

# CLASS STRUGGLE



Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

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## Ethiopia/Eritrea

# Manmade Famine

International relief organisations have mounted a major effort to counter the threat of mass starvation now hanging over millions of African people. A broad strip of sub-Saharan Africa is in the grip of the worst drought in living memory. In this dry, transitional zone between the desert and tropical Africa, life has been hard at the best of times, but now the people there are struggling for survival as their livestock perishes and the Sahara edges southwards. Chad, recently beset by civil war and foreign intervention, is hard hit, but conditions are worst in Ethiopia, where thousands have died already and the position of many more deteriorates daily. Despite a large international relief effort, little aid is getting through to the most affected areas - Tigray and Eritrea - and the reason for that is political. The fact of the matter is that the Ethiopian government has turned mass starvation into a weapon of war against the liberation movements of Eritrea and Tigray.

### PRISON HOUSE OF NATIONALITIES

The Ethiopian state has been dominated from its foundation by one nationality - the Amharas. Towards the end of the last century, Amhara rulers, with European backing, conquered neighbouring peoples - the Tigreans, Oromos, Afars and others, including to the east, the Somalis who had not lost their independence to Britain, France or Italy.

Eritrea was never part of Ethiopia. But Britain, after seizing Eritrea from Italy in 1941, planned to partition it between the Sudan and Ethiopia. The scheme never came off; the US emerged as the leading imperialist power after the Second World War, and it favoured getting Eritrea out of British hands and into Ethiopia, where US influence was growing. In 1950, the US pushed a resolution through the United Nations in favour of the establishment of a "federation" between Eritrea and Ethiopia.

This was simply a disguised take-over. Immediately the federation was established, the Ethiopian government began to suppress all expressions of Eritrean independence and democracy. Trade unions were suppressed, political parties banned and press freedom was totally destroyed.

In 1958, the Eritrean flag was torn down: even this symbol of Eritrea's identity was unacceptable to the Ethiopian authorities. Seeing that they would not secure their rights peacefully, the Eritreans launched an armed struggle for independence in 1961. The next year, Ethiopia declared that from then on, Eritrea was no more than an Ethiopian province.

### LONGEST WAR

After 23 years, the Eritreans are still fighting for their independence. It is the longest war going on in Africa: a whole generation has grown up without knowing peace.

There have been divisions among the Eritrean liberation forces, but since early in the 1970's, the strongest organisation has been the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). Their stand for an independent democratic Eritrea has remained constant since the Front's foundation in 1970. They in-



M. Goldwater/Network  
Making spare parts for E.P.L.F. trucks

flicted serious defeats on the US-armed and trained imperial army of Haile Selassie. When a group of officers, the Dergue, seized power in 1974, the EPLF was ready to negotiate with them to allow Eritrea to gain its independence peacefully, but the new rulers, despite their "socialist" pretensions, continued the Amhara supremacist policies of the old regime, and poured more resources into trying to suppress Eritrean resistance.

### SOVIET INTERVENTION

Everything failed. By mid-1978, the Eritrean forces were on the brink of total victory, with the entire countryside and all but three towns in their hands. Then the Soviet Union stepped in, preferring the gains it could make from a militarily dependent Ethiopian junta to support for an independent Eritrea. EPLF fighters were forced to retreat from the main Eritrean port of Massawa by the gunfire of Soviet warships, Soviet military aid was poured into Ethiopia, and the EPLF was forced to make a strategic withdrawal into western Eritrea.

To the south of Eritrea lies Tigray, home of an oppressed nationality within Ethiopia. After the fall of the old regime, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), formed to fight for self-determination for Tigray, made rapid progress, in co-operation with the EPLF. Before long, it won control of 85% of Tigray, and even mounted operations against

Ethiopian troops in neighbouring areas.

### SELF-RELIANCE

Despite the intense pressure put on them by an enemy armed and trained by the Soviet Union, despite the efforts of the Soviet Union and its loyal followers in the international "left" to isolate the EPLF and TPLF from the solidarity of progressive people around the world, the two organisations have maintained a highly principled stand of independence and self-reliance. They did not fall into the trap of choosing between superpowers and turn to the US because they were opposed by the Soviet Union. Instead they relied upon the strength of their people and their own military skills. The people co-operated to produce food for all; they built underground workshops, safe from Ethiopian bombing, to produce clothes and repair weapons. Guns, ammunition and even trucks and a few tanks were captured from the enemy.

Such independence is intolerable to all imperialists, who would rather push a liberation movement into the arms of rival imperialists than see it practice self-reliance and escape all imperialist domination. While the Ethiopian government depends on the Soviet Union militarily, it relies mainly on the west economically. The EEC and Sweden are major donors, and the World Bank has

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Photo AP/RN

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### AID FOR ERITREA AND TIGRAY

Send your contributions to:

Eritrean Relief Association,  
BCM Box 865,  
London WC1V 6XX

Or pay cheques into ERA's account: National Westminster  
Account Number: 2642 9357.  
ERA is registered charity No. 272845.



## EDITORIAL

# Whose Democracy, Whose Law?

There has been much talk about democracy recently. The day after the IRA's attack on the government, Thatcher talked about it as "an attempt to cripple Her Majesty's democratically elected government." Douglas Hurd, recently appointed Secretary of State for the north of Ireland, echoed her when he said: "The democracy we have inherited will outlive their bombs and bullets." Ronald Reagan expressed his sympathy with the words that the bombing was "an attack on the principle and institutions of democracy."

When the House of Commons opened all the bourgeois parties joined the chorus. David Steel, Liberal Party leader expressed their common theme when he said that they were all "one democratic family" and whatever their differences, when one member of the family was hurt, they all closed ranks.

The government and its opposition was clearly shaken by the Brighton attack which came so close to annihilating its leading figures. But the same theme has emerged in relation to the miners strike. Thatcher has called the miners "the enemy within" and a senior police officer referred to the pickets as "terrorists without bombs or bullets". In the case of the miners, the defence of "our" democracy has been linked with the need to uphold the law. Neil Kinnock hammered home this theme at the recent Labour Party conference.



"The state is a machine for maintaining the rule of one class over another" - and the role of the police in the miners' strike shows that they are the iron fist of the state.

### SHAM DEMOCRACY

Although we should be careful not to equate the miners' struggle with that of the people of Ireland, both expose the sham "democracy" of the British state. They both raise the questions of whose democracy, and whose law? The cries of "standing firm" and "defending our democracy" are attempts to hide the class and imperialist nature of Britain's bourgeois democracy and to unite people in the defence of British imperialism, as was done to justify the invasion of the Malvinas. (This too was done in the name of democracy and freedom.)

### BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

Lenin saw clearly the nature of bourgeois democracy. He wrote: *The state is a machine for maintaining the rule of one class over another.* And that: *"A democratic republic is the best possible shell for capitalism ... therefore once capital has gained control of this very best shell, it establishes its power so securely, so firmly, that no change, either of persons, or institutions, or of parties in the bourgeois democratic republic can shake it."*

Bourgeois democracy, on paper, means that everyone is equal before the law. But this hides the more important relationship of the exploited and the exploiter, and essentially means freedom for the exploiter to exploit and the exploited to be exploited.

The struggle of the miners has

shown clearly the class nature of 'our' democracy and laws. As long as class struggle can be confined within social-democratic channels and controlled by the 'labour lieutenants', it is acceptable. Once it breaks out of these limits, the courts, the police and all the power of the law are used to try and defeat it.

Of course, bourgeois democracy was an advance on earlier systems of government. The working people historically have fought for the limited rights they have and we should fight to defend them, while understanding their class nature. We have to understand that the bourgeoisie prefers to rule 'by consent' by allowing people certain rights, which the bourgeoisie can dispense with if necessary.

### NATIONAL MINORITIES

The British state denies national minority people even most basic rights. Under the Immigration laws, for example, black national minority people are denied basic bourgeois democratic rights that others take for granted such as habeas corpus. Some so-called "illegal immigrants" are held indefinitely in prison and can be deported with no right of appeal. Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Irish national minority people are held for seven days incommunicado and can be deported to another part of the "British state".

to buy opium from British traders so Britain went to war, seized Chinese ports and forced China to open up its markets. When diamonds and gold were found in southern Africa, the scramble for territory was one of naked force. Wherever Britain went, force was used to Britain's economic, political or military advantage.

Although most of the wealth gained from this exploitation of nations went to the bourgeoisie, they took Cecil Rhodes' advice and used some of the superprofits to strengthen the facade of bourgeois democracy within England. In the 20th century universal franchise was conceded, particularly since the Second World War, the welfare state created in order to tie the working class to the imperialist state and avoid 'civil war'. But the twentieth century has also been an era of struggle, particularly for the oppressed peoples who have risen up against imperialism, many in armed struggle. It is this historic struggle for national freedom and self-determination that is undermining the world imperialist system, of which Britain is part. The working class and other progressive people in the imperialist heartlands must decide whether to line up with these forces of the future, or defend the democracy of Thatcher, Kinnock and Co.

The IRA and the revolutionary people of Ireland, have clearly chosen the road of struggle. In an interview published in An Phoblacht/Republican News, a spokesperson for the GHQ of the IRA said: "It is the Irish people who are denied democracy,



Miners' families march in the Rhonda, South Wales, in defence of their communities.

who are denied self-determination, who are denied by this British government which is the staunchest supporter of the Union and the loyalist veto, the right to elect a national government for this island." We have a duty to give our unconditional support to their struggle.

We also have a duty to demonstrate that although the working people of this country have won some concessions and a better standard of living, in the long term they too must break the links with imperialism and take the road to hard struggle to a true socialist society.

Dear Editor,

Along with many papers from the British left, you have reported miners sharing platforms with Irish Republican speakers. Whilst this is an encouraging thing, it is far from widespread solidarity by NUM members, and trade unionists generally, with the struggle of the Irish people for national liberation. 'The Miner' has given a whole page comparing the police behaviour in the miners' strike to their actions in the north of Ireland. Although having described the police state over there, there was no explanation of why it exists. Some of the reporting, as in September 21st issue of 'The Miner', is far from helpful. The caption to a picture from the Falls Road containing a 'Victory to the Miners' banner read in part: "Ironically in northern Ireland the strike has been a positive factor. In both Catholic and Protestant pubs working class people have donated thousands of pounds to visiting strikers from the Notts coalfield. Their class commitment has overtaken all other considerations."

We still have a lot of work to do on the issue of Ireland when those "other considerations" are the occupying armed forces of British imperialism. In the euphoria of supporting the miners' just cause, such dismissive snide remarks about the Republican cause should be noted. We have the responsibility not to sidestep the chauvinism of working class militants to ensure that solidarity is internationalist. That is why I welcome October's editorial on the miners' strike: "We have to break with the politics of imperialism." Victory to the miners! Victory to the Irish people!

Yours in struggle,  
Midlands reader.

Dear Editor,

Following on last month's articles in 'Class Struggle', marking the 35th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, I write to recall a small, very informal but joyous evening spent in a pub with some young students from China who are studying here.

The Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding (SACU) organised a most successful 35th anniversary meeting at the Holborn Central Library Hall on October 5th, attended by about 200 people of British, Chinese and many other nationalities. After a short speech from the Chinese Ambassador, a stimulating talk by Jack Gray from Sussex University, we were entertained by three students studying at the Royal College of Music. To the western ears of most of the audience, Chinese instruments and music are strange but the virtuosity of the players and the melodies and songs played soon had us all enthralled.

After this formal meeting was over, the three performers were invited to join us for a drink at the local pub - a cheerful and welcoming place which was pretty full of probably mainly 'regulars' at that time of the evening. Complete with piano, pianist and vocalists, this was just the sort of place we all needed to relax in. But our Chinese guests soon gave it an extra element, for when the resident pianist vacated his seat, one of the students sat down and began to play softly, with his co-musicians fingering their flute and accordion. Then with the publican's consent, and a very short announcement as to why this was a special occasion for China, they soon struck up properly and all heads were turned, some apprehensively, to consider the unusual music



The Editor,  
'Class Struggle',  
c/o 203 Seven Sisters Road,  
London N4 3NG.



that was being played. At this point you couldn't call the listening full-scale appreciation - what was happening to the usual Friday night entertainment for goodness sake?

But after a few Chinese tunes the players launched enthusiastically into well-known and well-loved English and Scottish songs, and with this link of music between us, apprehension turned quickly to friendship. We all began to join in the singing - with many dancing together and there were other Chinese present to partner their British hosts - and the clapping and encores were soon in full swing. This unusual singsong ended on a high note when our small orchestra ended with Auld Lang Syne. At this everyone spontaneously joined crossed hands all round the pub and friendship and appreciation really flowed.

For me, as someone who has been a SACU member since its founding in 1965, it was a truly remarkable gesture of real people to people friendship and one I thought I would never witness in an English pub!

BP, London.



## MINERS' STRIKE

# 'No Compromise'

"In the life of every human being there comes a time when you either put up or shut up," said a recent issue of 'The Miner'. "This time has now arrived for all the miners in Britain." The paper was responding to the decision of the High Court to fine the union £200,000 for 'contempt of court'. Since then the court has ordered the sequestration (seizure) of all the funds of the national union.

This is one more step in the seven-month battle over pit closures. In October the government faced a serious threat from the National Association of Colliery Overseers and Deputies (NACOD) to stop all production. But they quickly rectified this. After they had failed to persuade NACOD to have another ballot as the result of the first was a vote of over 80% for a strike, the National Coal Board (NCB) quickly made sufficient concessions to get NACOD to back down and thus deprived the miners of a powerful ally.

### PICKET LINES AND COURTS

Meanwhile on the picket lines and in the mining communities, the struggle goes on in a more down-to-earth and bitter way than is reflected on our television screens. The courts continue to back up the police - in an important test case recently an appeal against the restrictive bail conditions being imposed on pickets, was lost. This means that even when miners charged are eventually acquitted, the bail conditions prevent them from being active in the meantime. Two Derbyshire miners were recently given bail on condition that they moved to the north of Scotland (where, of course there are no pits). Some miners are also being sacked by the NCB when found guilty in the courts.

By mid-September in the course of the strike there had been 6,891 arrests, over half of these being for 'breach of the peace'. By October 40 miners had been sent down by the courts. Injuries include two picket line deaths, five men now on life-support machines, three fractured skulls, ten broken legs and numerous other injuries.

### RESISTANCE

But the miners have fought on and in the areas on strike, whole communities have faced police invasion and have resisted. One miner at Polmaise, Scotland, commented before the NACOD's settlement: "Whatever is settled by NACOD, Polmaise will never accept compromise now, not after these eight months." (Polmaise was on strike in February, a month before the other areas.)

### COMMUNITIES UNDER ATTACK

The names of Blidworth (Notts), Maltby, Armthorpe and Grimethorpe (all three in Yorkshire) will go down in history as whole communities under brutal attack by the police force. Blidworth came under siege in May, by about 300 police when Yorkshire pickets were camping in the gardens of striking miners. One woman explained: "One of the officers told my husband that they would arrest all the house occupants for 'harbouring' Yorkshire pickets."

### MALTBY

In June, Maltby came under siege

for nearly two weeks. Police occupied the village and generally intimidated miners and their families. Eventually crowds of youths fought back and attacked the police station. One eye-witness described on incident: "People were swept up. I saw police attack a lad and his girlfriend. She was dragged across the road. Other women were abused and called 'whores'. The rough house treatment was now in full swing as police, some with dogs, drove local people up the main street of their own village."

### ARMTHORPE

On August 22nd, during a picket of Markham Main colliery, the police sealed off Armthorpe, even halting bus services and preventing journalists entering. The NUM reports that at around midday the police charged the pickets in full riot gear and chased fleeing pickets into a neighbouring estate.

Pickets and residents were beaten by police. Local people opened their houses to the escaping pickets, but police broke in through doors and windows. People were dragged from houses and gardens, and severely beaten in full view of local people. The village was outraged and organised protest meetings and a march.



Miner injured when the police attacked pickets at Armthorpe.

### GRIMETHORPE

Most recently in October, Grimethorpe erupted with anger at the NCB, the government and the police. On Monday morning lorries being loaded at the pit came under a hail of missiles. A mechanical shovel was set on fire and destroyed. At dinner-time 200 youths, many wearing hoods, attacked the police station smashing windows and equipment. Later the control room and manager's office at Grimethorpe colliery were also attacked. The villagers' anger had been sparked off by arrests the previous weekend of people 'coal-picking' from the local tip - scavenging for coal to keep their families warm.

At a local meeting following police revenge attacks in the village, the Chief Constable, Frank Gutsell, gave the people an 'unreserved' apology for police behaviour. Others spoke of the ownership of the coal. One miner pointed to the cemetery outside the window and said: "There's men laid in them cemeteries that died through being gassed, or explosions, having their legs blown off. They paid for that coal."

People have traditionally taken coal from the tip during disputes and it is only now

that the police have intervened to stop them, bringing charges of theft against them. One local councillor condemned violence from both sides and urged people to stop throwing stones. A young miner met with cheers when he pointed out that no-one ever condemned David when he stoned Goliath.

There can be no doubt about the fighting class spirit and determination of the miners on strike, and their communities. They now have 'General Winter' on their side too. But they will need much broader support, in action as well as words, from wider sections of the working class, to win the struggle.

The government has not taken on the miners lightly. Economically, they are prepared: they still have large coal stocks and a substantial minority of miners working. Politically, they have prepared the ground well over the last few years - the results can be seen in the demoralisation and lack of real solidarity action from the majority of the working class. Legally the courts and the law are on their side and militarily, they have mobilised the police force on a scale not seen before on the mainland.

British imperialism needs to re-structure the economy in order to survive and expand once more. It must do this at the expense of working class jobs and living standards. The miners are fighting this strategy and the outcome will be important for all of us.

### VICTORY TO THE MINERS!

## Miners and Ireland

### BUILD A REVOLUTIONARY ALLIANCE

The slogan 'One Struggle, One Fight', often heard on marches, expresses the fact that the miners and the nationalist people of Ireland face one enemy - British imperialism. However, it omits the other aspects of what is going on. One of the fundamental contradictions in the world today is between the oppressed nations and oppressor nations. Politically, the struggle of the Irish nation for freedom shares many features of the struggles of the people of the Third World, and their struggle has been a protracted one in the form of a national liberation struggle with a tried and tested Republican leadership. The miners' struggle is a class struggle within an oppressor nation, beginning to break out of the social-democratic consciousness which has, for many years, characterised even the working class of the oppressed nations. It inevitably carries with it, the racism and chauvinism that has imbued all of imperialist society. The recognition by a small but growing number of miners, that they face a common enemy, whose uses the same ruthless tactics against the people of Ireland as well as against themselves, is an important step. We welcome this step but have a responsibility to build on this understanding not just for the need for mutual support, but also for the need for the working class to understand and support the national rights of national minority people here, the Irish people and all oppressed people of the Third World who are in the forefront of the struggle against imperialism.

In this country we have to build

★ Delegates at the recent Labour Party conference defeated a motion calling for the withdrawal of British troops from the north of Ireland by a majority of more than 10 to 1. If its leaders had had their way a motion calling for the end to the Diplock (no jury) courts would have been thrown out too - but against their advice the rank and file approved that motion by a narrow majority. So when we are tempted to look favourably at the Labour Party - when it is upholding the miners' strike - don't let us forget for one minute that when the crunch comes, when the imperialist system of the present British state is really questioned, it lies solidly behind maintaining the status quo: military occupation of another country.

★ The problem of low pay has become so serious in Merseyside that over a quarter of all people in full-time work fall below the generally accepted low pay level of £100 a week, according to a report published recently by the Low Pay Unit. The extent of the problem was illustrated by the Wages Inspectorate, which found that 56% of Merseyside employers visited last year, were paying illegally low wages. Yet NO employers were prosecuted for the offence last year, and the number of inspectors has been cut by over a third.

## WORKERS NOTEBOOK

★ The strike by 380 computer staff at DHSS Tyneside is now 22 weeks old, is causing a lot of hardship to families and pensioners and is costing the government phenomenal amounts in providing alternative arrangements. The strike, called by the Civil and Public Services Association in May, is in response to proposed savings of £700,000 a year by reducing shift payments and "increasing efficiency" ... i.e. wage cuts. Mr Norman Fowler has shown no sign of wishing to settle the dispute. Instead he has authorised local DHSS offices to employ large numbers of temporary workers and is paying local post offices everywhere to process weekly benefits. This has cost an estimated £30 million to date. The dispute affects benefits to 12 million mothers and pensioners and means they have to personally collect their benefit every week and any change in circumstance cannot be handled. The strike may extend to unemployment benefit soon but a letter sent to regional controllers says that ministers are prepared to spend another £38 million to recruit 3,800 casual staff for local unemployment offices rather than agree a settlement. Despite the individual hardships suffered, people should support the correct and lasting stand taken by the strikers against wage cuts, and call on Norman Fowler to withdraw his proposals.

★ An all-party Commons report, published in October, is scathing in its criticism of the vast investment of money in nuclear energy research at the expense of other energy policies. In the present financial year the Department of Energy will spend £196.6 million on nuclear research compared to £47.5 million on non-nuclear energy options. It will spend only £10 million on conservation of energy measures as against £235 million on development of supply. The government has, for decades, relied on the advice of the UK Atomic Energy Authority in formulating energy policy, with the resultant bias towards electricity and especially nuclear reactors.

a revolutionary alliance between the working class and the oppressed national minorities to overthrow our common enemy. Such an alliance will not be built quickly. But what is happening now shows us that there is a basis for this unity.

Comments from Guy, from South Yorkshire, after visiting Belfast this summer.

"Before we came over we were talking to a soldier whose dad is a miner. Before he joined the army he never hated anyone, he never wanted to shoot anyone. I want to know what they do to turn someone like him into a killer - like the soldiers in the landrovers and saracens we've seen today. I feel ashamed, too. It's working class lads who are doing this. They're traitors to their class. I can't brainwash that squaddie like his masters over here can. His dad's an active picket in the strike, but the son's fighting his own kind. I just wish we could see them mutiny like the Sikhs did over the siege of that temple in India. They said: "These are our people and we're not shooting them."

We reprint below a letter sent to the Troops Out Movement paper and printed in their October issue:

The coverage of the miners' dispute in August/September's issue was interesting for many reasons. One of these reasons is that as far as we are aware Roy Mason and Don Concannon are National Union of Mineworkers sponsored MP's.

There is a great and tragic irony that the mainland Security Forces are using what they have perfected in the Six Counties against the NUM strike. Roy

Mason was Secretary for N. Ireland between 1976 and 1979. His previous portfolios had prepared him well for his new role. It was Mason who was to introduce the SAS to the Six Counties, it was he that enlarged the role of the UDR and the RUC - 'Ulsterisation'. The methods of control perfected by Newman for the RUC have been imported. Mason created the atmosphere that enabled the British police (including the RUC) to utilise the baton, snatch squad, plastic bullet, Prevention of Terrorism Act and media control.

Nearly ten years on the miners are able to enjoy the fruits of their sponsorship. Many people and many miners have seen the link between Ireland and their own struggle. Has this link appeared as a blinding revelation to the NUM? Many spokespersons suggest that this has been the case. What is the NUM going to do about their two sponsored MP's? Do the miners remember the Hunger Strike in the H Blocks, are they aware that Concannon told Bobby Sands MP that he and the Labour Party supported the Tories in their decision not to intervene? This was just days before Sands died. He also opposed the call to ban plastic bullets at the 1982 party conference.

We would hope that the sponsorship of these two men is called into question and that the NUM fully support the various resolutions on Ireland at the TUC conference. The TUC had best look at the Six Counties and see what is in store for them unless they act now.

Gerry Saunders, Irish Interest Group, Brent, London.



# Philippines Revolution Advances

In the Philippines today, the fight against the US-Marcos dictatorship has reached an unprecedented level.

The establishment is split, with leading businessmen and figures like the head of the Catholic Church in the Philippines, Cardinal Sin, publicly criticising the Marcos family's rule.

Since the murder of Senator Aquino last year, there have been repeated anti-Marcos demonstrations of hundreds of thousands in Manila and elsewhere. Popular protest forced Marcos to appoint a commission to investigate Aquino's murder. On 24th October, four of the five members of the fact-finding board delivered a report implicating General Fabian Ver, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, and Major-General Prospero Olevas, Chief of Metrocommand (Manila area) and Deputy Chief of the Philippine constabulary, in Aquino's murder. Marcos granted them temporary leaves, and said that those implicated would be brought to trial quickly. However, many in the Philippines feel that the responsibility for Aquino's murder goes right to the top, and that like Richard Nixon during the US Watergate scandal, Marcos is attempting to stave off pressure by sacrificing subordinates.

In the countryside, the armed movement against the US-Marcos regime is growing by leaps and bounds. On 22nd October, "Newsweek" magazine reported that there are now areas of north Luzon (the biggest island in the Philippines) and Mindanao (in the south) from which the Philippine Army has been driven out by the New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas. US experts calculate that the NPA has doubled its strength in a year, and that it has a presence in 20% of human settlements in the country.

'Class Struggle' has carried regular articles on the Philippines in the past year. The Revolutionary Communist League sees the Philippines as one of the major centres of revolutionary struggle in the world today, and its importance will grow, not diminish. It is highly significant that a leading role in the revolutionary struggle is being played by the Communist Party of the Philippines which has applied Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought in a living way to the conditions in the Philippines. The CPP participates in the National Democratic Front, a broad alliance of popular organisations opposed to the US-backed Marcos dictatorship.

In this issue, we present a number of brief reports on various aspects of the situation in the Philippines. For more general information, see our June issue.

## Workers Protest Grows

The Marcos government has tried hard to provide attractive conditions for foreign capital investment. This includes government grants for companies opening new factories in the Philippines, with generous tax concessions and a whole range of other "incentives". But the biggest attraction has been the Philippine workforce.

Workers in the Philippines frequently work long hours and receive barely enough to survive on. Technically, there are minimum legal wage levels, but no attempt is made to enforce them. When workers of the Artex Development Company in Metro-Manila went on strike in May, they were attacked by police. In July, their picket line was (temporarily) broken by 300 police and troops who shot and beat the workers, wounding 56 and arresting 23. Yet one of the main complaints of the striking workers was that their wage was only just one half of the legal minimum for the Manila area.

Although strikes are technically legal in the Philippines, there are a whole host of obstacles to workers withdrawing their labour. Many industries are deemed to be "vital" to the country, and the right to strike

does not exist at all in them; elsewhere, there are "arbitration" and legal procedures to go through which invariably favour employers.

On top of that, many workers are un-unionised, or belong to unions affiliated to the Trades Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) which, on paper, has 800,000 members. The TUCP is, in reality, nothing but a government controlled instrument for paralyzing workers' struggles.

This has long been recognised by the workers, and now more and more are transferring to the two independent labour organisations, the 400,000-strong Federation of Free Workers and the militant Kilusang Mayo Uno (May 1st Movement - KMU), with 500,000 members. Internationally, the New Zealand Federation of Labour has broken links with the TUCP and given full support to the KMU, while labour federations in Ireland and Japan recognised the KMU as a genuinely representative national trade union body. The British TUC, however, still maintains fraternal ties with the TUCP.

In 1983-84, a succession of strikes have taken place. Women workers have been prominent in them: micro-electronics and textiles plants are overwhelmingly staffed by women. Plant bosses used to say that women are better in these jobs because they are "docile" and "patient", but recent actions in plants in the Bataan Export Processing Zone involving thousands of women belie these claims.

The right of workers to strike has been defended by many other forces in the movement against the US-Marcos dictatorship, and recently, the New People's Army (NPA) has undertaken urban actions in support of workers' struggles.

On May 25th, members of the Alex Boncayao Brigade of the NPA (named after a militant worker who joined NPA in 1978) executed police chief Tomas Karingal after his officers had fired on a picket line while escorting scabs to work. More and more workers are enlisting in the NPA, while working class participation in the big anti-Marcos demonstrations of the past year or so, has made an impact on the whole opposition movement.



In August, the Philippine Conference on Human Rights referred to the existence of around 800 political prisoners in around 100 detention centres across the country. (Left) Poster calling for the release of political detainees. (Below) Mila Aguilar, writer, poet, and detainee.



## FREE MILA AGUILAR!

As reported in the September issue of 'Class Struggle', distinguished woman writer, journalist and teacher Mila Aguilar was arrested on August 6th and charged with subversion by the Philippine government.

Worldwide protests followed Mila's detention, and a Quezon City civil court ordered her release. But, using a Presidential Detention Action, the military got round the court order and continue to hold her.

A Committee to Free Mila Aguilar has been formed, and it appeals to people to sign its petition and to write to the Philippine President in Manila calling for her release. Copies of the petition can be obtained via the RCL, or direct from: 5A, Durham Street, Somerville, MA, 02143, USA.

## Superpowers Out!

There are signs of growing worry in US ruling circles about the growth of the popular opposition movement in the Philippines. According to "Newsweek" magazine, some US intelligence sources estimate that the Marcos regime only has another two months left to exist; the CIA calculates that the maximum time the regime can survive is two more years.

That such reports are taken seriously is shown by the fact that the US has recently leased 8,000 hectares of land on two Pacific islands, Saipan and Tinian, in case it needs to replace its installations at Subic Bay and Clarke Airfield in the Philippines—its biggest bases outside US territory. This does not mean that the US is ready to give way to the Filipino people. Military exercises have taken place which amount to dress rehearsals for direct US intervention. Last month, Stephen Solarz, Chair of the House of Representatives Sub-committee on Foreign Affairs urged the Reagan administration to change its policies towards the Philippines before it was "too late."

The Philippines National Democratic Front believes the threat of intervention is a very real one. It hopes to win wide international support against any attempted direct US military involvement.

The NDF doesn't want any foreign bases on Philippine soil, and stands for an independent and non-aligned Philippines. That is why the US, which props up Marcos and is the main exploiter of the Filipino people, opposes it, and why the Soviet Union finds the Marcos government "progressive" and preferable to a new coalition democratic government of the opposition, including the NDF.

## Philippines Tour

In co-operation with other organisations, the RCL is arranging a national tour on the Philippines for the week beginning 26th November. Anyone wanting to participate in organising the event or wishing to know details of meetings should contact RCL locally or at our national address.

## A Corrupt Regime

Ferdinand Marcos, President of the Philippines, is a dying man hanging onto power for as long as he can. Since he became President, he has concentrated more and more power in the hands of his family and a small clique around them. The Marcos political machine is the New Society Movement (KBL). It is a vehicle by which careerists can advance themselves in return for linking their fortune to those of the regime. It has no mass roots. When it had "popular rallies" in the past, people were either ordered to go to them or paid to do so. It won the elections this year through massive electoral fraud: after the first results had come in showing large gains for the opposition, the count was slowed down, and suddenly the KBL wins began to mount up.

More important to Marcos' rule has been his domination of the armed forces. General Fabian Ver, the army's commander, was a loyal Marcos supporter, and until very recently, it looked as though he would be crucial in securing the arrangements for the succession to Ferdinand Marcos when he dies - which would mean, if the Marcos family had their way, guaranteeing the succession of Ferdinand's

wife, Imelda, to the presidency. However, now that Marcos appears to have thrown Ver to the lions over his implication in the murder of Aquino, the future of his family's rule looks even more shaky.

Not that the Marcos family have failed to take out an insurance policy. Ferdinand started out as a law graduate; Imelda as

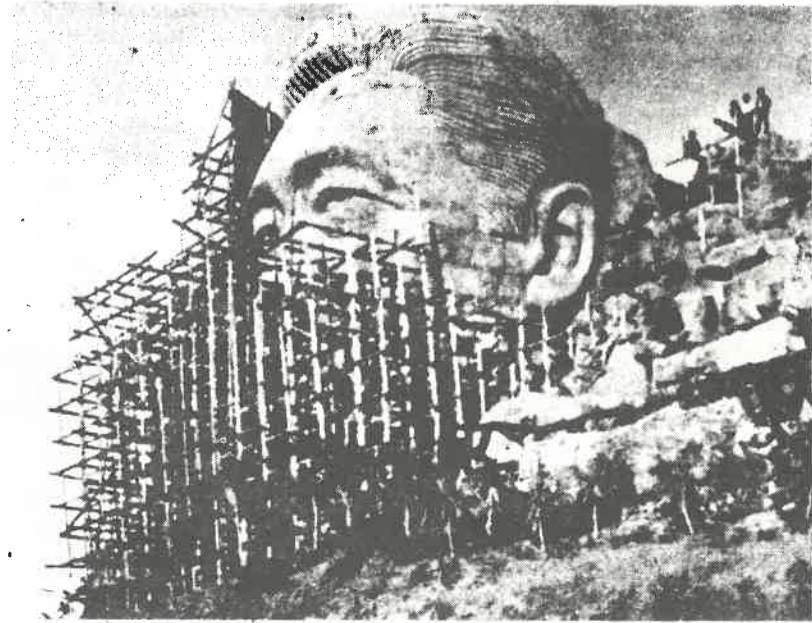
a beauty queen; but today, each of them is a multi-millionaire, with large overseas bank deposits.

They have squandered money while many Filipinos live in squalid slums, working for a pittance. Imelda was recently decked out in expensive clothes on opening a "new housing project", but when the cameras moved, they showed that the "new houses"

were just facades with the same old slums behind them. Ferdinand is having a Mount Rushmore-style 50-foot high face of himself carved into a mountainside.

Daughter Imee Marcos ran off several years ago with playboy Tommy Manotoc, who divorced his wife, Aurora, abroad, (divorce is not legal in the Philippines) and married Imee. Father soon overcame his anger and accepted Tommy as one of the family, but there was a hitch during the elections this summer, when Imee and Aurora both stood as candidates, and both as "Mrs Manotoc". Since, in the Philippines parliament, members are seated alphabetically, Marcos feared a great deal of embarrassment if the two Mrs Manotocs took their seats. Aurora looked set to win on an opposition ticket, but the count was interrupted by the authorities, and when the place where the count took place was re-opened for it to continue, the piles of ballot papers for the government candidate had increased dramatically. Aurora lost.

The Marcos family embarrass their US backers, but the US has yet to find anyone more credible with whom to replace them.





## AFGHANISTAN

# People's War

In Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, the Mujahidin launched an offensive on Kabul on 13th September of this year. The city was bombed daily and eleven days after the attack started, one of the Soviet strongholds in the city, the Bala Hissar, was attacked along with the airport and other suburbs of Kabul.

Government tanks opened fire in the streets of the old city and air strikes were ordered on suburbs to dislodge the Mujahidin resistance. Over 100 government soldiers were killed and armoured personnel carriers were destroyed in the fighting.

Kabul is a besieged capital under shell and mortar attacks from positions sometimes less than a mile away. The attacks on Kabul follow on from the intensification of the war in a summer campaign by the Soviet-backed regime. The Soviet



offensive on the Mujahidin's mountain and valley strongholds included indiscriminate terror attacks and the use of high-level bombers based in the Soviet Union.

A western reporter who recently saw for himself the increasing military traffic of Soviet transport planes, MIG jets and helicopter gunships, commented: "The airport, two and a half miles from the city, is reminiscent of Da Nang at the height of the Vietnam war."

The failure to win a decisive victory over the Afghan resistance reinforces the parallel with the US occupation of Vietnam. Another reporter observed that five years into the war, the Soviet conscript army "walks even less than American GI's and, apart from the much-vaunted Special Troops, hardly ever alight from their vehicles."

In mid-October, up to 70,000 reinforcements were reported to have been flown into

Afghanistan, from the Soviet Union, to defend Kabul from increasing Mujahidin attacks. Unconfirmed accounts were circulating that negotiations between the Soviets and Ahmad Shah Mahsood, leader of the resistance in the Panjshir valley, north of the city, are designed to bring about a truce.

### GUERRILLA WAR

Embroided in a classic guerrilla war in defence of the Soviet-

imposed Karmal regime, Soviet soldiers are in poor shape, low in morale and increasingly, high on drugs. The resilience of the resistance to the Soviet invasion has forced a stalemate that discourages any talk about light at the end of the 'Afghan Tunnel'. In the eyes of the people of Afghanistan, the defence of their national independence is seen as a holy war that will give no respite to the constantly-harassed Soviet forces.

## Kampuchea

The rainy season which ended in September, was a time of great successes for the liberation forces of Democratic Kampuchea.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry of the Government of Democratic Kampuchea noted that the Kampuchean people's struggle had a strategically important turning point. Regular units of the Kampuchean army have extended their operations into central Kampuchea, to areas around the Tonle Sap, Kampuchea's Great Lake, and to Kompong Chhnang province, whose capital is only about 60 miles from the capital city of Phnom Penh.

Until recently the Kampuchean forces concentrated on wearing down the strength of the Vietnamese occupation army through guerrilla attacks which inflicted heavy casualties, but now they have been able to attack ammunition dumps and seriously interrupt food and fuel supplies being moved up to Vietnamese forward positions in western and north-western Kampuchea. This year, they have also carried out major attacks on provincial and district towns in many western and central areas of Kampuchea.

The result of both the cutting of supply lines and the extensive attacks of the Kampuchean forces has been that this year for the first time, the Vietnamese have been unable to launch one of their major operations in the western border region. Many foreign commentators noted that military action on or near the Thai frontier was low key compared to previous years.

## Moroccan Prisoners Defiant

The following letter is reprinted from "Solidaire", paper of the Party of Labour of Belgium:

40 days have passed since the militants Moulay Boubaker Douraidi and Belhouari fell as martyrs during the hunger strike they undertook with their comrades in Marrakesh, Safi and Essawira prisons. These militants were victims of waves of arrests carried out in different parts of the country following the popular mass struggle of January 1984.

We, the undersigned political prisoners, commemorate this event along with the families and comrades of these militants, as well as all justice-upholding

people in this country. We express our profound sorrow for the lives of these militants of the people. We denounce the intransigence of those responsible and their premeditated determination to ignore the just demands of the strikers, consigning them to a certain death. Two lessons can be drawn from the martyrdom of these militants:

Firstly, Moroccan reaction only knows one means to meet all expressions of opposition - repression and violation of the most elementary human rights. The death of these militants is new proof of the falsity of Morocco's sham democracy. These deaths bare the reality lived by the masses

of the people, a reality which has nothing to do with the pretended democratic process.

Secondly: these two militants, by their martyrdom, illuminate, side by side with other militants, the path of hard struggle which our people are taking. Self-sacrifice is proof of the firm will and resolution of the militants of our people in defending their rights and their dignity in order to be human.

To mark the 40th day after their martyrdom, to salute and honour their memory, we are carrying out a hunger strike on Saturday 6th October 1984.

Kenitra Central Prison,  
October 6th 1984,  
(Signed by 18 prisoners)

# Third World Solidarity

Many of the articles in this issue of 'Class Struggle' have been concerned with supporting national liberation struggles against imperialism.

Looked at on a world scale, the struggle for socialism is very complex. Many who claim to be 'Marxists' in Britain today wear blinkers. All they can see is the struggle of class against class within the imperialist countries. They imagine the struggle in Third World countries to be similar, but contemptuously view them as 'backward' in comparison.

In fact their whole approach is totally wrong. It has little to do with Marxism, and is in reality only a reflection of the imperialist and racist ideas that infuse every class in an imperialist society.

Britain is an imperialist country. The entire world is divided into oppressed and oppressor nations. The wealth of the imperialist countries is built on the oppression of the Third World. The struggle for socialism can only advance through the defeat of the imperialist rulers of the 'advanced' nations. The main blows being struck are not being struck within the imperialist nations. They are being struck by the national liberation movements. This is an inescapable fact. Portugal was rocked by the Liberation struggles in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau. The USA was rocked by its defeats in Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos. The Soviet Union is bogged down in Afghanistan, whilst its

agents flounder in Kampuchea. British imperialism has been hit recently in Zimbabwe and faces armed resistance in Ireland.

We have particularly highlighted the national liberation movements and their right to fight for their independence because they are the motor force for change. They will strike the biggest blows for freedom and the defeat of imperialism. But it would be a mistake to limit our support purely to them.

Inevitably other classes in the Third World are drawn into the struggle against imperialism alongside the working class and peasantry. Some join the national liberation movements themselves. Others appear in a more vacillating position.

Many Third World countries have united in regional associations, or in product groups such as the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and at the United Nations, in order to resist the level of plunder of their countries. When they do so they are entitled to the support of genuine socialists within the imperialist countries even if they are bourgeois or repressive regimes internally.

In an imperialist world the class struggle takes the form mainly of national struggles against imperialism. At the same time the effect of imperialism within the imperialist countries has been to dampen down the class conflict and

to divert the working class mainly into a temporary alliance with their own bourgeoisie against the national struggle. The task of genuine revolutionaries is to work to break that alliance and to fight for another - between the working class, the oppressed national minorities within the imperialist countries and the oppressed nations. Arduous and long term it certainly is. But there is no other way.

At the same time we should be well aware of the conflict between different imperialist powers. In particular, the two superpowers are increasing their contention. The USA and the Soviet Union are the biggest powers in the world, and both face national liberation struggles, but they continue to strive against each other to hold or gain a bigger share of the plunder. The arms race escalates and the threat of world war lies round the corner.

The fight for peace will mainly be realised through the fight against imperialism and particularly against the superpowers. The conclusion again is that support for national liberation is not peripheral. It is not something to do 'when we have time'. It is central to the struggle for socialism. In particular, as Lenin said:

"A proletariat that tolerates the slightest coercion of other nations by its 'own' nation, cannot be a socialist proletariat."

## Manmade Famine

(Cont. from front page.) earmarked \$780 million for Ethiopia over the next five years.

From 1978-83, the EPLF remained on the defensive: attack after attack broke before its resistance. Then, at the beginning of 1984, its forces began to push forward, liberating the whole north-eastern coastline of Eritrea and practically all Eritrea east of the city of Keren. At Tessenai, in January, the EPLF captured a Soviet-made Antonov bomber; in May, its forces struck at the airfield at Asmara, Eritrea's capital, destroying 33 enemy warplanes on the ground. Over half Eritrea's territory has now been liberated, and EPLF guerrilla units are active in the rest, wearing down the Ethiopian army to assist the advance of the main forces from the west.

### FAMINE

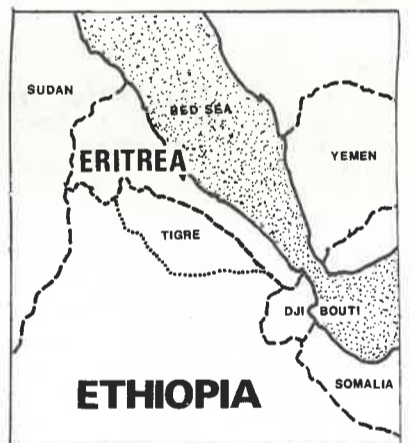
It is the war-torn areas of Eritrea and Tigray which are worst affected by the current famine. The drought was a natural disaster, but the famine is due to the policies of the Ethiopian government.

Ethiopia admits to spending a quarter of its budget on defence, compared to 3.2% for education and 1.3% for health, although the real figure for military spending may be 50%. It has run up a debt to the west of \$646 million and to Eastern Europe (mainly the USSR) of \$5 billion, mainly because of its military spending. Most of the results of this spending go on trying to deny the Eritreans, Tigreans, Oromos and other oppressed nationalities their right to self-determination.

During the Ethiopian occupation, people in a number of agricultural areas of Eritrea were taken from their villages into towns in an effort to cut links between them and the EPLF. Agricultural areas have been devastated by Ethiopian bombardment and animals have been stolen or killed.

Most of the famine relief aid donated to the people of Ethiopia has gone via the government, so that none of

that is distributed in the liberated areas. Large quantities have been used to supply the Ethiopian army of occupation. During a rapid advance in the north-east in March, EPLF forces discovered EEC food aid stockpiled in captured Ethiopian bases. Some of the independent relief agencies only work in places agreed by the Ethiopian government, so that large areas of Tigray and Eritrea are untouched by them.



War on Want and some other agencies have voiced criticisms of this situation, and called for provisions to be made for them to channel aid through Ethiopia into the EPLF-TPLF areas, but so far, the Ethiopian government has not responded positively. There is one way in which people can ensure that their contributions get to the people who need food and medical care most badly, however: that is by sending money to the Eritrean Relief Association, an international charitable body run by Eritreans. (See box on front page)

Meanwhile, in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's ruling military clique, headed by Mengistu Haile Mariam, has just transformed itself into a "People's Government" and the "Workers Party of Ethiopia". There was a tremendous fanfare around the event, like the fanfare around the OAU summit which took place a little over ten years ago in Haile Selassie's Ethiopia, as tens of thousands starved to death a few miles from the ceremony. The old regime didn't survive for long after that ...



## NATIONAL MINORITY RESISTANCE

The following interview is with Mohammed Younas, Chairman of the Kashmiris Defence Campaign. It is reprinted from the Summer 1984 issue of PAIKAAR, the quarterly paper of the Pakistani Workers Association (Britain).

PAIKAAR: Why was the Kashmiris Defence Campaign set up?

YOUNAS: The events immediately following the abduction and killing of the Indian diplomat in February of this year became so unbearable - the police exercised their racism and victimised the Kashmiri community in such a manner that we had no alternative but to organise ourselves, together with other Kashmiri organisations and other progressive and freedom loving organisations to stand against the police.

PAIKAAR: Is the KDC a campaign of the whole community?

YOUNAS: There are two aspects. Firstly, we are supported, not just by a few Kashmiris, but by many Kashmiri organisations, like Kashmiri Workers Association, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, Kashmir Liberation League, Azad Muslim Conference and other religious institutions. Secondly, we are supported by non-Kashmiri organisations - Pakistani, Indian, Irish and progressive white individuals. They not only support, but actively participate in the campaign.

PAIKAAR: For the campaign to have such a wide range of support, these people must have some idea of the injustices done to the Kashmiri people?

YOUNAS: Obviously we Kashmiris understand the present situation in Kashmir and its background, but yes, other organisations also have some understanding of the issues. Also, when we are fighting to defend the Kashmiri community, we are fighting for the whole black community and for all freedom loving people.

PAIKAAR: What have you done to bring the campaign to the notice of the community at large?

YOUNAS: Our first action was to picket the police headquarters in Birmingham - a picket against the victimisation of the Kashmiri community. This was a successful picket.

PAIKAAR: Can you say more about the picket? What was the background to the protest?

YOUNAS: We raised our voices, made it known that we were under attack by the British police. We were exposing a situation where people were being dragged away from the streets, cafes, libraries - taken from their homes in the middle of the night. The police were not investigating a killing but victimising the whole community. This is not the first sort of incident in which a person has been killed. Black people have been burnt to death by racist thugs. Racist leaders have said publicly in meetings in London: "One down, a million to go". The police never investigate racist organisations as they "investigated" the Kashmiri community. They do not raid the houses of members of fascist organisations, occupy their offices, go through their records. Yet this is what they did to the Kashmir Liberation Front. Nearly every Kashmiri who was active in some way became a target for investigation. It was large scale intimidation - an attempt to keep people quiet.

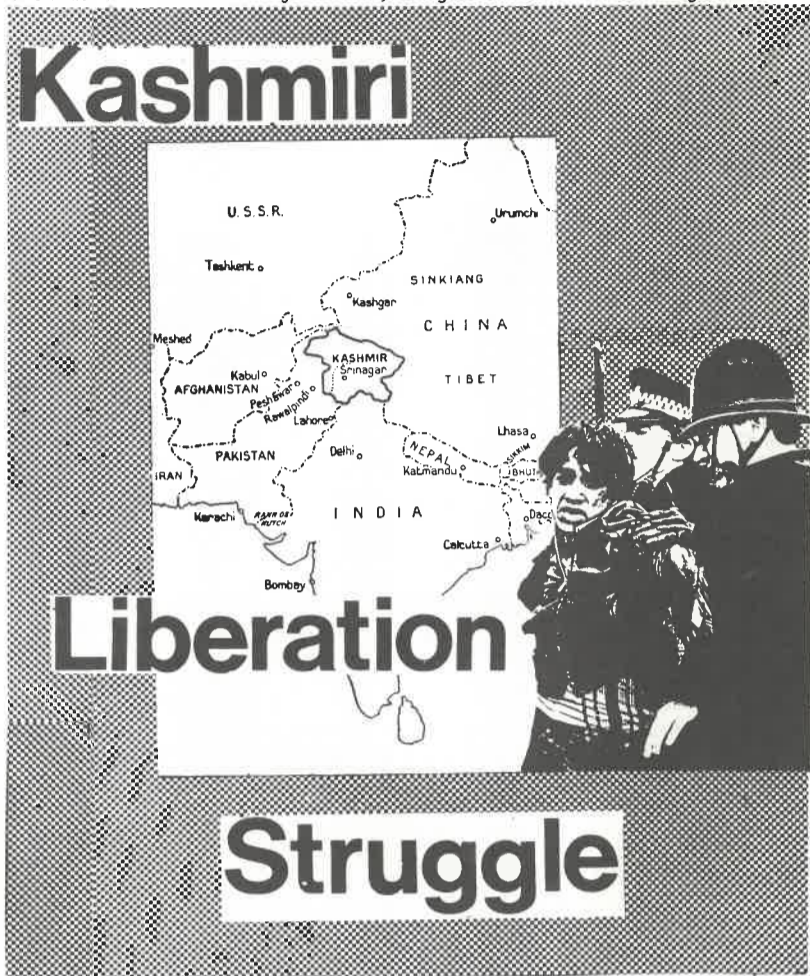
PAIKAAR: After the picket?

YOUNAS: We held a demonstration. People who witnessed it viewed it as successful. It was clearly a reaction of ordinary people against police victimisation - old and young, came out onto the streets.

PAIKAAR: Did the demonstration start from areas where black minorities live?

YOUNAS: Yes. The demonstration started in Alum Rock, an area that had been a battle ground for the police and where the KLF office is situated. The local population had been terrorised by the police. We then marched to the city centre,

situation of Kashmir clear. Briefly, the Indian government continues to occupy Kashmir by force, and has done for the last 37 years. Not only do they occupy - thousands of Kashmiri people have been murdered by the Indian occupying army - women widowed, children orphaned. Leaders of the national liberation movement are in the death cells of the Indian government. It is the duty of Kashmiri people to fight against the Indian government



past Steelhouse Lane police station where Kashmiri people were held, interrogated and tortured, physically and mentally.

PAIKAAR: How big was the demonstration?

YOUNAS: It numbered thousands, and this was only from the local area. Kashmiri people have been harassed all over the country, but because of the short time available for organisation, many people from outside Birmingham couldn't come.

Our next activity was a public meeting where people from all sections of the Kashmiri community spoke.

PAIKAAR: What was the purpose of the public meeting?

YOUNAS: To show the continuous struggle of the KDC and to explain further what actions were being taken against victimisation and criminalisation. To stress and explain in more depth about the actions of the police. Speakers talked about the historical background of Kashmir and explained that the responsibility for the abduction and killing of the Indian diplomat lies with the Indian government.

PAIKAAR: How is that?

YOUNAS: This cannot be fully understood until we make the

**LONG LIVE THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE OF THE KASHMIRI PEOPLE**



Shahed-e-Kashmir  
Maqbool Butt  
(1930-1984)

in every way possible.

The Indian government is putting pressure on the British government to eliminate the Kashmiri political movement here. The Indian government wishes to ensure that there is no opposition to the Indian occupation of Kashmir from Britain. The British government is supporting the Indian government by intimidating the Kashmiri community. The Indian police were even sent to help the British police in their investigation of the abduction and killing of the Indian diplomat.

PAIKAAR: How did the Kashmiri community react to the martyrdom of Maqbool Butt?

YOUNAS: They were very upset and angry. Prior to the setting up of the KDC, there was a demonstration organised by the Kashmiri community to protest against the vengeful decision of the Indian government to hang Maqbool Butt. On the day that he was murdered, Kashmiri people demonstrated outside the Indian consulate in Birmingham. There were similar demonstrations by Kashmiris all over Britain, Europe, Azad Kashmir, Indian-occupied Kashmir, in fact, all over the world, wherever Kashmiri people live. These protests were not covered by the media. It was from these activities that the idea of a local campaign emerged.

PAIKAAR: Recently KDC participated in the local elections. Can you tell us about this?

YOUNAS: One first point, we were unable to stand all five of the imprisoned Kashmiris. There was widespread sympathy for this idea, and there were many Kashmiris who were prepared to nominate them. However, there were legal problems that we were unable to resolve. Finally we were able to nominate two Kashmiris to stand in the local elections. The purpose of the campaign was to stop the harassment of Kashmiri people now, and to assert that Kashmiri people are not

criminals. We stood against criminalisation and for the freedom of the five Kashmiris.

PAIKAAR: Was it only to get publicity, or was it to make a political point?

YOUNAS: It was more than publicity. It was one way for us to say that whatever the British people are saying about Kashmiri people and the five imprisoned Kashmiris, to Kashmiri people, they are not criminals. There are four points which summarise the political position:

1. Whatever the authorities say, Kashmiri people do not see the five as criminals.

2. Kashmiri people are living in this country, more than 6000 miles away from their homeland, but they have not forgotten about liberation. This is true of Kashmiri people throughout the world. The British media never talks about the liberation of Kashmir.

3. In this country, we have voted for the main political parties. They all condemned the killing of the Indian diplomat, yet not one of them raised a voice in protest at the murder of Maqbool Butt.

4. To stop the harassment of Kashmiri people.

PAIKAAR: It has been said that you were trying to sabotage the Labour Party vote.

YOUNAS: This was not the actual situation. Many Kashmiri people have been involved with the Labour Party for a long time. Many came out to support the Kashmiris. Some were undecided and would not come out openly, but were sympathetic. A major thing was that we did not engage in dirty politics. Our aims were quite clear and open. We were not trying to take away their seats on the council, we were fighting for our people.

The major political parties have nothing positive to say for Kashmiri people. Our campaign had nothing to do with the Labour Party and the other major parties. In reality they are not sympathetic to our cause, nor are they likely to be. The Labour Party has never defended us or fought for our rights. The laws that Labour make are the same as those of the Tories.

Throughout the election campaign, we defended and fought for Kashmiri people. If that's sabotage for the Labour Party, then that means that we should

not organise to defend our communities, but sit back and wait for the Labour Party to do it - but we know they wouldn't do anything. If fighting for our basic rights is breaking the Labour vote - what can be better than that? Soon after the abduction and killing of the Indian diplomat, MP's from all major parties condemned it as barbaric. Within one week, the beloved leader of the Kashmiri people was vengefully murdered, and not one MP from any party said a single word which condemned the terrorist, barbaric behaviour of the Indian government, not did they express any sympathy for the Kashmiri people. On this incident, there was no difference between Labour and Tory - in both cases their interests are with the Indian ruling class. If defending basic human rights is sabotage, then so be it.

PAIKAAR: What was the response?

YOUNAS: We had a total of 1355 votes in the two wards - Nechells 650 and Small Heath 705. We were very pleased. We only had three weeks in which to campaign. In such a short time it was difficult to explain how important it was to vote Kashmiri. Many people were sympathetic, and believed that the five were not criminals, but had a long history of loyalty to the traditional parties - to vote for those in the Council House. But we got more than 1300 votes in the heart of an imperialist state. This was a very great victory for the Kashmiri people, particularly when fighting against the major parties. Independents and SDP/Liberal alliance was forced into 4th and 5th places in both wards. Throughout the country, the Kashmiri candidates had the greatest success of all "independents". We were disappointed that lack of resources meant that we didn't get more votes, but we had already achieved a great victory. People living in those areas became aware that Kashmir was a country fighting for national liberation. Kashmir, known around the world as a heaven on earth is hell for the working people of Kashmir. This point was put across.

PAIKAAR: What is the future of the campaign?

YOUNAS: It was formed in a situation where every Kashmiri felt harassed and victimised. Now five Kashmiris have been charged and are behind bars. The Kashmiris Defence Campaign is now concentrating on the campaign to free the five.

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## CLASS STRUGGLE

Subscribe to "Class Struggle": Britain £4.00: Overseas: £5.00 for one year.



# Justice for John Pat!

John Pat was sixteen years old when he was found dead in a police cell in the town of Roeburn, Western Australia, on the night of September 28th, 1983. He and other Aborigines had been provoked into a fight with a group of drunken policemen, as a result of which they were arrested. When the seven Aborigines arrived at the police station, they were systematically beaten again, which resulted in the death of John Pat and the hospitalisation of two of the others.

Seven months later, an all-white jury heard 57 witnesses tell how the police had provoked a fight and arrested John Pat and his friends; they acquitted the five police officers brought to trial, charged with his manslaughter.

The six Aborigines who lived through the racist police attacks have not been so fortunate. They are being tried under the same system that freed the white policemen. One has been sentenced to three months' imprisonment, another has been fined \$375, a third has been acquitted, and the other three have still to be tried.

For years, Aborigines have faced denial of their land rights and the most horrific racist treatment - the last massacre of Aborigines in Western Australia took place as late as 1927, and Aborigine prisoners



"GSM" Photo

only stopped being locked in neck irons in 1958. When the apartheid system was established in South Africa, it was partly modelled on measures introduced long before by the British against Australian Aborigines. What happened to John Pat was nothing new.

Aborigines all over Australia were angered by Pat's murder. They have demanded that further action should be taken against the police involved in the case, that charges against their victims should be dropped, funding should be provided for the Aboriginal Legal Service

to carry out further inquiries, and that a Royal Commission should be established to investigate and report on the events surrounding John Pat's death.

On the first anniversary of Pat's killing, the Aboriginal Land Rights Support Group organised a picket of Australia House, London, to support the demands of the Australian Aboriginal people. The flag of the land rights movement was displayed outside the building, and Aboriginal speakers linked their struggle to those of black people world-wide.

# Labour Chauvinism

Last issue of 'Class Struggle' carried an advertisement for a week of anti-imperialist activities, organised by Newham Asian Association. In the end, the event did not take place: it was stopped by the local Labour council.

Newham Asian Association (NAA) had been given the go-ahead for the event by the council, who were to provide funding for it. As was its right, the NAA decided which speakers it wanted at its own events and started sending out invitations to them. Then Newham Council stepped in: they objected to three proposed speakers - from Sinn Fein, the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the NUM, all of whom were considered too extreme or

controversial.

NAA rightly considered that it was their event and they'd have the speakers they wanted, so they rejected the council's objections. The council's reaction was not only to withdraw funding from the anti-imperialist week, but to freeze the NAA's bank account so that it hasn't got any money for anything.

Thousands of Asian people live in Newham. The local Labour Party is quite happy to come round canvassing their votes at election time, but the Labour councillors have shown utter contempt for the right of a major local national minority organisation to handle its own affairs without interference.

# Anti-Arab Racism Slammed

On October 14th, the Palestine Solidarity Campaign organised a Conference on Anti-Arab Racism. It was a big success, with over 520 people attending, including many Arabs living in Britain.

The conference went ahead despite a big campaign by Zionist organisations to stop it, claiming that the PSC was "anti-semitic"-an absurd accusation given the fact that many of its mem-

bers have actively opposed anti-semitism, while quite a few are Jewish themselves.

Speakers both from the platform and the floor gave ample proof of the extent of anti-Arab racism in British society, referring to physical attacks, deportations and media stereotyping of Arab people. The conference decided to establish a media monitoring group and supported a call for an Arab community centre in London.

## BOOK REVIEW

### NOTES FROM A WAITING ROOM

Anatomy of a Political Prisoner  
by Alan Reeve.

Alan Reeve has had an embattled life. Without sensationalism, he tells the story of the awakening of his political consciousness and commitment. The theme of this autobiography is of: "A child who became a rebel without a cause, who became a prisoner, who re-found a class and thus a cause, who became a communist, who became a political prisoner, who became a fugitive."

The narrative is marked by a constant reassessment of ideas and actions. You understand why at Broadmoor "nurses" are in inverted commas. You read about the beatings, the punishment blocks, the individual resistance, roof-top protests and escape. Alan Reeve's commitment to confronting the state in microcosm as "the prison's own Maoist" took shape in the prisoners' organisation, the Revolutionary Action Committee for Broadmoor. His own individual awakening was via homosexuality and was in the context of a repressive penal institution. Within such a closed society, Alan Reeve's analysis of class domination adds a biting edge to his tentative critique of "deviance" and psychology. As he himself develops from a dissident to a revolutionary, so does his indictment of the destructive prison system.

Seventeen years in Broadmoor "special hospital" ended with Reeve's escape in August 1981. At his trial in the Netherlands in late 1982, he charged the British state with crimes "in reference to political control of periods of detention in psychiatric prisons along with the horror programme of isolation and torture which is not unusual."

'Notes from a Waiting Room' is a book to read twice: once for its absorbing narrative; second, to investigate the avenues Reeve's analysis opens on the relationship between the personal and social. The book is an impetus to action as prisoners in British hell-holes are increasingly adopting the same stance as Reeve: Dare To Struggle, Dare To Win!

# Who are the Terrorists?

(Cont. from back page.)

make or sell books or papers. There were special taxes for Catholics, etc. This is the King Billy that the Orange bigots in northern Ireland hold up as a hero!

The national resistance continued. In the 1760's there were violent peasant attacks on the landlords. The army arrested and hanged suspects by the score. Even protestant tenants, descendants of settlers, rose up in the north. These revolts were suppressed by murder and forced emigration to America.

### THE UNITED IRISHMEN

The United Irishmen, which was led by Wolfe Tone and numbered protestants as well as Catholics among its members, championed the national cause in the 1790's but was made illegal after some initial success. As the United Irishmen were being suppressed, the Orange Order was being created-an organisation bent on suppressing Irish nationalists and maintaining the protestant ascendancy.

In 1798, the United Irishmen revolted, only to be suppressed with the help of mobile galleys and caps of pitch set alight on prisoners' heads.

### ACT OF 'UNION'

The Act of Union which combined Ireland with Britain in the 'United Kingdom', was passed in 1801. Through the middle of the nineteenth century, Irish resistance developed. The Irish struggle ranged from peasant uprisings, to mass political movements. It saw the development of the Fenians, and English Terror in Ireland was met for the first time with bombs in England itself. In 1867 the Manchester Martyrs (see advertisement) were legally murdered by an English court. Their murder was just one of many similar events.

### EASTER RISING

In 1916, an independent Irish

Republic was proclaimed during the Easter Rising. Britain suppressed the Rising ruthlessly and murdered its leaders, but its brutality only heightened Irish determination to win independence.

In 1918 an election was held throughout Ireland. Sinn Fein, standing on a platform of independence for Ireland, won the vast majority (73) of the seats. Of those elected 36 were in gaol, and about 20 on the run. They refused to take their seats in the British parliament and formed an Irish National Assembly (Dail Eireann), to which all of those elected in Ireland were invited. In the 1920 local elections, 72 towns elected Republican councils, 26 a Republican-Nationalist coalition and only 29 the Unionists. In the county elections, 28 out of 33 counties, 182 out of 206 rural districts, and 138 out of 154 Boards of Guardians returned Republican majorities.

The British government proclaimed the Dail and its courts to be illegal assemblies, and the Dail's activities to be "seditious." Nevertheless, a new administration was springing up in Ireland, and, faced by British repression, it created its own army-the Irish Republican Army.

### MORE REPRESSION - MORE RESISTANCE

In January 1920, a curfew was imposed on the towns and British terrorism against the Irish stepped up. The Black and Tans were formed. They were recruited in England. Men imprisoned for crimes of violence were released if they joined up. Other 'auxiliaries' were formed from ex-Army, Navy and Air Force officers, and were used as 'shock troops'.

The Tan War that followed saw these British forces yet again involved in murder, arson, torture, rape and the systematic breaking up and looting of whole areas. The IRA's national

resistance rose to the occasion, and included defeating British military units in straight battles. Outlying districts were liberated.

The Government of Ireland Act (1920) passed by the British parliament prepared the ground for the partition of Ireland. By this plan, six counties of Ulster would be separated from the rest of Ireland. The south and 'north' would each have a limited degree of home rule. Most of Irish industry was in the six north eastern counties, it was also the area of highest concentration of Unionists. These were the only reasons for the drawing of the boundary. Not even the whole of Ulster was included as three of Ulster's counties had a majority of Irish Catholics who were Republicans. The line was drawn in order to ensure an Orange majority.

Whilst the Black and Tans rampaged in the south, the Orange fascists launched pogroms in Belfast and other areas of the north east. Catholic workers were driven out of the ship yards and factories, their homes burnt, and many murdered, thus increasing the 'loyalist' majority.

### PARTITION

In 1921 the south finally won its 'independence', but the six counties of what became known as 'northern' Ireland were kept under British rule.

The sectarian Orange state had been created to enable Britain to keep dominating the whole of Ireland, whilst maintaining its direct rule over the most industrially developed part. The continuation of discrimination against Catholics in jobs, housing, democratic rights in the north meant the continuing loyalty of the Orange fascists.

The treaty that partitioned Ireland was signed by some Irish nationalists under duress. They were threatened by the British government with unlimited war within three days. The result was not only the partition of Ireland but a civil war in the south between a

section of the 'nationalist' government and the Republicans who saw the treaty as a betrayal of the cause for which they fought.

As for the British rulers they had shown a complete contempt for the democratically expressed demands of the Irish people as a whole for a free independent and united republic. Their future domination of Ireland lay in an alliance with Orange fascism, the fixing of elections, and discrimination and brutality against the nationalist population. The minority Orange Loyalist community in the north had been given a veto against the unity of the Irish nation, because this was in the interests of British imperialism.

### THE WAR GOES ON

And so the situation has remained since. The partition of Ireland has continued. The Orange veto has continued; and the Irish national liberation struggle has continued. The IRA still fight on and will continue to fight on.

British politicians will continue to hide the realities of the Irish struggle and bewail that there is "no solution to the Irish problem", when it is precisely British imperialist rule that is the problem. British imperialism's violence and suppression of the national rights of the Irish people continues to be described as "democracy" and "civilisation".

The just struggle of the Irish people will continue to be described as "mindless violence" by the imperialists and their spokesmen, when they are the real perpetrators of violence.

But it will not go away. The Tory government has had a taste of what they and their forebears have dished out to the Irish people for centuries. They claim that they cannot be moved. Centuries of Irish history have proved that it is the only way they will be moved. Time has also shown that the Irish people will not stop fighting till they have won.



# FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



## Brighton Bomb

# Establishment Shaken

In the early hours of Friday, October 12th, the British Cabinet underwent an unexpected re-shuffle when an IRA bomb exploded in the Grand Hotel in Brighton. The bomb went off when Tory ministers, MP's and top figures in the Conservative party were either in bed or about to retire, and very few hotel workers would be about.

Predictably, the newspapers next day went berserk condemning this "outrage". The TV news was extended so that the public could be presented with pictures and a commentary intended to provoke hatred of the IRA and sympathy for the government. Thatcher was shown apparently as the papers said, "defiant" and "unbowed".

Neil Kinnock sent a sympathetic message to her condemning the bombing. In short, the British

establishment reacted as expected when a section of it is attacked and given a taste of what it has dished out to millions of people around the world - with hysteria.

### PUBLIC REACTION IN BRITAIN

It failed to get a similar reaction from the general public. Many people weren't bothered much one way or another; it was clearly not a random bombing, but one aimed at a

very specific section of the political establishment. Not a few were quite gleeful about the bombing. Many have suffered as a result of the government's policies, and don't care for all the talk about 'democracy' being under attack from the IRA: they just see a war-mongering government which has inflicted unemployment and hardship on them taking a hammering, and they know that no-one poor or oppressed was threatened by the attack.

There were those on the 'left' such as the 'Workers Revolutionary Party' and 'Socialist Workers Party' who rushed to condemn the bombing as "individual terrorism", ignoring the fact that the IRA only lives on thanks to the support of hundreds of thousands of Irish nationalist people, and that any action it takes is part of a strategy for winning Ireland's reunification and independence. They're always calling on the working class to fight the Tories, but they had to condemn an IRA action which hit the Tory leadership directly, despite the approval for that action by many working and oppressed people the length and breadth of Britain.

### IRA STATEMENT

The IRA issued a statement after the bombing, giving its reasons for the attack:

"Mrs Thatcher will now realise that Britain cannot occupy our country, torture our prisoners and shoot our people on their own streets and get away with it. Today we were unlucky, but remember we only have to be lucky once - you will have to be lucky always. Give Ireland peace and there will be no war."

Later, in an exclusive inter-

view with the Republican paper, "An Phoblacht", an IRA spokesperson stated that: The bomb was aimed at killing most of the British Cabinet and several dozen other leading Conservatives who would have been part of Thatcher's entourage... We detonated a bomb against the key people responsible for the violence and war in our country in order to bring this war to a speedy conclusion... We were interested in fundamentally shifting the argument not towards a shoring-up operation but towards a radical re-think. As we said in our statement last Friday, we were unlucky. But we only have to be lucky once; they will have to be lucky always."

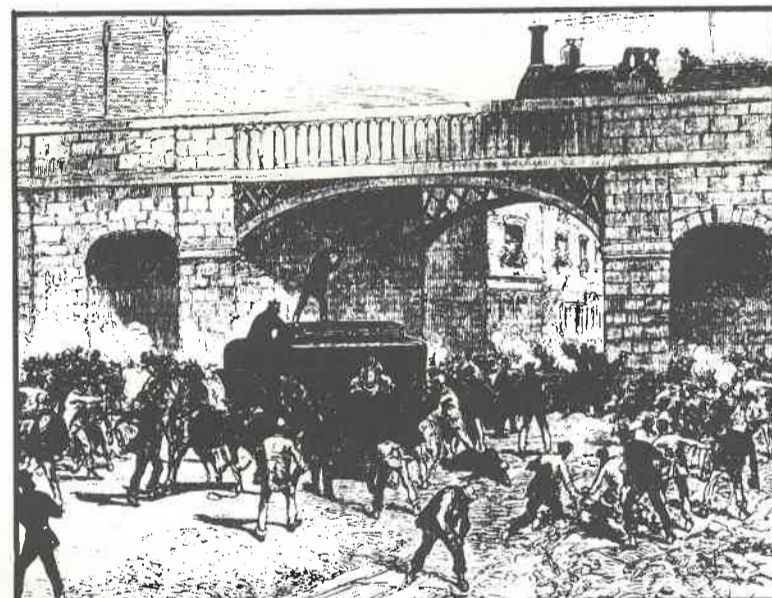
"We feel we are going to be very lucky."

British politicians have a long history of sending soldiers to other people's countries, where they have killed and maimed those people, and often been killed and maimed themselves, while those who sent them in the first place dwell in security and comfort.

The anguish of the British establishment was not over any "challenge" to "democracy" from the IRA - a democracy which it has never respected in Ireland, which has only applied in Britain when the working class has consented to work within capitalism's rules, and which the British ruling class itself is busy demolishing; no, its anguish was over the breach of its immunity from paying for what it has inflicted on others.

## REMEMBER MANCHESTER MARTYRS

In November 1867, William Phillip, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien were executed and their bodies buried in Strangeways Prison. Their legal murders arose after two Fenian leaders were freed from a black maria taking them to prison. A group of Irishmen ambushed the black maria. As the lock was shot off, a police sergeant was accidentally killed by the ricochet. The three martyrs captured afterwards were found guilty of murder despite the fact that there was no evidence that any of them had fired the shot.



This year, as in past years, there will be a commemorative march. The demonstration, called by Sinn Fein, will concentrate on the situation of Irish prisoners in British jails today. The main slogans will be:

REPATRIATION, ON DEMAND, TO JAILS IN IRELAND  
RELEASE OF PRISONERS FRAMED BY THE BRITISH POLICE  
AN END TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AND SPECIAL CONTROL UNITS  
RELEASE OF PATRICK HACKETT ON MEDICAL GROUNDS  
ABOLITION OF THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 25th, 1 p.m.  
ASSEMBLE outside STRANGEWAYS PRISON

SUPPORT THE IRISH PRISONERS OF WAR!  
JOIN THE MARCH THIS YEAR!

STOP THE STRIP SEARCHES IN ARMAGH JAIL

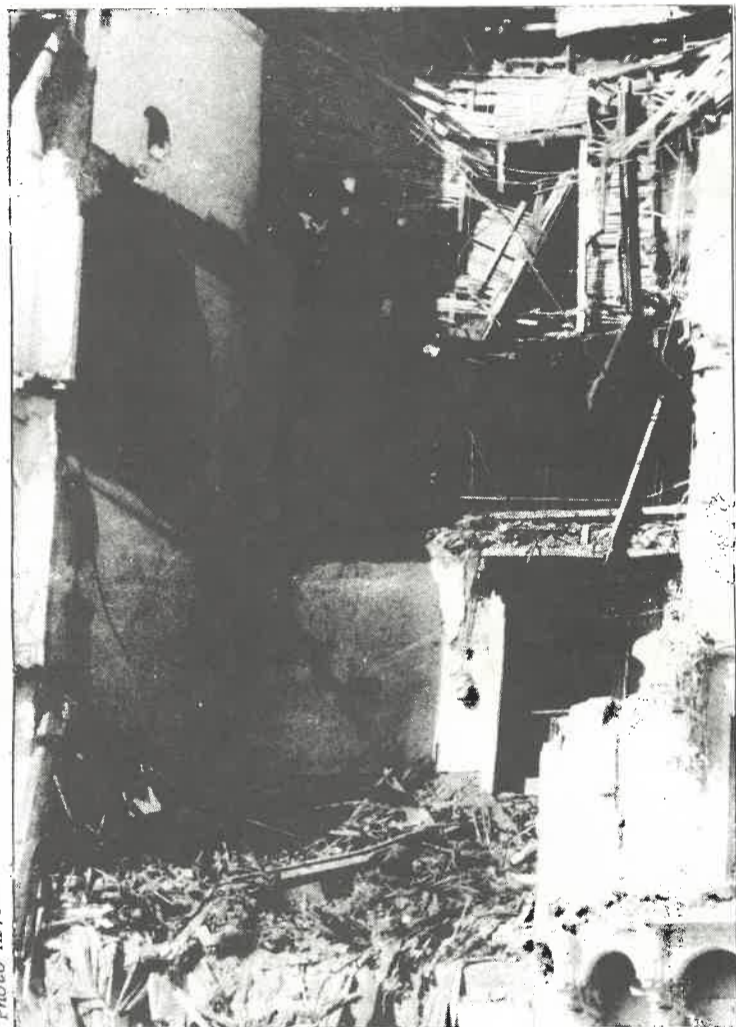
WEEKEND MEETING FOR WOMEN ONLY  
North West Region

SATURDAY/SUNDAY NOVEMBER 24th/25th, 1984

Sat. a.m.: Speakers.  
Sat. p.m.: Workshops on starting an effective strip search campaign  
Videos - exhibition - Bin Lids and Barricades - all day.  
8.00 - 11.00 p.m.: Social (No admission after 9.30 p.m.)

Sun. 11 a.m.: Talk and discussion on history of Irish in England, Scotland and Wales.

Admission: 50p unwaged, 75p low waged, £1.50 high waged.  
Creche. Ramp access, no disabled toilets, steps inside, but help available.



## Who are the Terrorists?

By Mark Harris

The following article is not intended to be a deep analysis but does illustrate the reality of the long history of English violence against Ireland and Irish resistance to it.

English attacks on Ireland have continued unabated since the twelfth century.

Starting with murder and plunder expeditions, the assaults escalated to the carving out of territory.

The English lords developed their attempts to dominate Ireland into the fifteenth and sixteenth century by demanding that Irish clan chieftains recognise their rule. In return the English were prepared to give out 'titles'. The chieftains who resisted were hunted and murdered.

Throughout this period the Irish resisted. By the turn of the sixteenth century revolts were

so widespread and frequent wherever the English attempted to rule that they amounted to a general uprising. The English repression was ferocious, crops were deliberately destroyed and cattle impounded. Many people died from starvation.

### PLANTATION

At the turn of the seventeenth century the whole of Ulster was confiscated by the English and English and Scottish tenants sent to populate the area. Most of the Irish were forcibly driven off their land.

Much of Ireland freed itself during the English Civil War, so, with its end in 1649, Cromwell went to Ireland to reconquer it.

### GENOCIDE

Cromwell attacked Drogheda, then Wexford, slaughtering everyone in both towns. Such

was the character of the whole war. By 1652, the reconquest of Ireland was almost complete. The result of the extermination was described at the time by a British officer: "A man might travel twenty miles and not see a living creature, either man or beast or bird." The remaining Irish were herded into fixed areas, and English and Scottish settlement extended. The army was paid off with Irish land. The vast numbers of Irish orphans were rounded up and sold to agents who shipped them to the West Indies and resold them at a profit as indentured labourers.

### DISCRIMINATION

Following another upsurge in England when King James II was overthrown and replaced by William of Orange there was another revolt in Ireland. In the early 1690's, King William led yet another bloody invasion. Another three quarters of a million acres of land were confiscated from the Irish. Catholics were barred from parliament, the legal profession, military commissions and teaching. They could not take apprentices or

(Cont. on p.7.)