peru stand as beacons of revolution in Asia and Latin America and many parts of Africa are getting ready to follow the same path. Mao Zedong's theory of world revolution has been fully confirmed by events.



## Tigray

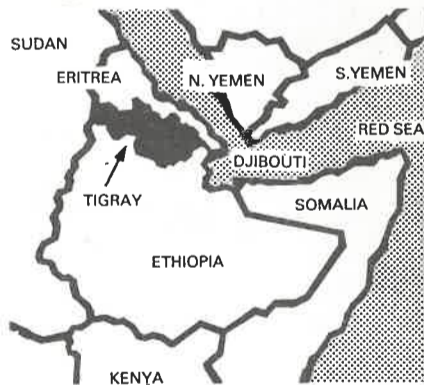
### Fighting the Locusts

During the earlier part of this summer, swarms of locusts have been flying into Tigray, destroying crops which this year have been much better due to the higher level of rainfall. In July, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) said that unless urgent and effective measures are taken to control the locusts, a human catastrophe worse than the 1984-85 famine will occur.

In a recent statement, the TPLF noted that the government in Addis Abbaba had done absolutely nothing to control the situation. In the past, it has used famine to subdue the Tigrayan people's struggle: at present, it is turning a blind eye, thinking that the locust invasion will force Tigrayans to abandon all hope of maintaining their present livelihood and accept the Ethiopian government's notorious resettlement programme.

The statement goes on to say that the TPLF believes the international community and the humanitarian organisations have a duty to avert such a major human disaster and should not be a party to the genocidal schemes of the Ethiopian government either by connivance or by default.

"The TPLF on its behalf is ready to do everything in its power to control the danger and is willing to co-operate with anyone to do so. Up to now, the TPLF and REST (the Relief Society of Tigray) have organis-

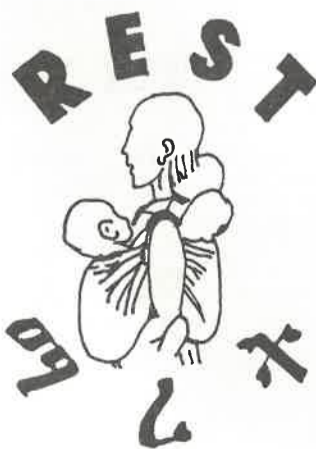


- **Location.** Tigray is situated in the northern part of Ethiopia. On the north and east, it is bounded by Eritrea; on the south by Wello and southwest by Gonder regions; and on the west by Sudan.
- **Area.** About 102,000 sq. kms.
- **Population.** 4.5-5 million.
- **Occupation.** 90 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture.
- **Natural resources.** Sulphur, salt, potash, iron, copper, gold, zinc, gum arabica, geothermal energy, etc.
- **TPLF.** The current popular democratic struggle began on February 18, 1975.

ed Locust Combat Units. But with limited equipment and insecticides in their hands and the scale of the threat, it is clear that the danger cannot be averted by this alone. Our efforts in this regard can only have a supportive but crucial role."

After noting that it is willing and capable of mobilising the entire Tigrayan peasantry, provide airstrips and depots and ensure the safety of those coming into the liberated areas, it states that the TPLF is not asking for recognition from or negotiations with the government in Addis Abbaba.

"All the TPLF requires is immediate action to combat the locusts. All the demand is for speedy action of the humanitarian and international organisations concerned to avert the disaster .... and not allow this human tragedy to be used by sinister forces for genocidal purposes."



The Relief Society of Tigray - can be contacted at their European office at:

27 Beresford Road  
London N5 5HS.

Tel: 01-359-9685.

## Eritrea

### 'Free to Learn'

"When you think of how women were kept out of most things before you can see how active they've become, especially when you compare them with the men. I think women are more energetic and determined than the men. I think it's because they were kept out of so much before, they didn't even know what was happening in their own villages, and then the work they were expected to do - "women's work" - was completely underestimated. These days women do know what's going on, not only locally but also nationally, and their work has been given its own value and this encourages them.

"When I compare my own life - I wasn't allowed to open my mouth. If I did, I was told to shut up and no-one ever defended me and my problems. Now I can talk about anything. I can ask any questions I like. I know what's going on in my village and in Eritrea as a whole. I'm free to learn. As a woman, I have political rights and representation. I'm older and can't predict what the future will hold for younger women but I don't want the idea of equality just to be lip-service. I'd like to see women really considered and treated as equals to men. That way we'll have happier woman and happier families."

These are the views of Teberih, a 40-year old woman from Asmara, interviewed earlier this year by a member of the Eritrea Support Committee.



Eritrean Women Well Drillers.

### BACKGROUND:

Eritrea has been at war since 1962 when it was annexed by Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. This move was backed by the US government even though it contravened a UN Declaration. Since then, Eritreans have been fighting regimes based in Addis Abbaba that have been supported at different times by both the superpowers. Yet despite the war and famine, they have been successful in carrying out an impressive transformation of their society. This has been due to the way both women and the members of the various national minorities have been actively involved at a number of different levels.



# Kampuchea

## "Our Kampuchea will survive"

CLASS STRUGGLE CORRESPONDENT

"More than anyone else, Vietnam knows it is not possible to impose a military solution on the Kampuchean problem", stated a spokesman for the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK), at the July public meeting organised by the British Kampuchea Support Campaign. The CGDK's deputy delegate to UNESCO in Paris, presented an overview of the Kampuchean national struggle to his London audience.

The CGDK spokesman emphasised that the Vietnamese army has reached an impasse. The main front is around the region of the Great Lakes - an area of key importance as it is the country's rice basket and fish reserve.

Guerrilla activity is carried on continuously in this populous area. The results are not spectacular but has a long-term impact by gradually dismantling the infrastructure set up by the Vietnamese and their war machine.

A video showing these guerrilla operations was shown at the meeting, filmed in the combat zones in 1986.

It is the increased participation of the population in the resistance struggle that is regarded as the most significant political development. "The war in Kampuchea is not one between two armies, but a war between, on the one side invading Vietnamese troops, and on the other the Kampuchean

people, whose armed forces are like the iron of the lance."

Pointing out that Kampuchea is a small country, a poor country, with a population ten times smaller than Vietnam, he said: "We aspire to live in peace and good neighbourliness, and it is the Vietnamese that threaten Kampuchea's existence." This alone would guarantee that all Kampuchean parties would adhere to the proposals of the 8 Point Programme to preserve the national cause of the Kampuchean people.

Talking to 'Class Struggle', the CGDK spokesman recalled that a few months after liberation in 1975, there were clashes between Vietnamese and Kampuchean forces. This was over Hanoi's refusal to withdraw from Kampuchean territory that had provided the Vietnamese a safe rear area during the liberation struggle against the US.

The conflict that ensued, culminating in Vietnam's Christmas invasion in 1978, has had an influence on the Coalition Government's thinking about a diplomatic settlement. The Heng Samrin group installed by the Vietnamese is not regarded as the enemy. Reconciliation with such misled people is being positively sought. At the present time the main objective for solidarity work is to publicise the 8 Point Peace Programme. These proposals are supported by over 60 countries around the world.

"Our people and the international community appreciate .. the struggle we are waging against an ambitious Vietnam, whose expansionist strategy is supported by Moscow."



Samdech Norodom Sihanouk and Khieu Samphan.



### The 8 point Peace Programme

This proposal is inspired by the Kampuchean people and the CGDK's genuine desire to seek a political solution to the problem of Kampuchea and is based on the United Nations relevant resolutions adopted in the past seven consecutive years and the International Conference on Kampuchea Declaration in 1981.

1. The tripartite Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) calls on the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to get into negotiation with it in order to discuss about the process of the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea. We do not demand the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to withdraw all its forces from Kampuchea at once. We accept the withdrawal of the Vietnamese forces from Kampuchea in two phases within a definite period of time.

Other countries may take part in the negotiations according to their judgement in order to help bring about a political solution to the problem of Kampuchea.

2. After the agreement on the process of the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, there will be a ceasefire so as to allow Vietnam to withdraw its forces according to the said agreement.

3. Both the withdrawal of the Vietnamese troops and the ceasefire must be supervised directly by a UN observer group.

4. After the first phase of the Vietnamese troops withdrawal, Heng Samrin and his faction get into negotiation with the tripartite CGDK in order to set up a quadripartite coalition government of Kampuchea with Samdech Norodom Sihanouk President and His Excellency Son Sann as Prime Minister in conformity with the spirit of the great national union and national reconciliation so that each of the four parties should have the same rights as political forces in the national community.

5. The quadripartite coalition government of Kampuchea will hold free elections under the supervision of a UN observer group.

6. Kampuchea will be restored as an independent, united in her own territorial integrity having a liberal democratic regime, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned country without any base of foreign troops on her soil. The Kampuchea's neutrality will be guaranteed by the UN with the presence of its observer group on the spot for the first two or three years.

7. Kampuchea welcomes all countries from West as well as from East and neutral and non-aligned countries to help rebuild the country.

8. As for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Kampuchea independent united in her own territorial integrity, peaceful, neutral and non-aligned, is willing to sign with it a non-aggression and peaceful coexistence treaty and to establish economic and trade relations between the two countries for ever.

The above proposal is put forward for the sake of peace in Kampuchea, and peace and security in South East Asia and Asia-Pacific region as well.

Signed Beijing, March 17th, 1986.

Khieu Samphan, Vice President of Democratic Kampuchea.  
Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, President of Democratic Kampuchea.  
Son Sann, Prime Minister of CGDK.

### An Interview with Khieu Samphan

The following comments were made by Khieu Samphan, Vice-President of Democratic Kampuchea, in charge of Foreign Affairs, in an interview with Thaddee In, published by 'Politique Internationale', Winter 1986/1987.

"The 8-point proposal further clarifies and thoroughly specifies our previous offers. Besides, it inserts itself within the framework of the resolutions successively adopted by the United Nations. It deals with the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops to be supervised by a UN observer group, the national reconciliation and the organising of free elections....."

"It is not at all in our interest to have the Soviet Union as our enemy. We wish, on the contrary, to have good relations with it. That is why we call on it to stop helping Vietnam in its war of aggression against us. In spite of all appearances, the Soviet Union has not yet shown its real intention to work in favour of peace and security in South-East Asia. In this respect, the Vladivostok speech of Mikhail Gorbachev is indeed edifying: Moscow continues to support Hanoi's strategy of 'Indochina Federation' and it wants ASEAN and the international community to accept the Vietnamese fait accompli in Kampuchea."

".....The systematic settlement of Vietnamese nationals is part and parcel of the global strategy of 'Indochina Federation' ... The war imposed upon us is a war of racial extermination, not a colonial war of conventional type. The settlers have entered Kampuchea illegally: we must never lose sight of this fact."

"No-one can deny that Vietnam has failed in its tactics of lightning-attack, lightning-victory. Year after year, it has got bogged down deeper and deeper in spite of everything it has tried. It now attempts to extricate itself by resorting to diplomatic manoeuvres, but it is more than ever isolated on the international scene. The steady and overwhelming support of the international community to our proposal will compel Vietnam to negotiate with our Coalition Government."

".....Vietnam has nurtured for a long time the ambition to set up an 'Indochina Federation' which would have included Laos and Kampuchea under its control. .... The occupation of Laos by Vietnam and the settlement of more than 700,000 Vietnamese nationals in Kampuchea are not isolated and fortuitous events. They are actually part and parcel of a global strategy masterminded more than half a century ago. Believe me, it was not our past mistakes that had brought about the invasion of Kampuchea. On the contrary, it would be only fair to recognise that we have contributed to prevent Kampuchea from undergoing a fate similar to that of Laos. Our people and the international community appreciate to its value the struggle we are waging against an ambitious Vietnam, whose expansionist strategy is supported by Moscow. By now the progress and success scored by our Coalition Government with Prince Sihanouk as President of Democratic Kampuchea have prompted us to state that our country will not be integrated into Vietnam. Our Kampuchea will survive."

## BOOKNEWS

JOHN GARANG SPEAKS

This book explains the genesis and objectives of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement through the speeches of its leader, Dr. John Garang de Mabior, and its challenge to Khartoum's "racially based hegemony".

£7.95 + 43p P&P.

AFTER THE LAST SKY  
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# FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



## BRIT JUSTICE CONVICTED: Guildford Four

In August, Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, ordered a police investigation into the case of the 'Guildford 4': the three Irishmen, Paul Hill, Patrick Armstrong and Gerry Conlon and one Englishwoman, Carole Richardson. The four were convicted of the bombing of a Guildford pub in 1974 and have been in prison ever since. They were given savage sentences: Paul Hill - life with a recommendation that he should stay in prison to 'a great age'; Patrick Armstrong - life with a recommendation that he serve at least 35 years; Gerry Conlon - should stay in prison for at least 30 years and Carole Richardson was ordered to be detained 'during the Queen's pleasure' - she was only 18 at the time.

The four all protested their innocence at their trial. The only evidence against them was 'confessions' which they said had been forced out of them by police. There have been campaigns for their release ever since they were convicted.

### BALCOMBE STREET

Further evidence of the innocence of the four was given to the Director of Public Prosecution in December 1975 after the capture of members of an active unit of the IRA in the Balcombe Street siege. At their trial, in January 1977, Joe O'Connell, Eddie Butler and Harry Duggan all said that they took part in the Guildford and Woolwich bombings for which innocent people had been sent to prison. They also later made it known that a fourth comrade, Brendan Dowd had made statements admitting to the Guildford and Woolwich bombings.

In a speech from the dock, Joe O'Connell explained why he refused to recognise the court:

"There has been an attempt by this court to isolate certain incidents which have been called 'crimes'. These incidents have been put completely outside the context in which they occurred in a way that is neither just nor consistent with the truth. The true context is that of the relationship between this country and our country - Ireland. That relationship is one of a state of war against the occupation of Ireland by Britain....."

The defendants did, however, recognise the court to the extent that they admitted to the bombings for which innocent people had been jailed: "We are all four Irish Republicans. We have recognised this court to the extent that we have instructed our lawyers to draw the attention of the court to the fact that four totally innocent people - Carole Richardson, Gerry Conlon, Paul Hill and Paddy Armstrong - are serving massive sentences for three bombings, two in Guildford and one in Woolwich, which three of us and another man now imprisoned, have admitted that we did..."

".....Time and again in Irish political trials in this country innocent people have been convicted on the flimsiest evidence - often no more than extorted statements or even 'verbals' from the police. Despite of often repeated claim that there is no such thing as a political prisoner in England, we would like to point out the stress laid in Irish trials on the political beliefs of the prisoners and the fact that over the last few years convicted Republicans have been subjected to extreme brutality in English prisons....."

### APPEAL

The appeal of the Guildford Four was heard in the Court of Appeal in October 1977. By this time, the four active Republicans had given evidence of their involvement in the Guildford and Woolwich bombings. The appeal exposed the flimsy case against the Guildford Four. The Republicans who had admitted to the bombings knew details of the layout of the pubs, people who were there at the time, the timing and methods of the bombings. However, all this and much more evidence was to no avail and the appeal was turned down.

### ANNE MAGUIRE

Seven other people, six of them members of the Maguire family were also convicted in connection with bomb-making. Again, they all protested their innocence and the only evidence against them was forensic evidence based on a test that has now been discredited. Of these seven, one died in prison and the others have served their sentences and now been released. Anne Maguire, in particular, has been campaigning to prove that she was wrongly convicted and this may have helped to build up the pressure for the case of the Guildford Four to be looked at again.

### BIRMINGHAM SIX

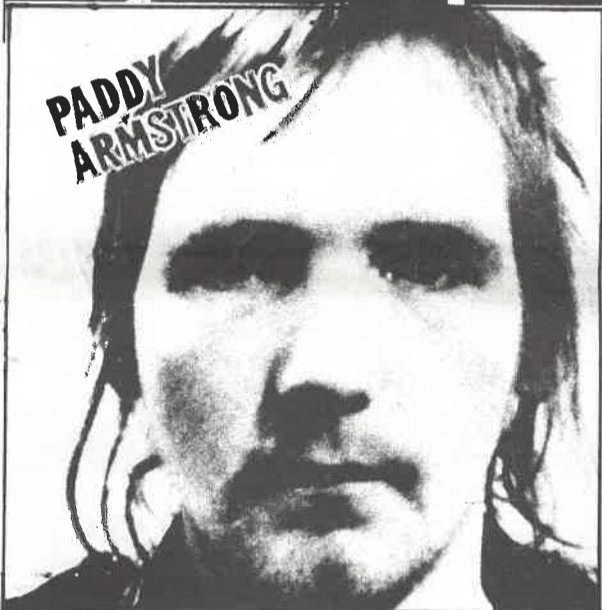
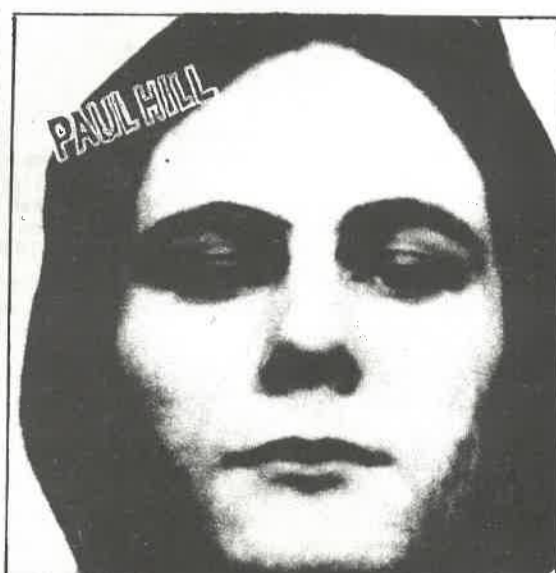
Early this year, the Home Secretary also gave in to pressure to re-examine the case against the Birmingham Six: six Irishmen convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings with the only evidence against them being discredited forensic tests and 'confessions' which were later retracted. Again, the men said they had been forced to 'confess' by police brutality.

At the time, the Home Secretary refused to re-open the case of the Guildford Four. However, as the campaign for their release has built up both in this country and in Ireland, where pressure has been put on the government in the south, the Home Secretary has moved some way to meet these demands.

In August, he was approached by a delegation led by Cardinal Hume, which included Lord Scarman, Lord Devlin, Merlyn Rees, Roy Jenkins and Robert Kee, who has written a book about the case.

Merlyn Rees, who was Home Secretary at the time of the convictions, admitted on television that the judge and jury may have been more influenced by the desire for revenge than by the evidence presented at the time.

The Home Secretary has, however, only ordered a police investigation into the case. Alistair Logan, solicitor acting for the Guildford Four, was critical:



"Why does the Home Secretary appear incapable of saying in clear terms what the function of the investigation is? There should be a full independent judicial inquiry."

Lord Scarman was also not altogether happy with the result: "The delegation is pleased that the investigation is to be held, but it is not all we were asking for. The Home Secretary is entitled to take a look at the

material, but what we really want is a judicial inquiry."

### BRITISH JUSTICE

There is a striking similarity between the justice meted out to the Guildford Four and to Winston Silcott and other defendants in the Broadwater Farm trial. In both cases, the police, the judge and jury combined to ignore the true facts in order to get convictions in a racist atmo-

sphere whipped up by the media.

In the case of the Guildford Four, this is all part of Britain's war against the people of Ireland. As Paul Hill wrote from prison: "The Irish prisoners are in British prisons because British troops are on Irish soil. If that is not political then what is? I have been told that I will spend the rest of my natural life in prison. I am 21 years old."

"A purely defensive weapon," that is how former head of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, Jack Hermon, described the plastic bullet.

These "non-lethal" (or "less lethal" as they are now called) weapons have killed 16 people in the north of Ireland, most of them women and children.

Despite Hermon's comment that they would be used to "keep rioters at a distance and to contain violence" most victims have been killed in non-riot situations.

A Ministry of Defence study undertaken at the University of Lancaster showed that the use of riot "control" weapons has made the situation worse. 22 out of the 43 police forces in England and Wales now have plastic bullets.

Standard House in Huddersfield, home of Standard Fireworks



company, was the scene of a recent protest against the use of plastic bullets. It is Standard's subsidiary, Brocks, who make the plastic bullets.

A second picket was to be held by Belfast-based United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets.

Campaigners against plastic bullets are urging people who oppose their use to boycott Standard and Brocks until the firm stops making plastic bullets. The firms are owned by the York-based Scottish Heritable Trust.