

# CLASS STRUGGLE



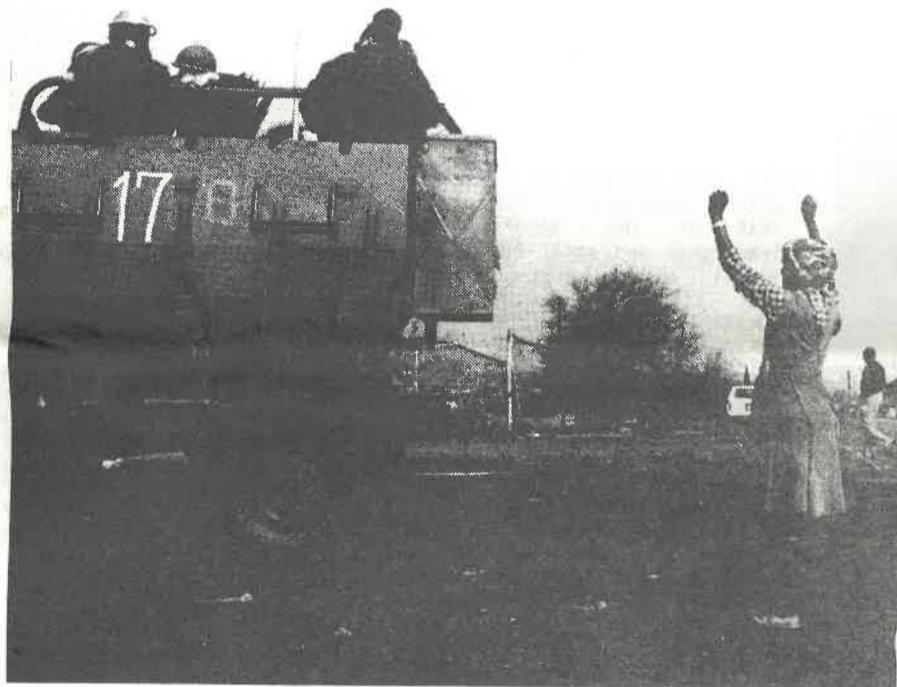
Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

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25P

**AZANIA-SOUTH AFRICA: STATE OF EMERGENCY, OR**

# STATE OF SIEGE



With June 16th, the anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising approaching, the Botha regime introduced a state of emergency throughout South Africa. This was the first time such a thing had happened since the aftermath of Sharpeville, 25 years ago. The state of emergency gave sweeping powers to the state forces to suppress opposition - whether by arresting popular leaders and organisers, or by shooting at people who defied them by demonstrating. It also prohibited the domestic and foreign press from directly reporting what was going on, so that the South African security forces could murder and terrorise people without the world knowing all about it.

Despite arrests and shootings, the anniversary of Soweto was marked in a big way. The general strike on June 16th, was bigger even than the May Day strike when two million workers stayed away from work. The strike was widespread in all the main centres except Durban, and in all industries except the mines.

Actions in the chain stores, organised mainly by members of the Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers' Union, began on the Friday after the emergency was declared. Within the first week of the action, up to 60 stores had gone on strike, the entire workforces of several striking stores were detained and retail managers were angrily demanding interviews with the minister of law and order, Louis Le Grange.

On July 1st, the National Union

of Mineworkers voted to take industrial action in protest against the detention of at least 10 of its leaders. It is also reported that the Congress of South African Trade Unions is also planning to take protest action against the detention of hundreds of its members.

Since the state of emergency began, over 2,000 Azanian people have been arrested, including activists from the COSATU and CUSA trade union federations, supporters of the Azanian People's Organisation and the United Democratic Front and many more, including the congregation

of at least two churches where speeches critical of the government were made! The number of people killed or injured in shootings is probably greater than that of those detained. News of the repression taking place is filtering out despite tight government censorship. But that censorship has been effective so far in preventing television teams from the outside world from covering anything except for events which the government wants the rest of the world to see.

## BUTHELEZI

It is significant, therefore, that the foreign press should have been able to cover Gatsha Buthelezi's rally in Soweto at the end of June. Buthelezi's supporters were bussed in from far and wide, and his opponents were kept away by armed thugs.

Buthelezi, as head of the Kwazulu bantustan, is part of the apartheid system. He and his supporters are a loyal opposition, who denounce apartheid,

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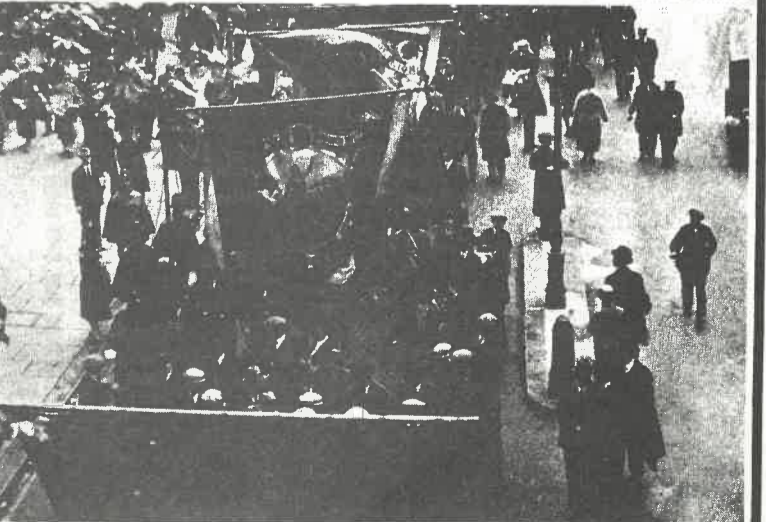
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# THE UNIONS



## Yorkshire Miners Gala

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

The 99th Annual Miners Demonstration and Gala got off to a good start on the morning of Saturday, June 21st as several thousand people from mining communities in Yorkshire and beyond, descended on Doncaster. On a brilliant sunny day, people were treated to music and dance from the Cultural Troupe of SWAPO, the songs of Banner Theatre and a performance of 'Margarella and the Moles', a children's pantomime based on the Great Strike and performed by people from support groups in Yorkshire.

ovation he received expressed wave upon wave of deeply felt emotion. Over a year after the strike ended, mining communities remain firmly convinced about the issues they were fighting for and solid behind the man who led them in that fight.

Other contributions to the day's events came from Yorkshire Arts Circus who besides mounting an exhibition of political works by artists living and working in Yorkshire, also launched a new volume of the People's History of Yorkshire, entitled 'The Life of Riley'. Fund-raising stalls for the Sacked Miners Campaign and striking printworkers did brisk business as did Nicaragua Solidarity and Anti-Apartheid.

Speeches were given by Jack Taylor of the NUM, Ken Gill of the TUC and Dennis Skinner MP, each of whom was well received. The warmest reception, however, even though he did not speak on the day, was reserved for Arthur Scargill. The standing

altogether it was a terrific event and next year's, the 100th Annual Demonstration and Gala, to be held in Barnsley, promises to be even better. Don't miss it!

## Which Way to NUM Unity?

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

At the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) conference in the first week of July, the Scottish area presented a motion on unity with the breakaway "Union of Democratic Mine-workers". The 'Communist Party' (CPGB) has long had a powerful influence in the Scottish area, which is reflected in the leading role CPGB member, Mick McGahey, has played there since the 1960's. There is no doubt that the unity motion had CPGB support.

the NCB and the government hoped for a bandwagon effect, helped along by a strong pro-UDM press campaign. But hard campaigning resulted in affiliation to the UDM being rejected in Leicestershire, North Wales and Lancashire (after a close fight) - the areas where the UDM had been most hopeful of expanding beyond its original Nottingham and South Derbyshire power base. The UDM bandwagon was stopped, and it has been put into reverse.

is happening to the CPGB is that it is becoming a mainstream social democratic lobbying group.

### EXPOSE THE UDM

Uniting all miners into one union is necessary. If that does not happen, the ability of all miners to win better wages and conditions and to defend their jobs is bound to be further damaged. The question is, how can the unity of the miners be restored?

### AGREE WITH UDM?

One approach is that followed by the CPGB. They want the NUM to come to an agreement with the UDM, with the help of intermediaries from the TUC and Labour Party. The problem with this is that the UDM was not established as a genuine independent union organisation. It was set up with the backing of the Conservative government and the National Coal Board (NCB - now British Coal) precisely in order to weaken the NUM and break it as a militant all-Britain organisation of all miners. As an organisation, it will not unite with the NUM except on terms which seriously weaken the NUM's ability to struggle for the interests of the majority of miners. For example, it will want a great degree of area autonomy and severe restrictions on the power of the union to call a national strike. That much is clear from the arguments which led to its establishment.

### UNITY FROM BELOW

In these circumstances, it would be wrong to take organisation to organisation negotiations as the path to unity. The only viable alternative is for the NUM to continue its efforts to persuade more and more individual UDM members to rejoin the NUM, until the point is reached where the UDM's base of support has been so worn away that it collapses. In that way, the NUM can avoid being pushed into making any changes in the way it organises which would weaken it, and can restore the unity of the miners.

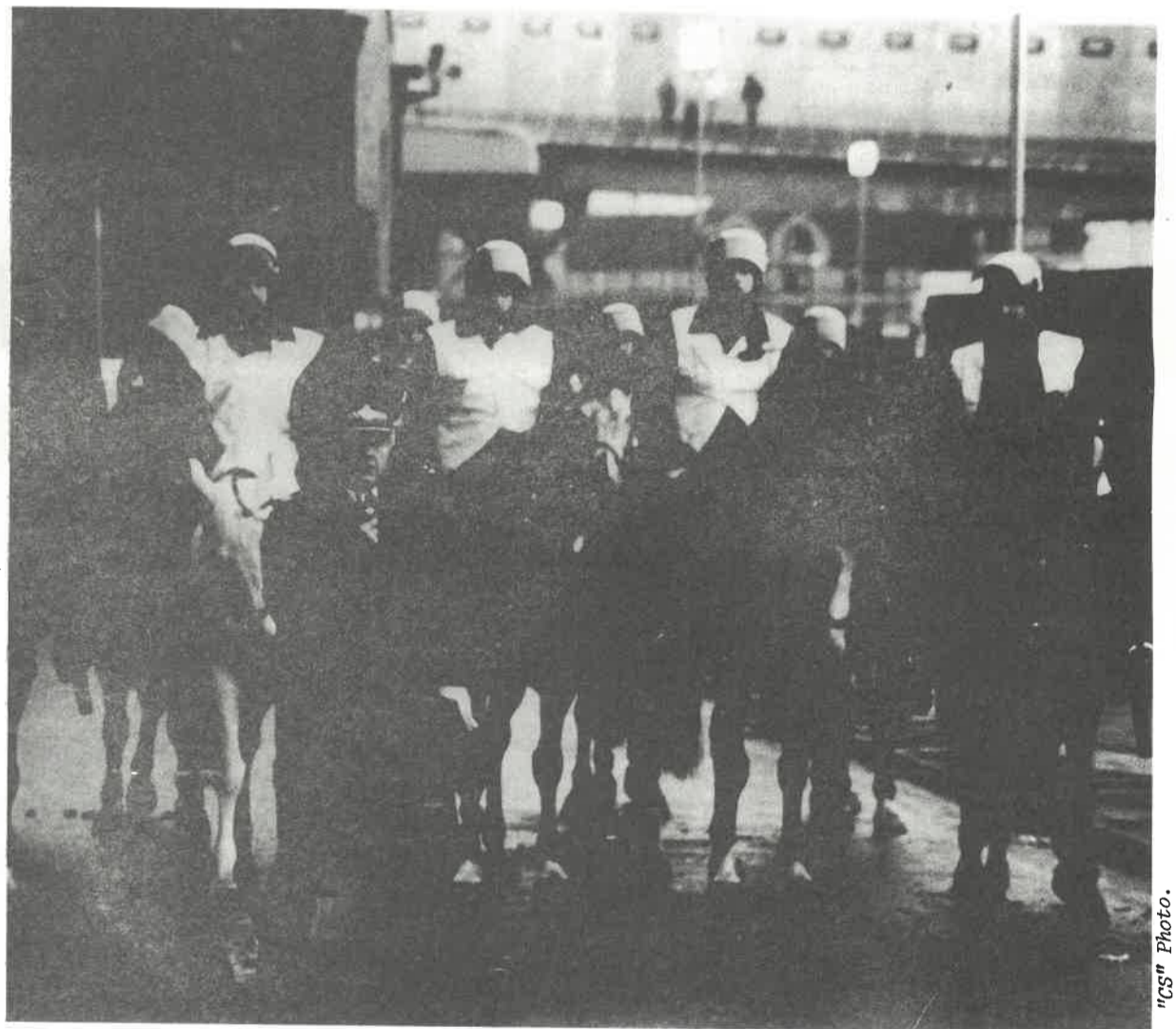
When the UDM was established,

To push this process ahead, NUM militants who stood firm during the strike and refused to join the UDM in Nottingham and South Derbyshire areas, and who are still barely talking to strike breakers have to take a more relaxed attitude towards them. They can then expose each and every fault in the UDM, and contrast that with the strengths which even the non-strikers have to recognise in the NUM, in order to win them back. It is not an issue where personal feelings can be allowed to get in the way. Any idea that there's a matter of principle involved in not having anything to do with those who scabbed has to give way before the principle of miners' unity. This is a necessity which cannot be avoided. At least this kind of struggle can defend the NUM as a fighting organisation while rebuilding its membership. In this process, the pro-NUM militants in the UDM-dominated areas have the right to call on left political activists for their assistance whenever appropriate.

That's the way to restore unity - from the base of the union, not by accepting dictates from the UDM leadership.

### CPGB POLITICS

The line that the CPGB has taken in the NUM is part of its general policy these days: popular politics has moved rightwards, it reckons, so that CPGB must move with the trend to win or keep support. The line we take is also part of our general stand: there has been an opening up of greater opportunities to put over strong left alternatives to what capitalism has to offer. Tactically, it is often necessary to adapt how we present our views to deal with situations where working people have right wing social democratic, even conservative views. But we should not water down our politics. In the end, a firm revolutionary position, well argued, can rally increasing numbers of people: all that



Mounted police guarding the News International plant at Wapping.

## Still Fighting Murdoch

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

At the beginning of June, members of the print unions involved in the Wapping dispute, voted on whether to accept Rupert Murdoch's "final offer" to them. They gave it a resounding "no".

Before the vote, there was speculation that members of SOGAT would go for the deal, and that would then force the other unions to give in. Murdoch had offered a £50 million redundancy settlement, plus the old "Times" building for the production of a Labour party paper.

Many SOGAT members involved in the picketing at Wapping believed that Brenda Dean and their leadership actually wanted the members involved in the dispute to agree to Murdoch's offer.

But because they were unsure of their own strength, and did not want to be blamed for an open rift with other print unions, they chose not to make any recommendation to members about accepting or rejecting the Murdoch deal. Yet while the SOGAT national leadership was refusing to take a public stand, there was a press campaign for a "yes" vote, including a lot of speculation about how SOGAT members were supposedly tired of the struggle and were ready to give up.

### TAKING CONTROL OF THE UNIONS

In the event, in a secret ballot, the SOGAT members gave a 2 to 1 "no" to Murdoch's offer and, in effect, to Dean and the other union leaders who were hoping for a "yes".

The result of the vote showed that the printworkers were determined to go on fighting for their jobs. But the conditions in which the ballot took place show that they are handicapped by the leadership which they have. Continuing the fight means taking as much as possible of the handling of the fight with News International out of the hands of the national leadership and concentrating it in the hands of those in London directly accountable to the members in dispute.

In the longer run, it means building a class struggle wing in the unions which will stand firm in a fight and can provide an alternative leadership to the social democrats, who see no alternative but working under the terms set by the capitalist system.

"CS" Photo.

The General Strike in 1926 brought to an end a period of militancy which has been unmatched in the sixty years since. The strike itself was characterised by the courage of millions of workers who stood up to everything the employers and state threw at them - the police, the army, unprecedented propaganda - until most of the leading trade union figures, afraid of the storm that had been unleashed, capitulated.

Now, over half a century later, it is not uncommon for many of the Left to demand a General Strike to bring down the government, or to win this or that demand. But the 1926 strike ended in defeat, and those who express these views never seem to have analysed why that defeat took place and what significance it has today. Such an understanding cannot be based merely, or even mainly, on a study of what happened in 1926, but must go further back.

For the first seventy years of its life, the industrial working class waged a relentless and violent struggle against its capitalist oppressors. Often this was nothing less than a struggle for physical survival, but its politics and ideology were increasingly socialist. For much of this time trade unions were illegal, and workers risked imprisonment or (like the Tolpuddle Martyrs) deportation merely for agreeing to join a union. During this period however, and particularly during the high points of the class struggle, union activity was far less important than the openly political struggle of the workers, led during the

in 1893 and in South Wales in 1910 and 1911; and gunboats were deployed against striking dockers in Hull in 1893 and on the Mersey during a Liverpool General Strike in 1911. The courts attempted to bankrupt the railway workers and erode the legal status of trade unions in the 1901

of most of the unions were not very deep however. The moment war was declared the general attitude was suddenly one of loyalty to King and Country. The most extreme of these new patriots was probably the seamen's leader, Havelock Wilson, who was rabidly pro-war and anti-German, and who prevented anti-war socialists from travelling abroad even when they had government permission.

More importantly, the Parliamentary Committee (forerunner of the General Council) of the TUC overturned its previous policy in September 1914, and issued a Manifesto strongly supporting the war and endorsing the recruitment campaign for the armed forces. When Labour leader Ramsay

orders enforcing union recognition in areas where, before the war, they had been struggling to get a real foothold.

The legal powers taken by the government with Labour and national trade union backing did not prevent industrial disputes from taking place. The government's new powers held back wages while prices and profits soared. War is usually a very profitable business, and the sacrifices demanded of the bulk of the population while the

shop stewards were able to lead a series of strikes, and despite having many of their leaders arrested, win a lot of their demands, the most militant actions taking place in Clydeside, Sheffield and Coventry. This mobilisation also showed up the political weakness of the movement however with the most widely supported demand being for the end of "dilution". War-time legislation allowed for the dilution of skills, with women and young people being allowed to operate single-purpose machines, and semi-skilled and unskilled men taking on jobs that had previously been the preserve of skilled craftsmen. The shop stewards were able to counter the worst abuses of dilution, and win an agreement that after the war things would "return to normal", with women being removed from the factories and semi- and unskilled labourers being returned to less well-paid, more monotonous and usually more dangerous jobs. The shop stewards movement was unable to lead a struggle of the whole working class, but rather was a sectional struggle on behalf of skilled male craftsmen. The efforts made by many stewards to move away from sectionalism to wider and more politically progressive issues were largely unsuccessful, with the result that no revolutionary struggle against capitalism as a system developed.

At the end of the war, the trade union movement was larger than ever - over eight million workers were members - and was demanding that Lloyd-George keep his promise of "building a land fit for heroes". Leading the struggle to win this demand was the shop stewards movement, who organised their

Armoured car "protects" a food convoy. In fact, the strikers did not want to stop the movement of food.

1830's and 1840's by the Chartists.

#### CARROT AND STICK

The Chartists waged many epic struggles during this time, but, in 1848, a year of revolutionary uprisings throughout much of Europe, the Chartist armies were finally defeated, and the ruling class then adopted a carrot and stick approach to working class organisations - carrots to 'respectable' trade unions mainly representing skilled and relatively highly paid workers and sticks against any organisation or leader showing a leaning towards revolutionary struggle. From the 1850's to the 1890's, the unions' political aspirations were centred firmly on Parliament and an alliance with the Liberals. The era that Engels referred to as "top hat" trade unionism enjoyed its heyday.

Such a cosy situation could not last. For the vast majority of the working class remained bitterly exploited, and the period of economic stagnation that had started in the mid-1870's had brought increased unemployment and poverty in the 1880's. These decades saw the emergence of powerful new unions organising among the so-called unskilled workers, with the dockers and transport workers in particular, playing a militant role in fighting back against ruling class oppression. These unions were, from 1884, strongly influenced by the Marxist Social Democratic Federation (MSDF), the forerunner of the British Communist Party, and rejected the compromising attitude shown by their "brothers" among the labour aristocracy. Activity was not confined to those in work, and when in 1886 the MSDF organised a demonstration of the unemployed in London, it turned into a mass 'riot'. By the end of the decade the scale of working class protest was at a level unseen since the days of Chartism, and even the 'respectable' leaders of the craft unions and the TUC had been forced into moving to the left, even if it was more in rhetoric than action.

There was plenty of action elsewhere in the union movement however, and the state responded with a heavy hand. There were many police and army baton charges on striking workers; miners were shot in Yorkshire

Taff Vale Judgement. At the same time, some ruling class leaders, particularly Lloyd-George, attempted to work with the more moderate union leaders through offering political and economic reform.

#### WORLD WAR

Working class militancy was not confined to the struggle between labour and capital within Britain, and with war looming, the trade union and labour movement adopted an increasingly anti-imperialist stance, with several unions and many leaders of the new Labour Party saying that the working class had no interest in arguments between competing capitalists, and that if war was declared it would be the task of socialists to sabotage the war effort.

The opinions of the unions were increasingly important as by now they had over four million members, and were not afraid to use their industrial muscle - about twenty million working days were 'lost' in strikes in each of the four years preceding the war. The anti-war views

McDonald, who was to serve the capitalists so well in the 1930's, resigned in opposition to his party's support for the war, he was replaced by Arthur Henderson, who entered the war Cabinet along with several Labour and union leaders. Henderson rejected the analysis put forward by Lenin and the Bolsheviks that the war was imperialist in nature, and became increasingly anti-communist, doing everything in his power not only to further the war effort in Britain, but to sabotage any genuine anti-war efforts being made by socialist parties and trade unions internationally.

#### MORE GOVERNMENT POWERS

As the war progressed, the government took increasingly tight control of the economy, including taking over the mines. In 1915, it passed the Munitions of War Act, making strikes and lockouts illegal in industries concerned with the production of armaments. The definition of munitions was so wide it excluded only a small section of production. Any disputes were to be settled by the Board of Trade, and through their influence here, unions supporting the war effort were able to

capitalist class thrived, discredited those union leaders active in supporting and enforcing government regulations. In a tour of the munitions industries in 1916 Henderson was subjected to widespread physical and verbal abuse. Only a few days after the Munitions of War Act came into the statute book, the South Wales miners rejected a pay offer and Lloyd-George issued a proclamation declaring any strike in the South Wales coalfield illegal. Two days later, 200,000 Welsh miners came out, and Lloyd-George, realising the problems that sending in the troops would involve, was forced to negotiate. The Miners' Federations were unusual however, in that they were both militant over pay and working conditions and opposed to the war. In contrast to this, most workers were forced by their leaders' class collaboration to fall back on their own resources and on the rapidly growing shop stewards movement.

#### SHOP STEWARDS' MOVEMENT

This movement, largely based in the engineering and shipbuilding industries, was mainly led by communists, socialists and syndicalists, and was able very quickly to demonstrate its economic strength. Through mobilising around the issues that most concerned workers in the engineer-

members not just to fight for higher wages and a shorter working week, but for the right of workers to control their own industries, a demand made popular by the success of the Russian Revolution. During the period 1919-1921, nearly fifty million working days a year were 'lost' by strike action - action accompanied by demonstrations and often violent street battles with the armed forces. Particularly worrying for the government, was the fact that it could not rely on the police, who themselves waged bitter disputes in 1918 and 1919, winning the first strike and losing the second. After that, most of the strike leaders were dismissed, and trade union membership and industrial action among the police force outlawed. At the same time, there was severe unrest in the Navy, although reporting on this was censored so that it did not add to the momentum ashore.

#### TRIPLE ALLIANCE

Despite this, the government saw the biggest threat to its existence as coming from the Triple Alliance, formed in 1914 by the miners, railway and transport workers unions. They agreed to coordinate wage claims and come to each other's assistance when required. Despite the fact that the unions never operated in unison, the government made it clear that it considered the Alliance to be a potential threat to the state when in 1920 it introduced the Emergency Powers Act. This



# STRIKE 1926

act enabled it to declare a State of Emergency and govern by decree if it thought that there was a threat to the "supply and distribution of food, water, fuel, or light, or with the means of locomotion, to deprive the community, or any substantial portion of the community, of the essentials of life."

In 1919 the railway workers had gone on strike, and Jimmy Thomas, the leader of the NUR, had refused to call on his allies for support even though they indicated that they were prepared to provide it. In 1920, the miners came out, and it was the call for support by the miners that brought them a temporary victory and persuaded the government to bring in its repressive legislation. In 1921, the mines were handed back to the owners who decided to reduce wages and locked out the miners on March 31st. The miners again called for support and the government called the bluff of the railway and transport union leaders, telling them that if the strike went ahead, the government would be unable to win as it could not rely on the loyalty of the police and the armed forces, but neither was it willing to give in to the miners' opposition to wage cutting as the coal industry was making huge losses. Lloyd-George gave the Alliance leaders half an hour to withdraw their support for the miners or take over the government and disband Parliament. Faced with such an option, the railway and transport workers unions withdrew their support for the miners and the Triple Alliance died. Initially the Alliance was only seen by its constituent unions as being an industrial grouping enabling each union to pursue its claims more forcefully. But the bringing together of three such powerful unions was bound to be seen by the state as a threat, and some of the Alliance leaders, and particularly Thomas, (who in 1924 joined the first Labour government), could not face the political implications of this.

Following the defeat of the Alliance, the government used its Emergency regulations. Left in the lurch by their so-called allies, the miners suffered a crushing defeat, returning to work on the owners' terms three months later when their funds were exhausted. Not all was negative in 1921 however, with the political highpoint being the successful struggle waged by Councils of Action, with dockers playing a leading role to stop supplies being sent by the British government to the armies engaged in the war against the new socialist state in the Soviet Union. Such determined action reflected the importance that workers attached to defending the Soviet Union, the first state in which the working class had come to power, and the degree to which Lenin and his comrades were a source of inspiration to workers and other oppressed peoples.

1921 was also the year in which the most spectacular crash in the history of the British economy occurred. Bankruptcy followed bankruptcy and mass unemployment brought a dramatic shift in power in capital's favour. The employers re-trenched and took back many of the gains won by the trade unions since the end of the war, seizing the opportunity to sack many of the most militant and political shop stewards in the process. There was considerable resistance to this, and despite the high level of unemployment nearly 40 million working days a year were spent on strike action between 1922 and 1926. Capitalism was in deep crisis and it needed to inflict a major defeat on the trade union movement. By 1926, with the breakup of the Triple Alliance, the weakening of the shop stewards' movement and the rebuilding of loyalty among the police, the time was ripe for the government to 'take on' the

unions. If such a confrontationalist policy was to be successful, the government needed to defeat the most militant, most left wing and best organised of all British trade unions - the miners.

In 1924, under the threat of a 'Miners Minimum Wages Act' that was in the process of being passed by the first Labour government, and with coal prices rising, the coal owners conceded a substantial wage increase for one year. In the summer of 1925, before the term of the agreement had expired, coal prices and sales had begun to go into rapid decline, and the owners demanded not only a return to the wage levels of 1921-24, but an increase of one hour in the length of the working day. Because of the unfavourable market situation, and because their finances were still severely depleted as a result of the 1921 strike, the miners felt unable to resist the owners' demands unaided and turned for help to the General Council of the TUC. Trade union rates of pay were under attack in a wide range of industries, and there was no doubt that the outcome of any conflict in the mines would have a substantial impact on other wage rates. With this in mind, and still smarting under accusations of betrayal in 1921, the TUC pledged its full support to the miners to the extent of being prepared to call a General Strike.

#### BUYING TIME

Faced with this threat, the new Conservative government staged what was to be a temporary climb down, and decided to give the pit owners a subsidy so that they could continue to pay existing wage rates. This subsidy lasted for nine months, and the government used this time to prepare for an all out struggle building on plans laid by the Labour government. Large coal stocks were built up; Britain was divided into ten areas under civil commissioners with draconian powers, and a state supported 'Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies' was set up to recruit volunteer strike breakers.

In contrast to this, the TUC made no political or organisational preparations whatsoever. Yet, two days after the government agreed to pay the subsidy, the Home Secretary had said that "The thing is not finished. The danger is not over. Sooner or later this question has to be fought out by the people of the land. Is England to be governed by Parliament and the Cabinet or by a handful of trade union leaders?"

One month later, 'Workers Weekly', the Communist Party's paper, argued "Thirty four weeks to go - thirty four weeks to go to what? To the termination of the mining agreement and the opening of the greatest struggle in the history of the British working class. We must prepare for the struggle." As a consequence of arguing this, several leaders of the Communist Party were arrested in October 1925, but still the TUC did nothing.

Not until the last week of April 1926, the week in which the subsidy was to run out, did the TUC start to discuss how it was to conduct any dispute. At the same time, and quite unknown to the miners' leaders, it was also trying to negotiate a "peaceful settlement" with the government. In direct opposition to the policy adopted two months earlier, the TUC was prepared to accept cuts in miners' wages so long as the government "reorganised" the owners. The government refused to play ball however. The subsidy expired at the end of the week and the miners were locked out.

The General Council of the TUC called its General Strike in support of the miners, starting at midnight on May 3rd, with a 'first line' of workers from

the transport, iron and steel, printing, building, electricity and gas industries being called out at once, and a 'second' line of engineers and shipbuilders due to follow on May 11th.

#### THE STRIKE

Despite the lack of preparation, the strike call received almost total rank and file support in those industries called out, with local trades councils and strike committees taking responsibility for providing necessary services to hospitals, production of news-sheets to counter the effect of the BBC



Echoing this cartoon, in 1974, Edward Heath called an election in response to the miners' strike, asking, "Who rules the country?" He lost the election....

(which was totally under government control), and to try and stop the activities of strike-breakers. The strike showed the great capacity for organisation, enthusiasm and solidarity that most ordinary workers had. But their efforts were almost totally nullified by the actions of General Council members, who, with honourable exceptions, were trying desperately to find a compromise instead of directing their energies to leading the strike.

The government was not interested in compromise. For them it was war and they were only prepared to meet the TUC in order to discuss the terms of surrender. The Emergency Powers Act was invoked, and almost the entire national leadership of the Communist Party and other working class leaders who could be expected to play a principled role, were arrested. All army and navy leave was cancelled and troop reinforcements moved into London, Scotland, South Wales and Lancashire. In Liverpool two infantry battalions landed from a troopship and marched fully armed through the city, while two battleships anchored in the Mersey. Warships also took up positions in the Clyde, Humber and Tyne, and at Cardiff, Bristol, Swansea, Barrow, Middlesbrough and Harwich.

Faced with such a show of force, many local committees became even more determined, some organising their own 'armies'. In the Scottish coalfields, for example, the unions organised a defence corps of 700 workers under the command of ex-

soldiers. The TUC, on the other hand, panicked. On Monday, May 10th, the headline of the 'British Worker', the TUC's own news-sheet, said "All's Well" and the article called on workers to "stand firm, be loyal to instructions and trust your leaders". But all was not well, and just two days later, and with scarcely any consultation with the miners, the TUC capitulated, calling off the strike without any concessions from the government or the owners. The strikers, who had only just begun to get into their stride, were amazed by this tame submission, and the following day

Bolshevik Revolution than "king and country", were themselves determined to 'build a land fit for heroes') could have led to a revolutionary insurrection. But even at that time the leadership of the trade union movement was too deeply ingrained with opportunism to consider anything that might shake Parliament and the Constitution, so that at the moment when the capitalist class would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to resist concerted political action, the leaders turned and ran. When forced to take action, instead of acting as the Council of War of the working class, the TUC desperately tried to compromise and when this proved impossible, capitulated.

#### LESSONS FOR THE PRESENT DAY

Things are not so different today. A few years ago when the health workers looked for leadership from the TUC, the General Council produced many fine and principled speeches and called a National Day of Action. Then frightened by the massive support it received, it went and hid in Congress House. When the miners' strike against the Coal Board's closure programme began in 1984, the TUC promised to mobilise the maximum possible support for the NUM, but in practice spent most of its time attacking the miners' leaders.

The British ruling class are very skilful at combining the stick and carrot in the class war, at granting concessions to some, while increasing the oppression of others, at offering reform on certain occasions only to increase repression at others. The superprofits reaped by British imperialism give it the scope to deploy these tactics, while the opportunism that characterises so much of the trade union movement gives it considerable help in carrying their tactics out. The overwhelming majority of trade union leaders worked hard to justify their positions as labour lieutenants of capital.

The General Strike has passed into a position of folklore in the labour movement. But in reality, despite the initiative and courage of millions of workers, it was at best a nine day wonder that ended in a massive defeat, not only for the miners, but for the working class as a whole. There is no doubt that general strikes can play an important role at critical moments in the class struggle, but until we can rid the trade union movement of the opportunism that engulfs so much of it, then passing the leadership of struggles to those who occupy the high table at Congress House will, at best be putting our futures in the hands of those who are too frightened to do anything but run, and at worst be putting our trust in those who identify more with the capitalist system than with those who they are paid to represent.

#### Eurocentrism and the Communist Movement

The "left" in Britain has long seen Europe as being at the forefront of world progress and has seen the peoples of the Third World as "backward".

"Eurocentrism and the Communist Movement" takes on these views and traces the origins and foundations of Eurocentric ideology, arguing that it has to be fought if the communist movement in Europe and North America is to advance.

Order your copy of this pamphlet (Price: £1.95 plus 70p p&p) from:

New Era Publications,  
203, Seven Sisters Road,  
London N.4.

From July 1936 to March 1939, a desperate and heroic struggle in defence of the Spanish Republic took place. Beginning as a purely Spanish affair, it rapidly became a focus for the international conflict between fascism and popular democracy and socialism.

At the beginning of 1936, for leftists and for the working class generally, things seemed pretty grim. The upsurge of revolutionary struggles in Europe which had been inspired by the Soviet example in 1917, had ended in a series of bitter and bloody defeats in the early 1920's. The revolutionary movements in the colonial Syria, Indonesia and Morocco were also crushed in the mid-twenties, and then one of the biggest defeats of all came in 1927, when the Kuomintang leaders turned on the Chinese Communists and massacred hundreds of thousands of revolutionary workers, peasants and intellectuals. Throughout most of eastern Europe, right-wing regimes had come to power. In 1922, Mussolini's fascists took over in Italy, and eleven years later, the Nazi regime celebrated its conquest of Germany by destroying the unions, introducing its first repressive measures against Jews, and placing hundreds of thousands of Communists in concentration camps.

It seemed that almost everything was going from bad to worse, as the fascist powers carried out one act of aggression after another, from the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, China, in 1931, to the Italian assault on Ethiopia at the end of 1935. The Soviet Union called for Britain and France to co-operate against the aggression of the fascist powers. But they were firmly set on the course of appeasement: it seemed more convenient to appease ferociously anti-communist, anti-working class powers who might yet be turned against the Soviet Union than to take a strong stand against them before they could accumulate strength.

Then came a new crisis in Spain.

POPULAR FRONT

In February 1936, the Popular Front, an alliance of Republican reformers, Socialists and Communists, won a clear majority of seats in the Spanish elections, as well as about 400,000 more votes than its main opponents in the right wing alliance, the National Front.

The new Prime Minister, Azana, formed his government from the more "respectable" parties of the Popular Front, leaving out the Communists and Socialists, but began to implement the policies on which the Front had won the elections by releasing all political prisoners, giving the deputies elected from Catalonia the right to elect an autonomous Catalan government and pushing ahead a land reform programme intended to transfer land from the great estates of private landowners to the impoverished peasants.

The parties of the left and the working class were overjoyed at the Popular Front victory. Great celebrations and demonstrations took place. But the most reactionary forces in Spain - the big landowners, the Church and the bulk of the military leadership, as well as the parties of the right, saw in these events a terrible threat to the old Spain which they represented. A conspiracy to overthrow the elected government

quickly took shape.

THE GENERALS ACT

A group of generals had already laid plans for a takeover shortly after the Republic was established in 1931. But they were dropped when the first, reformist government was replaced in elections by a more conservative regime. They now prepared to go ahead, and set about recruiting right-wing allies. Among the generals was Francisco Franco, eventually to emerge as the head of the "Nationalist" side in the coming Civil War. He had won a lot of respect from the Spanish right for his part in suppressing the Rif revolt in Morocco in the twenties, and the uprising of the miners of the Asturias region of northern Spain in 1934.

On 17th July, the military rebellion began in Spanish Morocco, and the rebels quickly overcame all opposition. The following day, the revolt began in Spain. Military officers who were part of the conspiracy against the Republic ordered their troops to occupy key positions, including the offices of the civilian administration. In Navarre, in northern Spain, armed Carlists (the Carlists supported the claim to the Spanish throne of a rival line to that of the king whose reign ended in exile in 1931) joined the military; elsewhere, supporters of the fascist party, the Falange, gave the generals their backing. They were also joined by the vast majority of the Civil Guards, a hated paramilitary police force with a long history of opposition to progressive movements.

During the day of 18th July, reports flowed into the Spanish capital, Madrid, of the military rising in a succession of towns in Andalusia, in the south - Seville, Cadiz, Algeciras,



Three conflicts were entangled with each other and finally expressed themselves in the Civil War.

The class conflict between the great landowners and the labourers on their estates and poor peasants was a very old one, and with the development of capitalism in Spain, a conflict between workers and capitalists emerged side by side with the older struggle.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, there had been a series of struggles between liberals and the Church. The Church had a stranglehold on Spanish life, and the liberals saw it as a defender of everything backward in the country and a determined enemy of modernisation. They wanted the separation of Church and state, secular education, the right of divorce and other

# THE SPANISH

Jerez, ... In each place, the main resistance was offered by the workers and the parties of the left. But even as the revolt spread across northern Spain, the government still tried to use constitutional means to defeat the rebels, calling for the support of loyal troops and police and appealing to helpless civilian administrators to stand firm.

In Madrid, the unions and the left demonstrated, calling on the government to issue arms to the workers so that they could defend the Republic. The UGT, the Socialist-dominated union federation, had 8,000 guns which it distributed to members of the Socialist and Communist parties and the most militant union members. Still the government hesitated.

BARCELONA

On 19th July, the rebels succeeded in seizing many northern towns, including Burgos, which became the Nationalist capital. But in Spain's second city, Barcelona, it was a different story.

Barcelona was the capital of Catalonia, but also a stronghold of the CNT, the Anarchist trade union federation. When news of the generals' revolt reached Barcelona, CNT members did not wait to be given arms, but went and took them from several arms depots they managed to occupy. When sections of the army moved to seize the centre of Barcelona, they found themselves faced by armed workers. In this situation, some soldiers responded to the workers' appeal to turn their guns on their officers; the Civil Guard sided with the people. In two days, the revolt was crushed in Barcelona.

On the evening of the 19th, the government finally issued guns to the workers: 55,000 rifles were given to the trade unions, but the bolts for 50,000 of them were in the rebel-held Montana barracks, which the workers had to besiege until the next day to capture. One by one, the rebel barracks were subdued.

There had been a lot of conflict between the CNT and the UGT before the revolt, but, as the Anarchists and the parties of the Popular Front joined forces against the common enemy, the CNT put up a massive poster outside its Madrid headquarters which reflected the mood of the time. It showed two dying militiamen, one of the UGT and one of the CNT, and carried the words: "With our blood, we seal our union."

BALANCE OF FORCES

If the government had reacted promptly to news of the revolt by the generals in Morocco, by issuing arms to the workers' organisations, it is likely that they would have been able to crush the rebels. But the gov-



Volunteers ride to the defence of

## The International Brigades

About 40,000 volunteers fought in the International Brigades before their withdrawal from Spain in November 1938. Though it tends to be the well-known people who joined the brigades who are remembered, 80 percent or more of them were working class people.

The largest group, about 10,000, came from France, of whom 3,000 were killed. Large contingents came from countries already under fascist dictatorships, their members determined to stop another land meeting the same fate as theirs: 5,000 came from Germany and Austria together (2,000 were killed), and 3,350 from Italy. In March 1937, the Italians of the Garibaldi Battalion found themselves in a furious conflict with Italian fascists during the battle of Guadalajara: a small Italian civil war took place within the Spanish Civil War.

A large proportion of the 2,800 American volunteers was black. The Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935 had aroused strong protests among Afro-Americans, and many of those who joined the International Brigades felt that they were not only fighting for Spain's freedom, but striking a blow for Ethiopia too.

Among the contingents from some 60 other countries was one from Ireland, led by Frank Ryan, an Irish Republican and former IRA man.

About 2,000 fighters went from Britain, of whom 526 were killed. Among the first to be

killed was Ralph Fox, a revolutionary writer and a Communist with an internationalist stand with the oppressed of the world which went far beyond that of any other known communist in the Britain of the 1930's.

Some of the fighters of the International Brigades were able to put their experience to good use later. Italian, Yugoslav and Albanian volunteers played a leading role in the anti-fascist struggles in their countries during the Second World War, and some survived to see German and Italian fascism smashed at last.

## Why Was the Republic

The balance of forces at the beginning of the Civil War was fairly even. While the Republican forces were short of arms, their main weaknesses were in training and military organisation, which could have been overcome given a little time. In fact, once most of the parties in the Republic had recognised these problems, they made a lot of progress in creating an effective people's army. It was foreign intervention on the side of the Nationalists, coupled with the "non-intervention" policy of Britain and France, which gave a decisive edge to the fascists.

At the height of the intervention by Nazi Germany, in the autumn of 1936, there were approximately 10,000 Germans

working with the Nationalists. The Nazis formed the Condor Legion to serve in Spain, which included planes and anti-tank units. It was planes of the Condor Legion which carried out the terror bombing of the ancient Basque town of Guernica in April 1937.

At the height of the Italian involvement, in mid-1937, there were 50,000 regular army troops in Spain. 20,000 Portuguese also fought with the Nationalists, as did 600 Irish fascists and a few extreme right-wingers from other European countries. Both Germany and Italy pumped military supplies to their fellow fascists.

In contrast, the only governments which came to Republican Spain's aid were that of Mexico,



**ESPAÑÓLES:**  
**POR LA INDEPENDENCIA Y LA LIBERTAD DE NUESTRA PATRIA**  
**¡100.000 VOLUNTARIOS!**

A Communist Party poster calls for 100,000 volunteers to fight "for the independence and liberty of our country."

# take for Spain

reforms. Lastly, there was a conflict between Spain's different nationalities and the regions and those who were opposed to any decentralisation of power. The Basques and Catalans had pushed hardest for recognition of their right to self-government, but there were others who wanted to see some measure of autonomy for their areas too, in a state which had always been Castilian-dominated.

The interweaving of these conflicts determined that the division into two sides during the Civil War would not be a simple one. In general, the exploiting classes, the Church and the army lined up together for an authoritarian, Church-dominated and centralised Spain in which "regionalism" would not be tolerated. However, the Falangists were originally opposed to the power of the

Church. The Basque country (Euzkadi) was strongly Catholic, but also (except for the province of Navarre), strongly nationalist. As the fascists would never accept self-rule for the Basques, they supported the Republic. Catalonia had a strong nationalist movement, but also a powerful working class, many of whom suspected the nationalist leadership of simply wanting a state for themselves in which they could exploit the working class more thoroughly and restrict competition. In any case, Anarchism was a mass movement in Catalonia, and the Anarchists wanted to do away with all states, not establish new ones.

Many of the liberal reformist politicians who supported the Republic and enthusiastically backed measures to break the

power of the Church, shrank from the revolutionary changes in all areas of Spanish society which the workers and peasants wanted.

It was these kinds of complex realities with which the Spanish Communists had to grapple in seeking both to maintain the maximum unity of the people against fascism and to open the way to a thorough-going transformation of Spanish society after the war, especially when Spain's struggle became part of an international fight against fascism.

As it was, during its short existence, the Republic did carry out land reforms, secularise and expand the education system, agree the establishment of Catalan and Basque Republics and increase the rights of women and workers generally.

# H CIVIL WAR

ernment was afraid to place its fate in the hands of the working class, and so it gave the rebels the time they needed to seize large areas of the country.

By the end of the first week of the rebellion, the bulk of northern Spain was held by the rebels, as were the towns of Seville, Cordoba and Granada in the south, as well as the southern tip of the country opposite Morocco, and the Balearic Islands, apart from Minorca. This included some of the most intensely conservative and religious parts of the country.

Of 15,000 officers in the Spanish army, 10,000 had joined the rebels and only 500 had remained loyal to the Republic.



Madrid.

- the rest sympathised with the rebels, but found themselves in the Republican zone when the war began. Two thirds of the army (40,000 men), and of the Civil Guards (22,000 men), as well as the Falangists and 14,000 Carlists had joined the revolt. The most powerful forces with the rebels, however, were the 34,000 men of the Army of Africa and the Foreign Legion, under Franco's command. But only a few of these troops managed to cross to Spain at the beginning of the revolt, as the majority of the navy came out for the Republic, though not without most crews having to kill their officers first.

The portion of the armed forces which remained loyal to the Republic was not match for the rebels on its own. But the difference in strength between the two sides was greatly narrowed by the rapid organisation of militias by the working class organisations and parties.

## THE SIEGE OF MADRID

At the end of July 1936, both the Republic and Nationalists were looking for foreign aid. Nazi Germany sprang to Franco's aid at this crucial moment, providing an airlift for his forces from Morocco to southern Spain, which quickly transformed the situation there, enabling the rebels to link up the cities they controlled, suppress the opposition and advance northwards to link up with the Nationalist zone in the north and attack Madrid from the south.

Italy also intervened, as did Portugal. The fascist states provided military aid to the Nationalists including troops and looked forward to the speedy victory of fascism in yet an-

other European country - as well as to an economic and strategic pay-off afterwards. Britain and France refused to sell arms to the Republic, but the Soviet Union did, and sent a small number of soldiers, too. The Communist International worked to raise support for the Republic, and provided the bulk of recruits for the International Brigade, volunteers from many lands who were determined to fight fascism.

As the summer of 1936 turned to autumn, the well-equipped professional army of the Nationalists swept towards Madrid. General Mola was asked which of the four columns of his forces advancing on the capital would take it, and he replied that a "fifth column of supporters" inside the column would do so.

There was little doubt in the outside world that Madrid would fall. The fascists had ready a list of people to be arrested and executed. On November 4th, the Nationalist army captured the airport of Madrid, and two days later, the government and the politicians, except for the Communists, left the capital. On November 8th, the fascists "final assault" began.

The slogan "No Pasaran!" - "They Shall Not Pass" was put forward by the Communists at the beginning of the war and it was taken up by the people of Madrid with real determination. The enemy reached the outskirts of the city, and managed to penetrate into the University City. But there the popular resistance finally brought them to a halt. The International Brigades joined in the battle too, and helped impose a stalemate on the elite troops of the Nationalist army.

# Morocco and the War

Spain's experience in the Civil War illustrates how the possession of colonies serves to strengthen everything reactionary in the colonial power.

Morocco repeatedly revolted against Spanish rule. In the early 1920's, Abd al-Krim led a revolt in the Rif area which led to the temporary liberation of most of Spanish Morocco and the declaration of a republic. The republic was only defeated in 1926 after the French intervened and joined forces with Spain against the Rif.

These struggles led Spain to maintain a strong army in Morocco, including the Foreign Legion (mostly Spanish, in fact) and the locally recruited Army of Africa, which together totalled 32,000 men. Those who joined the Army of Africa came from the poorest parts of Morocco and simply joined up because they needed money. The Foreign Legion was reactionary to the core, and the Moroccans did not feel any special attachment to any group of Spanish people as such, only to those who paid them.

Neither the Republic declared in 1931 nor the Popular Front government of 1936 had a commitment to end colonialism. It may well be that a move to make Spanish Morocco independent would have prompted the generals to act more quickly. But it might also have deprived them of tens of thousands of troops. As it was, Franco quickly gained control in Morocco in 1936, and his Moorish soldiers played a crucial role in southern Spain during the early days of the revolt and fought against the Republic and for "Catholic Spain" until the end of the war.

The defence of Madrid inspired the rest of Republican Spain: if Madrid had fallen in November 1936, it is likely that the fascists would have won the war very quickly afterwards. Instead, it was to take them nearly two and a half years more to win. But the defence of Madrid also inspired people beyond Spain's borders. It represented the first definite check to the advance of fascism, and it was one imposed by the working

class. Even though the Republic was eventually defeated, the defence of Madrid had helped to put new heart into the left and into working people right across Europe and in many other areas for the fight against fascism, and it was a testimony to Madrid's power as an example that, 46 years on, Palestinians and Lebanese leftists besieged in Beirut by the Israelis, compared Beirut's resistance with Madrid's and even used the slogan "They Shall Not Pass".



# Defeated?

which gave a small amount of assistance, and the Soviet government, which was unable to match the volume of supplies sent by the fascist powers to the Nationalists. About 560 Soviet volunteers fought in Spain. The International Brigades made a big contribution to the Republic's defence, but there were not more than 18,000 of them at any one time.

Britain, following a policy of appeasement towards the fascist powers and more worried that the left was strong in the Republic than that the Nationalists were attempting to overthrow a democratically elected government, undermined the Republic with its "non-intervention" policy. In this it had the cooperation of the French government. "Non-

intervention" was proposed to the other major powers, but it quickly became clear that Germany and Italy were giving massive support to their fellow fascists, in response to which the Soviet Union was aiding the Republic. Yet the governments of Britain and France stuck to their policy, which had the virtue of appearing to be even-handed though it was in fact the Republic which suffered from their refusal to supply arms.

In Britain, the attitude of much of the Labour Party leadership did not help. Labour's rank and file overwhelmingly supported the Republic, but the leadership passed resolutions and gave as little practical aid as possible. In March 1937, before a meeting of the Socialist International and the

International Federation of Trade Unions, Ernest Bevin rejected aid for Spain, announcing that in doing so he was: "speaking in the name of the whole British labour movement." The Spanish delegation walked out in disgust.

## DIVISIONS

Other factors played some role in weakening the Republic. Struggles between the Communists, other Popular Front supporters, Anarchists and the Trotskyists of the POUM group certainly weakened the forces fighting fascism. But that was a fruit of the divisions existing on the left before the outbreak of the Civil War. There was no agreement on how, or even whether to preserve the maximum unity of the anti-fascist forces

while, at the same time, bringing in a measure of social change. The POUM and at first, the Anarchists, believed that revolutionary changes should be implemented immediately in the Republican areas, whereas the Communists, wary of antagonising the more prosperous peasants and pro-Republican middle class people, wanted only limited changes during the war. Though the Anarchists generally stood by the cooperatives they had set up and other radical changes, most did eventually recognise the need to win the war before more radical moves could be made. POUM, however, had to be suppressed for its disruptive role after attempting a coup.

The military strategy and

tactics of the Republic were also flawed: too much stress was laid on positional warfare and frontal assaults on enemy positions, which incurred heavy losses, exhausting Republican strength. A greater stress on guerrilla warfare and mobile people's war might have reduced losses and been more devastating to the fascists, who would be less able to bring their superior armaments to bear against particular Republican units.

But the main factor in the Republic's defeat was the intervention of the fascist powers on the enemy's side, and the policy of Britain and France, which denied the Republic the arms it needed to win. With the odds against it, the Republic did well to fight until 1939.

# TIGRAY 'The Current Situation is Really Impressive' -TPLF.

We print below the first part of an interview given by a representative of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) to "Class Struggle" in June this year.

'Class Struggle': Following your recent trip to Tigray, could you please tell us something about the latest situation?

TPLF: The present situation is the Horn of Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular, and more precisely, in Tigray, is really impressive. For instance, last year we were affected by the famine. As you know, famine is not caused only by drought, but by war itself.

negotiate, or is its collapse a pre-condition for the success of your movement?

TPLF: We categorise the Dergue as a fascist government. This means anti-democratic. So, by its nature the Dergue will never come to any kind of negotiation and we never expect it to bring any democratic solution. Not just to Tigray, but to the rest of Ethiopia either. So this is why we rose up in arms to

state-monopoly type since they are controlling the whole state, everything is nationalised and then the political power is under their hand. By allying themselves with the Soviet Union, of course they are puppets of the Soviet Union.

CS: Do they have a certain affinity with the bureaucratic bourgeoisie in power in the Soviet Union?

TPLF: We have to see this in the light of social and economic conditions. Ethiopia is not so developed. Actually these "rulers" are puppets of the Soviet Union. But we must not forget that US imperialism is also aiding the Ethiopian government. We cannot identify them with the Soviet type. It is not really a capitalist society. It is a semi-feudal and semi-capitalist country so this differentiates it from the Soviet Union.

CS: Is Soviet interest in Ethiopia primarily strategic or are they exploiting the country economically as well?

TPLF: Bearing in mind that this is a strategic area geographically speaking, one priority for the two imperialisms is military strategy. But why are they looking at it from the point of view of military strategy? That is, to control everything and then exploit the natural resources of that country. So it is both. Even now, there is gold mining in southern Ethiopia and the Soviet Union is exploiting it.

Coffee is the main cash crop of Ethiopia. This coffee is exploited by the Soviet Union. They buy it at a cheaper rate in Ethiopia in exchange for armaments and bring it here and sell it at a higher rate in Europe. Grains like taff and sorghum grown in the central part of Ethiopia are also shipped to the Soviet Union.

## US INTERVENTION

CS: What will be the effect of Reagan's publicised policy of intervention increasingly in Ethiopia?

TPLF: They are saying this now openly. But actually they have been trying for ten years. In 1975-77, the Ethiopian Democratic Union was a puppet organisation armed by America. They had 10,000 innocent peasants in arms. Its leader was a Tigrayan, a prince, who wanted to bring back the feudal system which the people hated. It was us who defeated them after two years of fierce battles. The organisation split into three or four parts. Now the US is trying to create a "contra"-type organisation with one of these splinters, the "Ethiopian People's Democratic Alliance". We have been expecting this and are keeping very close watch. We have won the hearts and minds of the people. The people know their enemies and friends. There is no way the Americans can go to Ethiopia, let alone to Tigray, and create another puppet organisation like the Contras or UNITA in Angola. It is not impossible that they could create something - for instance, in the part of Ethiopia bordering Kenya, because Kenya is an American puppet. But its life would not last long. The people have identified their enemies. This is a fierce class struggle and there is no compromise at all with our class enemies.

CS: So you would view both superpowers as your enemy?

TPLF: Oh, obviously. They are both the same, imperialist countries.

(The second part of this interview will be carried in the next issue of 'Class Struggle'.)

# AZANIA

In December last year, six Azanian patriots were sentenced to death, accused of killing the deputy-mayor of Sharpeville. They included Theresa Ramashamula, the first black woman to be sentenced to death in a political trial by the South African authorities.

that the Sharpeville Six are alleged to have killed Sharpeville's deputy mayor, Jacob Dlamini. He, too, is said to have fired on the demonstrators. There were stories before Dlamini was killed suggesting that he would have personally benefited from

## Save the Sharpeville 6!

Following widespread protests, the Six have been given leave to appeal. The appeals will be heard at the end of this year. This means that there is a fair amount of time to build up international protest against the sentences to get them overturned.

The Sharpeville Six were involved in protests against rent increases which were authorised by the collaborationist local authorities (Community Councils) in the Vaal area in August 1984. On September 2nd, there were large rallies in the areas concerned, and a decision was taken to stay away from work the following day if the increases were not dropped.

Next day, residents in the Vaal townships stayed away from work and marched on the local Development Board offices to demand an explanation for the rises. Some people were fired on by local councillors. In one incident a marcher was killed when a councillor and his bodyguard fired on a group of protesters. The marchers then seized the two men and killed them in retaliation. As a result of such incidents, the houses of various councillors came under attack, and it was during one of these attacks

the rent increases, and it was known that he was planning to open a shop.

Prior to the trial of the Six, they were tortured, and so were people who appeared as witnesses against them. They were sentenced mainly on the "evidence" of two state witnesses.



The campaign to save the Six goes on. 300 more people are due to come to trial on similar charges to them: the sentence against the Six hangs as a threat over them too.

## SHARPEVILLE SIX - BIOGRAPHIES

All of those sentenced to death lived with their families in Sharpeville itself.

**Mojalefa Reginald Sefatsa** aged 30, is married with one daughter Brigette, who was born shortly after his arrest in November 1984. Sefatsa was a self-employed fruit vendor. **Oupa Moses Diniso** is also 30, married with two children - a son aged 8 and a daughter aged two. He completed his education to matriculation standard and was employed as an inspector at a steel firm. **Reid Malebo Mokoena** aged 22 is engaged with a son of three years. He worked in the steel industry and belonged to the Steel and Allied Workers Union. **Theresa Ramashamola** is aged 24 and the oldest in a family of three daughters. She studied at Assumpta Roman Catholic School in Sharpeville and was working at a roadhouse at the time of her arrest. **Duma Joshua Khumalo** is aged 26 years and was doing a teacher training course when he was detained. He has a six year old son. **Francis Don Mokhesi** aged 28 years is married with a seven year old daughter. He was working as a window-dresser when arrested and is also a first division footballer in the National Professional Soccer League. His elder sister, Joyce, is presently on a scholarship at Ruskin College, Oxford.

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### PEOPLE'S WAR

□□□□ but also condemn all effective action against it, as well as those who propose such action. On this occasion, he came out with what the South African government wanted the foreign camera crews to record - he stated his strong opposition to sanctions and claimed to be speaking in the people's name.

Statements such as this are designed for foreign audiences, and not least, to assist the British government to stand up to the growing pressure upon it to introduce sanctions. They suggest that black people in Azania are divided over sanctions, when in fact, the great majority demand them. The South African government fears sanctions. Former Prime Minister Vorster once stated:

"Each trade agreement, each bank loan, each new investment is another brick in the wall of our continued existence."

Yet Mrs Thatcher insists: "Sanctions won't work." In fact, her opposition to them is partly based upon the knowledge that they do work. She does not want any bricks pulled out from the "wall of (South Africa's) continued existence."

Those bricks are steadily being loosened. Nearly two years have passed since the current uprisings began, and not even the most ferocious repression yet has stopped them. Everything points to an intensified struggle, and a steady move towards a people's war of liberation by the Azanian masses. The Botha regime has neared the limit of the minor reforms it can make without weakening the real power structure in the country. The rapid growth of the Nazi AWB (Afrikaaner Resistance Movement) and its allies shows that even cosmetic changes are too much for a large section of Afrikaaners. For their part, the Azanian people have no intention of allowing the racist colonial system to re-stabilise itself, as it did after Sharpeville and Soweto. The state of emergency, closing off as it does even those limited legal avenues of protest which existed before, brings closer the final phase of the freedom struggle which has been going on since 1652: the people's war of liberation.



"We have won the hearts and minds of the people. The people know their enemies and friends."

The Ethiopian government has been deliberately bombing grain grown by the peasants. 3.8 million out of the 5 million Tigrayans were affected. Of these, about 170,000 crossed the border into the Sudan because the Ethiopian government was not willing to feed them, and also was forcing them to accept its resettlement programme. We had a rehabilitation policy to take these people back into Tigray and then assist them with tools, utensils, grain, oxen etc. So, last year we sent back about 59,000 heads of families. In fact, more than these - about 70,000 in all - returned. We tried to convince them that there was not enough food. But they were homesick and also were seen as dehumanised by going abroad begging for food.

But last year there was a very nice rainy season. So they grew enough. So now about 80,000 in addition to these 70,000 are returning to Tigray, making a total of 150,000 out of the original 170,000. Next year, I am sure the rest will return. So the prospect for the future looks bright now. Overall, we took the famine situation as a very serious thing, so that all the fighters and the whole activity of the TPLF was geared towards solving this.

### MILITARY OFFENSIVE

But also last year, during the famine, the Ethiopian government launched its eighth military offensive. Despite the famine we managed to combat it, and defeated it. Now we are taking the initiative, and in April launched a big offensive in western Tigray.

### UNITED FRONT

CS: Is the Dergue (the Ethiopian ruling junta) likely to

dismantle the system and substitute for it a democratic government with co-operation of the other Ethiopian people.

We have made proposals for the formation of a united front of all groups opposed to the Dergue and its Soviet backers, and also a united democratic front with those organisations who have a longer-term perspective of rebuilding the country in a progressive way.

Discussions are still going on with the Oromo Liberation Front and the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement. They have to take our proposals and discuss them with their own grassroots. This has two important aspects: first, it expedites defeat of the enemy: the Ethiopian people are not fighting each other, they all have the same enemy, this fascist, anti-democratic government. Secondly, in the long run this will help the future democratic Ethiopia.

### DERGUE'S NATURE

CS: How do you see the class basis of the Derg?

TPLF: We see it as mainly military. Under Haile Selassie different sectors of the people were demanding different things. But there was no single body to co-ordinate this. The whole Ethiopian people rose up and Haile Selassie was overthrown. But then there was a power vacuum for six months, and the military took over. Its class nature is petty bourgeois. But after a petty bourgeoisie take power, it has to ally itself with the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. By its nature it vacillates. Now they are allying themselves with the bourgeoisie. So they are bureaucratic capitalists of a



# Sanctions, Solidarity and the RCP

by 'Class Struggle' correspondent.

The liberation struggle in Azania (South Africa) has produced a host of organisations which express the determination of the Azanian people to free themselves. They disagree over some political issues, over how liberation can be achieved and over what kind of society Azania should have in the future. But when it comes to the question of sanctions against South Africa, there is total agreement between all shades of opinion which in any way supports the overthrow of the racist system. The liberation movements - Pan-Africanist Congress, Black Consciousness Movement and African National Congress - all call for sanctions; the internal political organisations, such as the United Democratic Front and Azanian People's Organisation, call for sanctions; the trade union federations - COSATU, Council of Unions of South Africa and Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions, call for sanctions. For all the liberation movements, getting sanctions imposed is one part of a strategy for liberation which includes industrial and community action, political organisation and armed struggle.

Yet in Britain, the state which has the biggest stake in the exploitation of the black people of Azania, there is a group of self-styled "communists" which opposes this call, even to the extent of campaigning against it: the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). A recent issue of their paper, 'The Next Step' (30.5.86), bears the headline "South African blacks need solidarity not sanctions": the fact that every organisation which represents the aspirations of "South African blacks" calls for sanctions is apparently irrelevant: the RCP has a much better understanding of what Azanians need!

## 'Next Step' on Wrong Footing

The RCP arguments against the call for sanctions have been outlined in 'The Next Step'. In the May 30th issue, the RCP takes Neil Kinnock to task for calling for sanctions: "Kinnock's sanctions strategy is deadly dangerous.

"It puts the future of blacks in the hands of the establishment dignitaries who have every interest in supporting apartheid (Note - a reference to the Eminent Persons Group). And it disarms the one force in British society with a real stake in opposing apartheid - the working class. The demand for sanctions promotes the British state as a potential force for peace and progress. It suggests that workers need play no independent part in the fight against international oppression, and reduces them to a passive audience cheering the actions of British statesmen."

A few weeks later ('The Next Step', 27.6.86), Charles Longford argues:

"But if Britain's ravaged economy was to lose one of its most important partners today, the consequences for capitalists here would be catastrophic."

The particular importance of South Africa to Britain explains why Thatcher has taken such an intransigent stand on sanctions." Therefore, it follows, since the British government is so rigidly opposed to sanctions, it is pointless to campaign for them.

It should be clear from Longford's article that the RCP is opposed to a sanctions campaign in any form, not just to Neil Kinnock's call for sanctions. So any plea that the first article was simply challenging the Labour leader's stand can be discounted.

## SOLIDARITY OR SANCTIONS?

The RCP's position can be refuted point by point. Firstly, to pose sanctions against solidarity is totally misleading. There are indeed those who see sanctions as an easy option, as a means to put pressure on the Botha regime to come to an agreement with "moderate" black leaders which will leave the imperialist interests in Azania intact. That's the position of much of Labour's leadership. But for the solidarity movement in general, the call for sanctions is part of building solidarity, not an alternative to it. Secondly, whatever Kinnock's intention in backing sanctions

of Azania, neither he nor anyone else has the power to put "the future of blacks in the hands of establishment dignitaries." The black people of Azania are waging a self-reliant struggle, not entrusting their fate to anyone else. Solidarity action can assist their fight, but is bound to play a secondary role to that of the oppressed people of Azania. The RCP's slip into suggesting that the Azanian people, with their wealth of political experience, can be controlled by "establishment dignitaries" smells of traditional British 'left' racism, which saw the colonial peoples as a passive, backward mass, dependent upon their "betters" in the West for improvement.

## THE BRITISH STATE

Thirdly, tens of thousands of Azanians gave their lives fighting against British colonialism in the last century and at the beginning of this century. More have been killed by South African forces using British-supplied military equipment. These facts are engraved in the minds of all Azanians, who still honour leaders like Cetawayo and Bambata, and their supporters, who fought British armies. The Azanian people therefore have no illusions about the nature of the British state, nor about the determination of the British government, in defence of imperialist interests, to resist pressure to introduce sanctions. Yet nevertheless, the national organisations of the Azanian people still call for friends in Britain to demand 'Sanctions Now!' They actually have more confidence in working class and progressive people here being able to force the British government to bow to the call for sanctions than the RCP does! (Not forgetting for a moment that the main pressure for Britain to accept this demand comes from the uprisings in Azania itself.)

The absurdity of the RCP position is shown by the another example: the campaign for the withdrawal of US troops from Vietnam in the sixties and early seventies. The American state was committed to keep its army in Vietnam until it won. Yet there was a world-wide campaign demanding that the US government get American troops out of Vietnam. The heavy cost of the war was the main factor in making the US pull out. But the solidarity and anti-war movements helped. The nature of the American state, the most powerful in the world, has not changed. But it had to get out of Vietnam in the end. Why then, should it be a hopeless task to make the British government introduce sanctions?

Fourthly, the RCP says that calling for sanctions "suggests that workers need play no independent part in the fight against international oppression" and disarms them. This is simply not true. The level of workers' political consciousness when it comes to solidarity with Azania varies a great deal, but



The Black Consciousness Movement marked the tenth anniversary of the Soweto uprising with a picket of South Africa House. The Turkey Solidarity Campaign, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Eritrean Workers' Association and RCL were among those supporting it.

"CS" Photo.

big steps forward have been made under the influence of events in South Africa over the past couple of years of uprisings. In an increasing number of working class areas - not only where there's a large black population - South African goods have disappeared from many shops because of the boycott campaign developing into a mass movement. Some workers have taken action against their employers' dealings with South Africa, and even at the level of the official labour movement, many unions have backed boycott campaigns. What is a boycott campaign if not a form of grass-roots sanctions? It would be

workers". But black people support a number of political and trade union organisations, through which they voice their demands. Solidarity work should include helping get these organisations a wider hearing, backing their members and supporters against repression, and, when possible, raising direct material support for their work. But the RCP does not do these things, because none of the Azanian people's organisations come up to its own "high standards": hence the necessity for its "solidarity" to be general and largely abstract: hence its refusal to support the clearly expressed demand

natural accompaniment to this ultra-left posturing is the gesture which the RCP has made its very own - the sneer. While genuine communists seek to promote all positive factors in the struggles going on in the society in which we live, and to build on them, the RCP ignores or sneers at any struggle in which it does not play a significant part or from which it cannot hope to win recruits - in other words, the vast majority of struggles. And that is just their attitude towards what others have succeeded in doing in solidarity with the Azanian people, no thanks to them.

## COLONIALISM

In short, the political stand and practice of the RCP on Azania show that beneath the super-revolutionary posing, the RCP is one of the latest in a long line of "socialist colonialists", who reject the demands advanced by the oppressed nations because they know better what is good for them. While most of the left in Britain only supports one liberation movement in Azania, the RCP cannot bring itself to support any of them. While the RCP argues for "solidarity, not sanctions", more and more working class people are expressing their solidarity with Azania by boycotting South African goods - and sometimes going further.

The RCP may not be a very significant force. But it can be disruptive, and it can also draw in some good militants on the basis of its revolutionary pretensions, and burn them up in relentless, (but often, counter-productive) activity. That is why it should be criticised, not just ignored. Such criticism can limit the damage it can do and cause fewer people to be diverted from real solidarity work. But as the RCL believes that the building of a genuine revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party is necessary in Britain, we also hope that some of those who see through the pretensions of the RCP will join with the League to help build a party whose commitment to a firm revolutionary internationalist position is fundamental to its theory and practice.



great if the working class here did more in solidarity with Azania, but that must be worked for through campaigning. It is a false argument to suggest that there has to be a choice between such work and calling for sanctions. The more the grass-roots sanctions campaign is effective, the more easily the Britain-wide sanctions campaign can be successful.

## WHO IS THE RCP WITH?

The RCP talks about "solidarity not sanctions". But exactly what does it mean by solidarity? Clearly, it wants workers here to take action against firms dealing with South Africa, which is fine. But who is this solidarity with? It is all very well to talk in general terms about "black people" or "black

of all shades of opinion among the national organisations of the Azanian people for sanctions.

This position goes some way to explain why the RCP's main slogan, in its activities on South Africa, is "Black Blood on British Hands!", usually followed by some other call. It has little in the way of positive solidarity to project. But that's only part of the explanation. It is typical of the RCP that it should choose a slogan that is intended to shock. It may not actually help build solidarity. But it can reassure RCP members that they are being more "revolutionary" than anyone else, as when they attacked Scargill at the height of the miners' strike. The

# BABA BAKHTAURA WINS!

## House of Lords Decision.

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

The House of Lords on 26th June, 1986, allowed the appeal of Baba Bakhtaura Singh, the Punjabi musician and folksinger, against the Home Office decision to deport him. For Bakhtaura, the decision meant that the Immigration Appeal Tribunal has to reconsider his case. For national minority communities in general, the decision meant that the interest of the deportee's community must be taken into account when reviewing a deportation order.

Bakhtaura had appealed to an adjudicator against a deportation order made in February 1983, on the grounds that he was an "overstayer". The adjudicator turned him down. The Appeal Tribunal supported the adjudicator. Bakhtaura applied to the High Court for judicial review. The High Court overturned the Appeal Tribunal and decided in Bakhtaura's favour. The Home Office appealed to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal reversed the High Court decision. And eventually the House of Lords reversed the Court of Appeal.

### INTERESTS OF SIKH COMMUNITY

The adjudicator had accepted that Bakhtaura's deportation might be a loss to the Sikh community in Britain. He said: "The appellant is, I am satisfied, a major attraction at festivals and the like, capable of attracting audiences of several thousands. He gives his services free to charity where others of his standing might charge as much as £500. He is greatly respected for it ... from what I am told this appellant has a rare talent."

But the adjudicator refused to consider this loss to the Sikh community, saying that the law did not allow him to take it into account. The High Court decided that it was wrong for the adjudicator to disregard Sikh community interest. The judge ordered the appeal tribunal to think again.

The Court of Appeal, even without the presence of the notoriously reactionary Lord Denning, managed to support the Home Office and decide that the adjudicator was right to ignore Sikh community interest. They did so by concentrating on one sentence in the Immigration rules which reads: "In consid-

ering whether deportation is the right course on the merits, the public interest will be balanced against any compassionate circumstances of the case."

The Court of Appeal said that "public interest" meant the public interest in favour of deportation. "Compassionate circumstances" were restricted to those of a personal nature. Thus community interest against deportation fitted into neither category. And where the rules said elsewhere that "full account is to be taken of all relevant circumstances", the Court of Appeal stated that the relevant circumstances were only those of a personal nature - relating to the deportee or his close family.

In argument before the House of Lords, the barrister for the Home Office accepted that wider interests than those of the deportee and his close family could be taken into account. But, he argued, only the Secretary of State could consider those interests of "third parties". The appeal authorities would not.

The House of Lords unanimously rejected this specious argument. Simply put, their reasons were these. First, there was no reason to limit "relevant circumstances" to "compassionate circumstances". Second, the "subtle distinction" between what the Secretary of State could consider as relevant and what the appeal authorities consider as relevant was not a feasible interpretation of the law. Third, the rules of administrative law in general required all relevant circumstances to be considered when making a decision, and this applied to immigration rules as to other areas of administration.

On this basis, Sikh community interest was a relevant circumstance, and the adjudicator was wrong to refuse to consider it. The case was referred back to the appeal tribunal. But the House clearly indicated what the tribunal should consider. They said: "On the adjudicator's primary findings of fact, this was a simple case of a man of outstanding talent and dedication rendering services of outstanding value to a particular section of the community of which they would be deprived if he were deported."

## Victory for Sikh People and Sikh Culture, Defeat for Assimilation and Deportation.



Baba Bakhtaura.

### GREAT VICTORY

The House of Lords decision in favour of Baba Bakhtaura is a great victory. For over four years, Bakhtaura fought for his right to stay in Britain, an uphill struggle against the mean and vicious racist tactics of the Home Office. This fight is not yet over, as the case has been referred back to the Appeal Tribunal. But a major success has been achieved.

It is a success for the rights of the national minority communities in this country. The government argued throughout Bakhtaura's case that the interests of the Punjabi, Afro-Caribbean, Bengali etc. community must be ignored when considering deportation. In other words, it is right to deprive these peoples of their poets, musicians and artists, their teachers, social workers and priests, their leaders and organisers. This is not surprising, for over the years Labour and Tory leaders have pursued two policies to destroy the character and cohesion of national minority communities. On the one hand deportation, on the other, assimilation.

The House of Lords decision limits this tactic by forcing the immigration authorities to consider community interest. This is excellent, but caution about legal victories is essential. While the efforts of brilliant and dedicated lawyers like Ian McDonald and Frances Webber, who represented Bakhtaura, are an important asset, it must not be forgotten that the Home Office

could change the law tomorrow to reverse the effect of the decision. And the decision itself remains only one flaw in the whole armoury of racist immigration laws.

### FOUR YEARS OF STRUGGLE

The Baba Bakhtaura Campaign has continued over the four years of the struggle. Its core has always been a group of black activists, working with selfless devotion to the cause. They have drawn support from the national minority communities on a wide scale. Support from the white working class, even from white militants, has been minimal. Nevertheless, the

"victims of the Tory government's concerted efforts to attack the black communities in this country." This really doesn't face up to the facts of Labour's deep racism, proved by its record of racist immigration laws and deportations while in office and by its continuing support for "strict immigration control". The same leaflet refers to the "victories of Muhammad Idrish and Shaheed Syed (both NALGO activists)".

The victories of Idrish and Syed must be strongly welcomed. But it should be clear that Bakhtaura was never a trade union activist and he won his



campaign has known how to unite with all sympathetic elements.

When necessary, Labour MP's have been used. Immigration laws are so constituted that sometimes only MP's are allowed to intervene with the Home Secretary to prevent deportations. But there should be no illusions that the Labour Party is an ally in the fight against deportations.

### LABOUR'S RACISM

A recent Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign leaflet stated that families under threat of deportation were

victory despite the studied indifference and racist apathy of the British trade unions. And, although the campaign had to use Bakhtaura's MP, Clare Short, when necessary, it must not be forgotten that he stood against her as a parliamentary candidate at the general election, under the slogan of Stop the Deportations of Black People Now.

## ANTI-RACIST NOTEBOOK

### SAVE ROSE AND BRIAN CAMPAIGN

The campaign to stop the deportation of Rose Alaso and her son Brian, of Leeds has organised a lobby of the Home Office on Friday, 25th July, to build support for her right to stay here. A recent leaflet from the campaign says:

"Rose Alaso and her son Brian have lived under the threat of deportation to Uganda by the British government since December 1983. There has been great public concern in the last ten months for the future of this Leeds woman. Five members of her family have been brutally murdered in Uganda because of their active support for democracy in Uganda. Her four brothers and sisters, and her mother have all fled Uganda and obtained political asylum.

"Rose has lived here since 1979 and she wants to remain here for good. She works for Leeds City Council as a computer operator....

"Around 250 people are deported or leave this country as a result of current immigration laws every month. Rose's sister who is a resident in Germany came to visit Rose recently and she was deported back to Germany on 28th May. Rose's uncle was refused entry when he wanted to visit Rose in Leeds."

For more information, the campaign can be contacted in the evening by telephone: 0532-740197.

### BIRMINGHAM:

#### FIGHT AGAINST RACISM AT WOMEN'S WORKSHOP

(For details see last issue of 'Class Struggle', June 1986.)

The start of the new course for trainees was delayed - so that our publicity could not reach them and as their new instructor correctly refused to start until the problem of racism was discussed at the workshop.

When the trainees did start, they too felt the racism and arrogance of the co-ordinator and started to complain. In the end EDU (Economic Development Unit who fund the workshop) were forced to take note and suspended the co-ordinator. She is getting full pay, however, and black women feel that the plan is to quietly reinstate her when we stop fight-

ing against the racist practices of all the institutions involved. We don't intend to stop!

Most members of the Management Committee have resigned although their self-criticisms and criticisms have not been made public.

Our demands still are:

1. The resignation of the co-ordinator.
2. A black woman to be appointed in her place.
3. Full compensation for the workers who resigned.

### Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign

Since the uprising on Broadwater Farm, Tottenham, last October, 66 people have been charged with affray, 13 more have been charged with riotous assembly, and six of them have also been charged with murder.

One black woman died during a police raid, and no-one was charged; one policeman died during the uprising and 350 people were arrested and 160 charged. This was an attack on a whole community.

The Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign has called a March Against Police Harassment for Sunday, July 20th. Assemble 12 noon at Broadwater Farm, London N.17. to march to Finsbury Park Anti-Racism Festival.



## BOOK NEWS

# Free the Guildford Four!

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

In the autumn of 1974, two pubs frequented by soldiers were bombed in Guildford and Woolwich. Three young Irish men and an English woman were arrested and charged with the explosions. Paul Hill, Patrick Armstrong, Gerard Conlon and Carole Richardson - collectively known as the Guildford Four - were brought to court on the basis of confessions obtained during police custody. There was no forensic evidence, and no positive identification to put them at the scenes of the explosions. Carole Richardson was subject to 30 identification parades and not picked out on any of them.

The only evidence against the four was what they said about themselves and what they said about each other. All pleaded not guilty at their trial and complained of a variety of police abuses such as brutality, sleep deprivation and denial of food. They rejected their confessions as false ones, obtained under pressure. In spite of this, all four were found guilty and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Richardson, then aged 18, was sentenced to be detained at "Her Majesty's pleasure". Conlon, aged 21, received life with a recommendation that he serve not less than 30 years. Armstrong, aged 25, was sentenced to not less than 35 years and Paul Hill, aged 21, was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Yet all four continued to maintain their innocence, and a number of awkward questions had been raised before and during the trial. Carole Richardson and Paddy Armstrong were both regular drug users - a bad security risk for any illegal organisation. Would the IRA really have used them as part of an active service unit (ASU) in England? It has never been known to have drug users as part of such units before or since.

The "evidence" the Four gave in their confessions contained over 100 contradictions, and they never seemed to have told the police anything that they (the police) did not already



The Guildford Four: Carole Richardson, Paul Hill, Patrick Armstrong and Gerard Conlon.

know. Facts such as these pointed to a frame up by a police force anxious to get convictions - any convictions - for the IRA bombings in Britain in 1974.

### BALCOMBE STREET

Seven weeks after the Guildford Four were sentenced, four members of an IRA active service unit were captured in Balcombe Street, central London. They were accused of a string of bombings, and they told the police and the court in which they were tried, that they were responsible for the Guildford and Woolwich bombings. Not only that: they later described in detail the type of bombs which were used, the car used to escape and where it had been abandoned, and gave other specific pieces of information that only those who had left the bombs could know.

### APPEAL

But this was not enough to win their freedom for the Guildford Four. Their appeal was dismissed in October 1977, the appeal court judges deciding to accept that two of the Balcombe Street unit were at Guildford, but insisting that they must have been working with the Guildford Four.

A "Free the Guildford Four" campaign has been established to work for their release. It has produced an information pack which exposes their frame up systematically. Further information and the pack (price 50p + post and packing) can be obtained from: Free the Guildford Four Campaign, BM Box 6944, London WC1N 3XX.

The trial of the Guildford Four is just one of a series of frame ups of Irish people by the British state. The release of

prisoners wrongly convicted of acts that they manifestly did not commit, is one of the demands of the Irish Republican POW Campaign. Along with the Guildford Four, the campaign calls for the release of the Birmingham Six, all those convicted in the Maguire trial and Judith Ward. The campaign states:

## Support Peter Jordan

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Peter Jordan is one of five people who were tried at the beginning of the year on charges arising from the planned assassination of an officer in the SAS. The SAS' military record includes a deep involvement in operations to suppress the revolutionary movement in Oman in the early 1970's, and the mounting of ambushes on suspected Irish freedom fighters in South Armagh.

Of the people charged with Peter Jordan, two were found not guilty; one was convicted on a minor charge and released, as he had already been in prison for a longer period than his sentence and two others, William Grimes and Peter Jordan, were found guilty as charged and given long sentences. Grimes was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment and Jordan to 14 years.

A Peter Jordan Support Campaign has been formed to contest the sentence he was given. It argues that he was not given a fair trial: the hostile media coverage and the drama which surrounded every court appearance, with armed police on rooftops and streets around the court, and heavy police escorts for the vehicles in

"Most of the thirteen were arrested, charged and imprisoned during the mid-seventies when public hysteria at IRA activity was at its greatest. We contend that these people were framed to placate public outrage and imprisoned as a result of political expediency."

which the defendants travelled, made a fair trial impossible.

The campaign considers that the severity of Peter Jordan's sentence was partly due to his record of principled political work over the years. In 1969, he and other spread tin tacks on Bristol rugby ground to stop a South African rugby team playing there. He took part in other solidarity work, especially with Ireland, and was rewarded in 1984 by being arrested under the PTA. He was an active trade unionist until his retirement. He researched and wrote a number of articles about the development of British state repression both in Ireland and in Britain.

The Peter Jordan Support Campaign is demanding that he should be able to appeal against his sentence and be given fair and just treatment. The campaign calls for his case to be raised in trade union branches, political parties and other organisations so that pressure can be built up for him to get a better hearing at his appeal than he received at his trial.

The campaign can be contacted by writing to: Box 45, 37 Stokes Croft, BRISTOL 1.



### EAST LONDON:

#### ILEA IGNORES "ANTI-RACIST" POLICY

In the previous issue of "Class Struggle", we reported on how the fascist British National Party had obtained a high court injunction to allow them to hold an "election meeting" at John Scurr school in Tower Hamlets, east London. In spite of a call by anti-racists that it should defy the court and implement its anti-racist policy, the Labour-controlled Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) refused to stop the fascists using the school.

After that, a delegation from the Campaign Against Racism in Schools (CARS) went to the next meeting of ILEA to protest at its stand. The CARS delegation had to insist on seeing the ILEA officials at the meeting, and

they then found themselves being fobbed off with excuses. When they objected to this, the deputy leader of ILEA struck two women in the CARS delegation.

A few days later, CARS had a public meeting. Up rolled ILEA's deputy leader, arguing against taking on those who carried out racist attacks on children and promoted racism directly: he was for relying on the police and the courts to deal with the problem!

#### NO POLICE IN SCHOOLS

In spite of ILEA's opposition to their position, more and more schools and teachers are adopting a "Police Out of Schools" position. The Inner London Teachers' Association has formed a campaign committee to encourage others to adopt this position. The police are known as a racist and oppressive force

by many black school students, and they've had plenty of time to deal with those who carry out racist attacks on school children if they'd really wanted to.

Struggles such as that over police in schools and over John Scurr school are drawing increasing numbers of teachers into anti-racist struggle. One indication of the immediate importance of this is the situation at Islington's Highbury Quadrant school, where teachers have monitored 80 racist attacks on Asian school students in the recent past-50 of them the work of one family. Teachers have to escort children to and from school for their protection.

#### CRANE GANG

Also in Islington, the local Anti-Fascist Action group are

organising against a fascist gang which has recently moved into the area. Headed by bonehead thug Nicky Crane, it is based at 35, Avenell Road, near the Arsenal football ground.

Since these fascists moved into the area, three schools have been broken into and daubed with racist graffiti, and local people have been threatened and intimidated. The Red Rose Labour Club in Seven Sisters Road has also been daubed with racist slogans.

Islington AFA is working to rally local people against the fascists. It has called a public meeting at the Red Rose Labour Club, at 129, Seven Sisters Road, London. N.4. for 2p.m. on Sunday, July 13th. Anyone wanting to contact the group can also write to it c/o the Red Rose.

British Volunteers for Liberty: Spain 1936-1939, Bill Alexander

- written by one of the commanders of the British Battalion, this is a first-hand account of some of the 2,000 volunteers for the defence of the Spanish Republic.

£4.95 + P&P.

Miners Against Fascism: Wales and the Spanish Civil War Hywel Francis

- this is an account of the contribution of South Wales miners who were amongst the largest contingents of the British Battalion.

£4.95 + P&P

Britain, Fascism and the Popular Front, Jim Fyrth (ed.)

- this collection examines the politics of the Popular Front designed to block the advance of fascism, and the reactions it produced.

£4.95 + P&P.

\* \* \* \* \*

BLACK SKIN, WHITE MASKS F. Fanon,

- Fanon uses psychoanalysis and psychological theory to confront the de-personalised, dislocated, colonial subject to explain the feelings of dependency and inadequacy that racism engineers.

£4.95 + 28p P&P.

#### MAD DOGS

- this collection of essays from E.P. Thompson, Mary Kaldor and others explores the underlying politics and implications of the US raids on Libya.

£3.50 + 22p P&P.

AYAHS, LASCARS & PRINCES R. Visram

- surveys the history of people in Britain from the Indian sub-continent. Ending in 1947 with independence, R. Visram examines individual achievements, official attitudes, the reactions and perceptions of the British people and responses of the migrants themselves.

£8.95 + 59p P&P.

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#### SPECIAL OFFER!

\* \* \* \* \*

IMPERIALISM AND UNEQUAL DEVELOPMENT Samir Amin

- contains ten essays collected under 3 sections 'Historical Materialism', 'Imperialism and Underdevelopment' and 'Problems of Transition and the Building of Socialism'. These were written in connection with discussions provoked by his earlier work 'Unequal Development', and Amin advises "viewed in relation to the general perspective of the re-birth of Marxism, which itself flows from the radicalisation of the anti-imperialist struggles".

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# FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



## Vicious Sentences

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

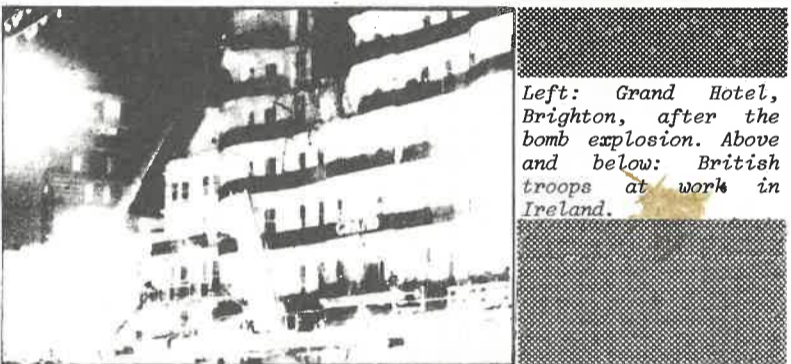
On June 11th, five Irish Republicans were found guilty of conspiracy to cause explosions in a number of English seaside hotels. One of them, Patrick Magee, was also found guilty of charges arising from the Brighton bomb in 1984. On June 23rd, Pat Magee was given eight life sentences, with a recommendation that he should serve at least 35 years. He and the four others - Ella O'Dwyer, Martina Anderson, Gerry McDonald and Peter Sherry - were all given life sentences on the conspiracy to cause explosions convictions.

During their detention before and in the course of the trial, the prisoners were subjected to repeated strip searches. The Irish Prisoners Appeal, which organised protests against strip searching, commented at the end of the trial:

"The British media has chosen to give virtually no coverage to the strip searching and other remand conditions the defendants suffered for 11 months. During the trial, the level of strip searching of all the defendants was increased to at least 17 times a week each. The average for each of the months before the trial for the women (who were subjected to more strip searches than the men from the time of their arrest until now) was 25 per month.

"Strip searches cannot be justified on security grounds. They represent a deliberate and systematic attempt to degrade and humiliate, in this case Irish women prisoners. They are a form of sexual harassment that amounts to torture."

There was little doubt that the five would be found guilty. Over the past year, media cover-



Left: Grand Hotel, Brighton, after the bomb explosion. Above and below: British troops at work in Ireland.



age of their arrests and the police investigation had already convicted them. They had wanted to be tried separately, but that was denied to all those arrested but one, so that the others were presented as guilty by association with each other any way.

The British state has never given Irish Republican prisoners a fair trial, and the sentences it has handed out have always been vicious. This is in contrast to the treatment given to British soldiers and RUC men who have gunned down unarmed Irish people in the Six Counties, including young children slain by plastic bullets: there always seems to be "justification" for them.

Patrick Magee was convicted of planting a bomb which killed five members of the British establishment in Brighton: it was a bomb which was intended to wipe out many of the British cabinet, including Thatcher and Norman Tebbit, who was injured in the blast any way. That cabinet, like others before it, had presided over a bloody war in Ireland, a war forced on the Irish people by 800 years of colonialism, and one which can be ended by British withdrawal from Ireland. The British politicians who have insisted on keeping the army in Ireland and denying the right of the Irish people as a whole to decide their own future are war criminals, and those who make war on the British occupation and are captured as a result are prisoners of war.

These facts are still not recognised by the great majority of people in Britain. But they are facts all the same and they must be accepted sooner or later. Those who repress other nations are bound to face a fight back and have no right

to moan about the consequences.

After the guilty verdicts were delivered, the IRA issued a statement in Dublin which says, in part:

"Contrary to the hysteria in the British media, there was no IRA plot to create 'carnage and massive destruction' at British holiday resorts last summer.

"Apart from the bomb at the Rubens Hotel in London, about which the British police know full well that a warning was to be given, no final decision to plant a series of small bombs around the English coast, with the purpose of diverting and embarrassing British forces, had been taken. Again, had such a tactic been adopted, warnings would have been given, despite all that has been said, it is not our purpose or in our interests to kill or injure innocent civilians....

"...IRA attacks in Britain and elsewhere are in response to the British territorial claims - backed up by violence and government repression - over the North of Ireland, a claim which is rejected by the majority of people in Ireland.

"There is a momentum behind our campaign which no British government can stop. We want peace and we appeal to the British people to put pressure on their government to withdraw from our country and allow Ireland to determine its own political future, free from outside interference."

As Ella O'Dwyer left the dock, her sister shouted: "Ireland Unfree shall never be at peace!" The truth of those words should be well and truly proven, over seventy years after Irish Republican Padraig Pearse first uttered them.

## ANGLO-'IRISH' ACCORD

# An Empty Promise

Belfast Sinn Fein Councillor Speaks in Yorkshire

by 'Class Struggle' correspondent.

The month of June saw Belfast Sinn Fein Councillor Gerard McGuigan address a number of well-attended public meetings across Yorkshire. Organised through local branches of the Troops Out Movement, the speaking tour gave people in York, Sheffield and Leeds a sorely needed opportunity to take in the Irish Republican point of view on the Anglo-Irish Accord.

With the impending closure of Unionist opposition to the deal "Ulster still says no", the accord But if Unionist politicians have lost face, the Dublin government and the SDLP have similarly failed to secure any of the concessions it was claimed the agreement would bring to the nationalist community in the north.

### "AN EMPTY PROMISE OF REFORM AND CHANGE"

Speaking in Leeds at a meeting chaired by the local branch of the Irish in Britain Representation Group, Cllr. McGuigan described the deal as "an empty promise of reform and change". Despite loyalist antics directed against the (supposed) involvement of a 'foreign power' in the affairs of the north, the signing of the Hillsborough agreement had not brought a united Ireland one single step closer. Nor was it ever intended to.

the Northern Ireland Assembly, has begun to fragment: while it is very definitely here to stay.

Recent years, McGuigan argued, had seen growing support for Sinn Fein both north and south of the border. This had been the result of consistent political work on the part of Sinn Fein in the aftermath of the Hunger Strikes. Added to this was the failure of the other parties to solve any of the major social problems inflicted upon the Irish people. (Unemployment is at present averaging 65% and as high as 80% in some areas.) People were turning in greater numbers towards the vision of a united, socialist republic of Ireland held forth by the Republican Movement.

The British and Irish governments had therefore been forced to produce a package that would counteract this development. In this, Cllr. McGuigan

continued, they seemed to have been partially successful. With the high profile given to the SDLP around the signing of the accord, by-election results early in the New Year had not



Sinn Fein councillor Gerard McGuigan speaking in Leeds.

come up to Sinn Fein's expectations.

In this sense, a temporary setback had been suffered. However, as the months had passed, little has changed,

apart from an escalation of sectarian attacks on Catholic families. Times has shown there to be nothing in the deal for the nationalist community. Indeed, he predicted sweeping repressive measures with the re-introduction of internment and even the banning of Sinn Fein and 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' high on the list of possibilities. Cllr. McGuigan saw a pressing time ahead for the Republican Movement but one in which everyone would have to redouble their efforts to make sure there were no setbacks on the road to victory.

### UNIONISM: MAIN OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS

In terms of British developments Cllr. McGuigan saw the agreement as having re-established Ireland on the political agenda. In particular, the antics amongst Ulster's Unionists in opposition to the deal, were showing up Unionism itself to be the main obstacle to political progress in the North of Ireland.

On the other hand, the agreement

had led to the re-introduction of bi-partisan policy on Ireland between the Labour and Conservative parties. The emergence of elements within the labour and trade union movement committed to withdrawal had been an important step towards British recognition of Ireland's right to self-determination. The return to a bi-partisan policy, defined by British parties and imposed by British institutions, was therefore a serious setback for both Sinn Fein and progressive forces in Britain. It only served to demonstrate how deeply British politics was still "hung up on the Empire".

In closing, Cllr. McGuigan urged everyone present to increase their efforts to secure British withdrawal from Ireland. Particularly, he asked those genuinely wishing to give solidarity to the Irish people to support the Troops Out Movement and the politics of self-determination.

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