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CLASS STRUGGLE



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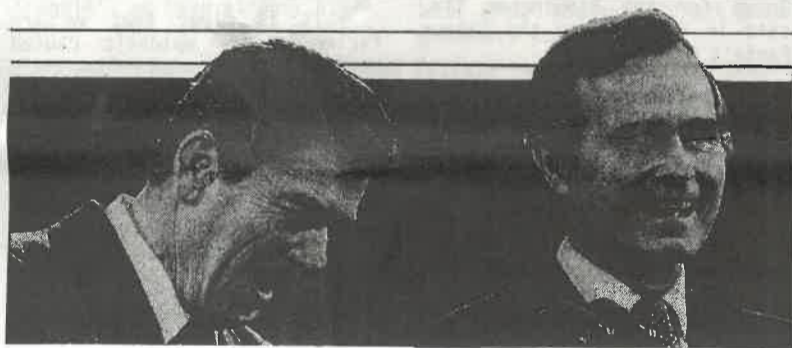
BUSH FOLLOWS REAGAN INTO WHITEHOUSE...

NEW SHERIFF

SAME OLD

GUN LAW

WHO WILL HAVE THE LAST LAUGH?



In January, Ronald Reagan rode off into the sunset into retirement and George Bush took over as President of the USA. Ronnie will be remembered as the second-rate filmstar who rose to be President on a wave of "make America great again" chauvinism.

He will be remembered as the President who ordered the invasion of Grenada, setting back hopes of progress for its people, the President who blockaded, mined and sent mercenaries to Nicaragua to destroy or weaken the revolution, the President who bombed Libya and supported the most hated reactionaries around the world: in South Africa, El Salvador, the Lebanon or elsewhere. In Britain, he will also be remembered, of course, for the "special relationship" with Maggie Thatcher.

George Bush made it clear in his presidential campaign that he would follow in Reagan's footsteps. As ex-head of the CIA, he has plenty of experience in defending the interests of the US, using every dirty trick in the book.

IMPERIALISM DEFEATED

But the Reagan years were not years of victory for the US. Grenada is a tiny island and the people had virtually no armed force with which to resist its mighty neighbour. Nicaragua has not been defeated. Although US policies have brought immense suffering and damage, the Nicaraguan people stand firm and have support around the world.

Meanwhile, hated dictators armed and funded by the US have fallen one after

another in the face of popular anger. Marcos had to be airlifted out of the Philippines. Duvalier fled the wrath of the people of Haiti. Chun Du Hwan was forced out of office in Korea and Zia, military ruler of Pakistan died by sabotage of his plane, before he could be pushed out.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLES

The underlying theme in all these countries has been the anti-imperialist struggles of the people who have risen in anger against the US and its allies. Of course, the US under Reagan or Bush, will build new alliances and the people's struggles continue. But the US no longer rules the roost.

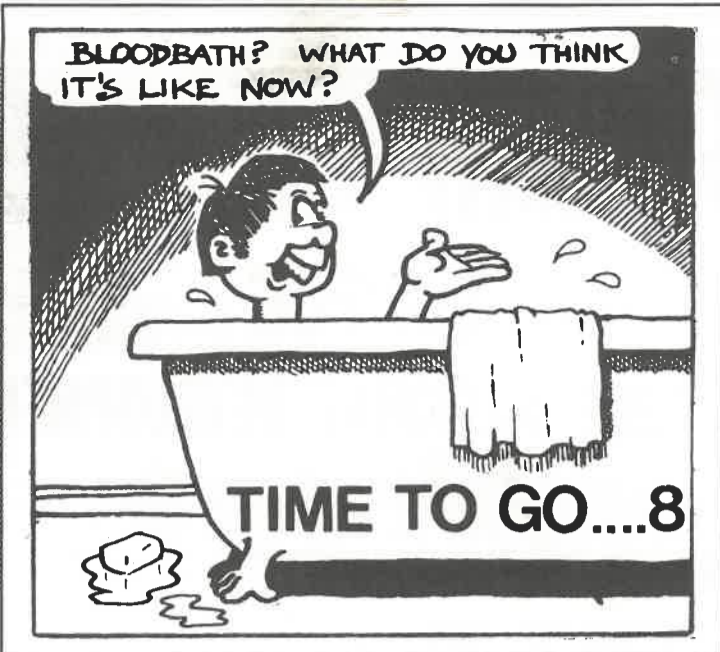
The most striking example of all is that of the US being forced to sit down to talk to the PLO. The main change has been in US policy. The PLO is now so strong, with the backing of the people of the occupied territories, that the US can no longer afford to ignore it.

In reality, the attempt to make America great again has run into difficulties. The US has retreated on many fronts.

Similarly, the Soviet Union is on the retreat. February sees the final withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan: a victory for the armed struggle of the Afghan people.

In 1989, events in the world are moving fast and the two superpowers, the US and the Soviet Union, are changing their tactics. But whether they are holding international meetings or using more aggressive tactics, whether there is a Reagan or a Bush in the White House, they cannot in the long run defeat the people's struggles.

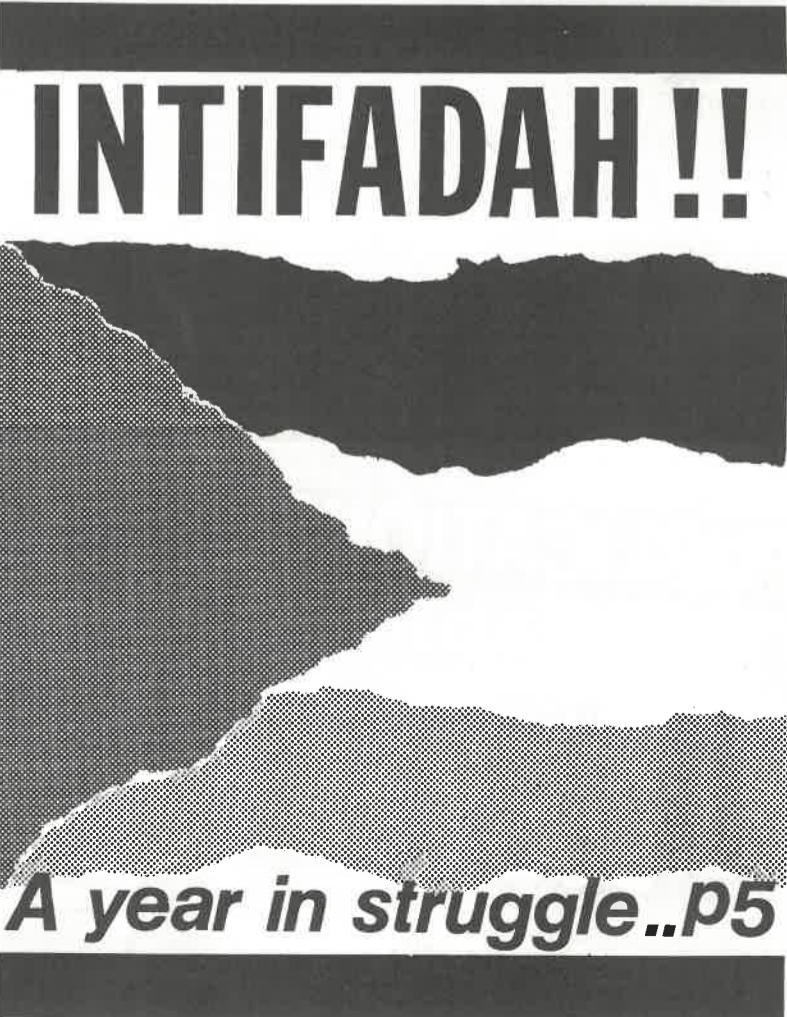
BRITAIN & IRELAND



THE WASTELAND

Thatcher's Britain

PAGE 3



INTIFADAH!!

A year in struggle..P5



SUPPORT

FREE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Many so-called Marxists see the national question as one that was resolved with the rise of nation states in Europe in the 19th century. They see the national question, and nationalist movements, as diversions from the pure path of class struggle.

The real world, however, is more complex. The reality of the world of 1989 is that the class struggle continues but in many different forms. The remarkable thing about the world today is the rise of national movements in many different places. The question of national independence and freedom, far from being a diversion, is the form currently being taken by many movements struggling for change.

To understand the nature of the national question, we have to go back to the end of the 19th century when capitalism, which to some extent could be understood as a development within single countries, became imperialism which operated on a world scale, creating a world system that left no people or nation unaffected by it.

Since that time, the world could broadly be seen to be divided into the oppressor and oppressed nations. The countries of Europe and the USA competed with each other to divide up Africa, Asia and Latin America. National oppression was not new. But since the development of imperialism the struggle for national freedom and independence has come to the forefront.

Throughout the 20th century, the peoples of the Third World have fought a heroic struggle for national freedom. Since the Second World War and the development of neo-colonialism, many countries have won formal independence but the struggle for true national freedom continues.

Since the Second World War, the Soviet Union has joined the ranks of the powers competing for control of the Third World. Afghanistan has become the Vietnam of the Soviet Union whose army has been defeated by a broad coalition of forces united in the struggle for national independence. Within Eastern Europe, different forms of national movements exist in countries such as Poland and Czechoslovakia, where freedom from Soviet control is a central demand uniting different forces. Within its own borders, the recent relaxing of control has led to an upsurge of national movements and demands.

British imperialism too faces opposition from national movements. The last 20 years has seen the latest phase in the struggle for Irish freedom. The national movements in Wales in Scotland have become important rallying points for broad numbers of people.

The struggles of black and Irish people within England are also part of a national struggle. Anti-racist struggles against police brutality, deportations and other injustices are closely linked to the defence of national cultures and religion, as can be seen in the current debate over education and separate black schools. The position of Irish people in Britain is also linked to the oppression of Ireland as a nation.

Nationalism in the era of imperialism can be a progressive force for change when it is the nationalism of an oppressed nation or people. It is vital for working class and progressive people to support the demand for free national development whether it is for freedom for the people of Ireland, Azania, Afghanistan or Eritrea, for national minority people within Britain or the people of Wales and Scotland.

It is for the people of different nations and nationalities to determine the form the struggle takes and its aims. Our task within Britain is to build an alliance between national minority people and the working class and ensure that the demand for free national development is an intrinsic part of the struggle for socialism.

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

The Labour Party's ruling National Executive Committee recently explained its reason for not supporting either the Birmingham Six or the Guildford Four campaigns:

It does not believe the Labour Party is in a position to declare them innocent. Such a conclusion could only be reached by lengthy research and investigation, the resources for which the NEC does not have at its disposal.

We know the Labour Party is a bit short of cash, hence their new recruitment drive, but the facts of both cases are easily available.

The NEC could probably raise £8-94p between them. They would find a well argued and researched view of the case of the Birmingham Six contained in 'Error of Judgement' written by Labour's own M.P., Chris Mullin, priced at £3-95p. And if they spent a further £4-99p, they would find the facts of the case of the Guildford Four objectively and conclusively laid out in 'Time Bomb' by Grant McKee and Ros Franey, the makers of two T.V. documentaries on the case. It does not take a lot of major investigative resources to stumble into a bookshop or watch the television.

Perhaps there is another motive behind the Labour Party's casual dismissal of the ordeal suffered by those innocent Irish prisoners. Paul May, chair of London Group for the Birmingham Six, said in response to the Labour Party's NEC ruling:

There is only one expression which adequately describes those who claim concern for human rights worldwide while deferring consideration of the stench of injustice in their own backyard: hypocrites.

A London reader.

ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL 'ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE'

Dear Editor,

Members of the Ealing Health Rights Group are concerned about a report in the 'Independent' national newspaper of 8th November 1988, that the Association of Community Health Councils, which is supposed to be the NHS's consumer watchdog but has never taken seriously the question of racial equality, was putting forward a series of proposals to regulate alternative medicine. The proposals were contained in a booklet entitled 'The state of non-conventional medicine - the consumer view'.

The uptake of NHS services by the racial minorities was low because of the all-pervasive racism in the NHS. The racial minorities prefer to visit a local 'Hakim' or other alternative medical practitioner for advice about their medical problems.

The Association of Community Health Councils proposes the regulation of alternative medicine through enforced standards of training, examination and qualification, as well as organised registration and qualification. This could only lead, in the group's view, to the racism in the NHS engulfing alternative medicine as well. In the past, regulation, both in the United States and in Britain, has meant increasing disadvantage, powerlessness and loss of autonomy for disadvantaged racial groups in society.

This could lead, in Britain at least, to the outlawing of 'Hakims' and others, and the registration of white doctors, (who had spent a fortnight studying acupuncture in Peking, for instance), as alternative medicine specialists.

Ealing Health Rights Group

EGGS - WAS EDWINA RIGHT?

Dear Editor,

It is clear that we are facing a new epidemic caused by the type 4 salmonella. Sir Donald Acheson, Government Chief Medical Officer, said on 11th January 1989:

I have no doubt at all that there is indeed a serious health problem associated with the occurrence of salmonella enteritidis phase 4 in eggs in this country.

In 1981 there were 392 cases; in 1987 there were 4,962 cases. In the first nine months of 1988 the number had doubled to 8,708. This particular type 4 salmonella now accounts for 45% of all human salmonella infections (total 20,532 in 1987).

These figures underestimate the total number of food poisoning cases. Many people do not go to their doctors; laboratories do not investigate all cases. Experts at the Central Public Health Laboratory estimate that there may now be up to two million cases of salmonella infection every year in England and Wales.

200 million eggs are eaten every week in Britain. Even if only one in 7,000 is infected, and

most of those are made safe by proper cooking, this still leaves a significant risk. No-one is sure about the extent of infection in eggs, but the one in 7,000 is considered a reasonable estimate by experts.

So if there clearly is a problem why was nothing done?

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) had clear evidence in February 1988 that hens could transmit the bacteria to their eggs: they did nothing.

The problem is that MAFF is responsible to food producers (well organised bosses' lobbies) and to food consumers, i.e. you and me. It is clear who is going to win in such an unequal competition.

John Coles is chairman of the independent-sounding British Egg Industry Council. He also happens to be managing director of Thames Valley Eggs, which produces a quarter of all eggs. It was that company which issued writs against Mrs. Currie.

The various Food Acts (covering safety of food) passed over the years are inadequate and full of loopholes. Training courses for environmental health inspectors (food inspectors) have been cut. There is a serious shortage of inspectors and the number of vacancies is rising steadily. MAFF has recently cut the money for research into meat and meat processing by £30 million. Research centres are under threat of closure as part of the strategy of cutting public spending.

There is growing pressure to set up a separate Food Ministry and bring in new food hygiene regulations. These would be a step in the right direction. However in a climate of public spending cuts and reliance on self-regulations by market forces, it is unlikely that the vested interests of the food and agriculture industries will be seriously threatened.

For once Mrs. Currie seems to have spoken the truth. Her mistake was that she picked on the wrong people: the rich and powerful. She could get away with blaming the poor and sick for their own problems and ignore the fact that it was the system (imperialism) she represented that caused the problems in the first place. She could play her part in cutting the NHS because that only hit ordinary people. Attacking the rich vested interests of the food and agriculture industries was another matter: she had to go.

NHS Shop Steward, Birmingham.

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OVERSEAS	

THATCHER'S BRITAIN

by JOE STEEL

Thatcher's strategy to save British imperialism is rolling on. The effects of Tory policies are bringing about a massive redistribution of wealth in favour of the rich at the expense of, not only the poor, but also the mass of ordinary people.

This attack on the people is two-pronged: changes in the taxation system and introduction of market forces into the state sector of the economy (denationalisation and "internal markets" into the welfare state).

In this article, we will examine some aspects of what is going on and how all the different parts fit together. Although we are concentrating on how the policies affect people in Britain, we must not forget that British imperialism is part of the global exploitative system and that a significant part of imperialism's survival depends on the superexploitation of the peoples of the Third World.

It is important to understand how the class struggle in Britain is unfolding. We need to know what the enemy is doing in order to mobilise the fight back.

THE TAX TRICK

Whether it is the direct taxation of individuals, or of companies, that money is wealth created by workers here or in the Third World. What it is used for; what services people get is part of the class struggle.

Analysis of the combined effects of changes in tax and social security over the last ten years shows that cuts in direct taxes have been entirely paid for by cuts in the welfare state and that there has been a major redistribution from those on low incomes to the better-off. It is estimated that the bottom half of the population has lost £6.6 billion whereas the top 10% have gained £5.6 billion. Indeed, the top 5% have ended up £4.8 billion better off. That top 10% now own 54% of the national wealth.

Despite government claims, the burden of taxation has hardly changed over the last ten years because tax bands have been adjusted for inflation but not for rising incomes.

The rest of us are increasingly in debt. By March 1988, we owed a staggering £38 billion; more than double what we owed (in real terms) in 1981. And that does not include our mortgages!

On top of this, we have subsidised the cheap sell-off of nationalised industries; having first paid for them to be modernised. What we get from the NHS, education, social services etc., gets less day by day. While it is estimated that the Treasury will end up with a £13 billion surplus at the end of March, spending on public services is falling in real terms.

MARKET FORCES IN THE WELFARE STATE

Everyone knows what happened to state industries when they were sold off. Water, electricity and possibly coal will be next.

What is not so obvious to people is what is happening to the human services (education, NHS, etc.) and how it will affect them.

Politically, the idea of the internal market is very clever. There is no clear sell-off to fight. On paper, it appears nothing changes. The right to free basic education and health care remain. What changes is how that service is provided. It will vary up

and down the country. The quality of service will suffer. There is nothing in the Education Act or the much-leaked NHS review about increasing the funding or reversing the already massive cuts.

THE HEALTH SERVICE

The NHS review is due to be published at the end of January. It will come at a time when waiting lists are growing (up 2.5% on the last six months). 678,000 patients are now on waiting lists. 25% of these (i.e. 182,000) have been waiting for more than a year to get into hospital.

The review is expected to propose three main changes:

1. Cut down the token democratic control of Area Health Authorities.
2. Allow hospitals to opt out. Very much like schools can.
3. Introduce an internal market. Hospitals and consultants will buy and sell services. GPs will buy services from hospitals.

Doctors and hospitals will end up competing with one another. Narrow financial management decisions will rule. Variation in what services are provided will develop. There will be even less long-term planning than there is now. Patients could end up travelling further because treatment is not available locally at their nearest but "inefficient" hospital.

EDUCATION

In a previous article in 'Class Struggle', we have already highlighted the effects of the

Already universities are having to raise funds from the private sector and run their campuses on a profit and loss basis.

Courses are more and more to be geared to the short term needs of the imperialist system. Any pretence at providing any wider educational need is being done away with:

"Your courses will visibly need to have application to business and to offer students bankable skills." Mr Baker, Education Secretary, January 1989.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Last year, a report was published outlining the application of market forces to the social services.

Already there has been an extensive move away from local authorities providing residential care. Only half of the 315,000 residential places for the elderly infirm, the mentally ill, the mentally and physically handicapped are local authority homes. 50,000 places are in the charity/housing association sector. The private sector has moved in. There has been significant criticism about how the private sector is run.

The charity/housing association sector is in danger of collapse as costs soar. Its residents rely mainly on social security grants (maximum of £165 per week) yet break-even costs are £220 per person per week.

It is, as to be expected, that the biggest expansion (1,200 new homes last year) in the private sector is homes for those elderly persons who can look after themselves, but need somewhere to live.

Private organisations are opening in direct competition with state-run children's homes. As one of the organisers of such a company said:

"The government is encouraging privatisation of all caring schemes.... Foster care is going to be next". Dennis Ryan, January 1989.

Private companies have also moved into nursery provision to make a profit out of the basic lack of nursery places.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE

We should be clear that whether a company or industry is privately-owned or nationalised is not the main issue. Both are part of the imperialist system and exploit their workforce.

Equally, we all know from personal experience that the state's services are inadequate, lack democratic control and lack humanity. However, putting them on a narrow profit and loss basis only makes them worse. It is important to fight privatisation and the introduction of internal markets in the social services.

Taking a wider view, we have to recognise that British imperialism, like other imperialist powers, is in crisis and fighting for its survival in the face of fierce inter-imperialist rivalry. There can be no basic solutions to the problems faced by ordinary people within the system. We have to oppose the views of those who argue that a Labour government is any sort of solution. After all, it is clear to anyone who examines the role of past Labour governments: whatever they did, served the interests of the imperialist system. There is no alternative for a political party that is elected within the system but to run the system.

A mass movement has to be built amongst the ordinary people to overthrow the system itself.

Growing Inequality

Each year the Government produces a general collection of statistics in the Social Trends Report. Issue No.19 came out in early January and provides an enormous amount of information about lifestyles in Britain in the 1980s. From it, we learn that television is the most popular leisure activity that greyhound racing is the most popular spectator sport and that Blackpool pleasure beach, which attracted six and a half million people in 1987, is the most popular free attraction in the country.

According to the report, we are all much better off, with real disposable income per head having increased by 3 per cent per year between 1981 and 1987. But behind the general conclusion, it is clear that it has been the very rich and the quite comfortably off who have, in fact, done best. If we consider: Total Original Income - (all pay, pensions, investment interest, gifts and alimony) then, the top fifth of all households received 50.7 per cent in 1986, compared to 44.4 per cent ten years earlier. The corresponding figures for the bottom fifth of all households were 0.3 per cent in 1986 and 0.8 per cent in 1976.

If we consider Total Disposable Income (this takes account of state benefits and taxation), the same pattern emerges. The top fifth of all households received 42.2 percent in 1986 (38.1 per cent in 1976). The second highest fifth broke even. The share of the middle fifth fell from 18.2 per cent to 16.9 percent. For the fourth group, it dropped from 12.6 percent to 11 per cent, and for the bottom fifth, it dropped from 7 per cent to 5.9 per cent.

These figures show a transfer of wealth into the bank accounts of the wealthy, a trend which government policies since 1986 has only increased.



Housing

Changes in the field of housing can also be seen in this Social Trends Report. A total of 14.5 million people owned their own homes in 1987, compared with 7 million in 1961. This change was accelerated by the sale of over one million council houses between 1981 and 1987. However, at the same time, homelessness is also shown to be on the increase. Local authorities accepted responsibility for 118,000 homeless families in 1987, almost double the 1979 figure.

Two themes that can be gleaned from the report are that Britain and the lifestyle of those who live here are undergoing rapid change, and that a polarisation in society is occurring.

This latter point is borne out by the statistics on holidays. Just over 40 per cent of adults did not have a holiday away from home in 1987. But the number taking two or more holidays a year rose from 15 per cent in 1971 to 21 per cent last year.



Hospitals are closed while waiting lists are growing.

Education Act on primary and secondary education.

Market forces are also being applied to higher education.

The introduction of loans for university students has already been proposed. Baker has now gone further by predicting that over the next 25 years, mass higher education will mainly be funded by private sources rather than the state.

From April, all polytechnics and larger colleges of higher education will have to run their affairs as free-standing corporations with most of their ruling governors coming from the business world.

"We are our own liberators!" is the New Year message from the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA).

The New Year message begins with a realistic assessment of the stage of the struggle for a free Azania:

"Our struggle for liberation from the evils of white racist oppression continues unabated and takes us, with each passing day, closer to our cherished free Azania. It would no doubt be incorrect, perhaps even dangerous, to proclaim that freedom is around the corner. To do so would imply lack of appreciation of the objective realities in our country, the state of the various aspects of the oppressive regime and the extremely devious plottings of the Boers and their imperialist backers against our revolution. Through their lackeys in and around our beloved Azania, the imperialists are taking every opportunity to subvert the liberation movement and weaken the revolutionary capability of our people. Despite all these, we are certainly surging forward, hammering away at the edifice of tyranny and generating fear and desperation in the wicked hearts of the white racist establishment."

The BCMA outlines the dual strategy of repression and "reform" of the racist regime:

"The state of emergency under which all sorts of draconian measures against us are taken with minimum fuss, is still in place. Almost the entire spectrum of the people's legitimate organisations are banned, newspapers are severely restricted or occasionally banned, thousands of activists and children are detained without charge indefinitely, the murderous police and army are free to commit as many horrendous atrocities against black people as they please. At the same time, the regime is making lots of empty noise about a reform programme which is supposed to be in progress....."

'FREEDOM NOT REFORM'



Platform of the Sept.12th Meeting, addressed by Molephe Pheto of the BCM-A
(Photo: Alan Naldo)

A self-critical view is taken of the past, particularly of "minor squabbles" that have, at times, "blurred our vision of the bigger and essential issues of our struggle."

The message expresses its outrage at the recent massacre of Azanian people by Barend Strydom and ends: "Only a thorough-going revolution could rid Azania of the scourge of racist murderers and restore humanity to the whole country."

UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT

We should pledge our continued support in 1989 to the people of Azania in their struggle for freedom. This is particularly important for us, given Britain's past and present exploitation of Africa and its continued support to the racist regime in Pretoria.

It is also important to re-state the basic principle that our support is unconditional and given to all the liberation movements. It is not our task to continue a "left" version of the imperialist tradition and dictate to the people of Azania who shall be their leaders.

IDEOLOGICAL IMPERIALISM

In this context, we should listen to criticisms made of the Anti-Apartheid Movement's (AAM) London meeting at the end of last year, which rejected calls for the movement to give a platform to the BCMA and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC).

Jon Qwelane, writing in the 'Sunday Star', Johannesburg, on 11th December, 1988, said:

"Exactly who the blazes, may I ask, do the AAM think they are to dictate to us - those at the receiving end of apartheid - who our leaders and which political organisations deserve credit?"

".....Some liberals - and I do not apologise for this - are so good at knowing what blacks want and what blacks must think, that they are at no pains at all even to prescribe to us what ideological pills to take."

"It happens all the time, and it is sickening. The liberals of Europe are now attempting, what I can only term ideological imperialism."

"Can you really begin to imagine their arrogance, deciding for us which of our movements and organisations campaigning against the injustices of racism and cruelties of apartheid are not to be recognised?....."

"Over the ages, the indigenous people of the African continent have been subjected to various forms of subjugation by European imperialists. From the look of things we still are....."

Qwelane goes on to point out that such "support" can only further divisions among the people. In its arrogance, the AAM is ignoring the simple truth that:

"There is no group inside or outside South Africa which can validly claim to be the authentic and only representative body of common opinion in the country, because such a claim would be a lie."

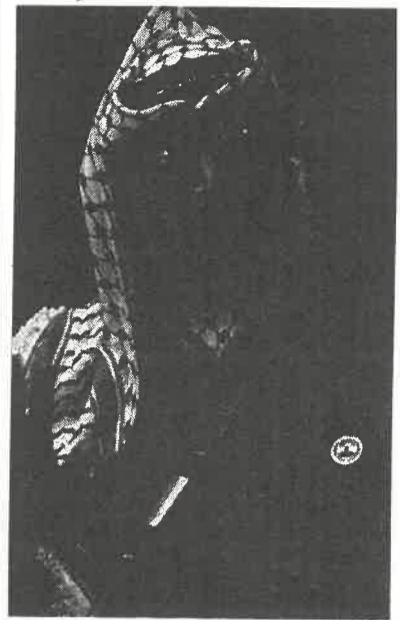
"I am speaking as a journalist, as an observer of political trends inside the country, and I believe, the undeniable presence and prevalence of different ideological schools of thought inside the country bears me out."

A statement by the BCMA, quoted in 'The Sowetan', 1st December, 1988, makes the same criticisms:

"...we abhor anyone who tries to use solidarity and support in order to manipulate us or play the role of king-maker in our country."

"We have been ruled by colonialists, both British and Dutch, for centuries, and we will not allow them to come back again even if it is under the guise of the anti-apartheid movement. They have declared a one-party state from the colonial capital of London even before the people of Azania decided on the issue themselves...."

GAINS



When Yasser Arafat addressed the United Nations (UN) in Geneva on December 15th, Israeli troops were patrolling the West Bank and Gaza Strip in increased strength. Electricity was cut to some areas to stop people without transistor radios from listening to Arafat's speech live.

Not long after, the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) offices had official meetings with a US representative, and later, with British Foreign Office Minister, William Waldegrave. Both the USA and Britain explained that they were ready to meet the PLO because it had adopted a more "moderate" approach, by accepting UN resolutions 242 and 338 (which only deal with the Palestine issue as one of refugees), accepting a Palestinian state alongside Israel and renouncing "terrorism".

In fact, the PLO had for some time said that it accepted 242 and 338 in the context of all UN resolutions relevant to the Palestine issue. But that was not good enough for the USA, which insisted on "unequivocal" acceptance. But the PLO did not completely accept the US objection in reformulating its position via the Palestine National Council (PNC): it coupled acceptance of the two resolutions with a reference to the "national rights of the Palestinian people", showing that it has no intention of meekly accepting US dictates aimed at ending the Palestinian liberation struggle.

The fact that the USA did not quibble about this qualification says something about the strength of the Palestinian position today. The USA wants to manage the situation in the Middle East to defend its interests and realises that the PLO cannot be excluded from diplomatic moves in the region. But it hopes to make the PLO abandon what it has fought for over the years through diplomatic pressures. Irrespective of that, getting the USA and Britain to speak openly with the PLO represents a victory for the Palestinians.

CONTINUING UPRISING

The diplomatic gains made by the PLO recently rest upon the continuing uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which has made it crystal clear that the Palestinians there will accept no other leadership but the PLO's.

PALESTINE

MOZAMBIQUE PROGRESS AGAINST RENAMO

After Mozambique won its independence from Portugal in 1974, it assisted the liberation fighters of ZANU to fight for the liberation of Zimbabwe by allowing them to have support bases on its territory. The Rhodesian racist regime countered by creating a mercenary force, supplied and trained by its own military, to destabilise the newly-independent south-east African state. Following the collapse of the Rhodesian regime, South Africa took over sponsorship of the mercenary group, known as the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO).

South Africa provided finance, arms and training for RENAMO, which presented itself as a movement against a "Marxist dictatorship", but was actually a terrorist organisation, which aimed to destroy Mozambique's economy if it could not bring down the government.

In fact, RENAMO had no coherent political alternative to FRELIMO, the movement which led the struggle against Portuguese rule and did not aim to win the conviction of the mass of Mozambicans for its objectives, simply to terrorise them and shake their support for the government.

RENAMO was able to expand its attacks to wide areas of

Mozambique, attacking the rail links between Beira, Maputo and Zimbabwe, paralysing the economic life of many regions and spreading fear among the people who survived the massacres and tortures they carried out. Their activities meant that Mozambique has suffered serious food shortages in the last couple of years. Mozambique at peace could have coped with a drought. But RENAMO had weakened its power to deal with this problem.

In the last four years, Mozambique has made a lot of progress towards eliminating RENAMO. The much-criticised Nkomati Accord, signed with South Africa in 1984, did lead to a reduction of South African support for the terrorists, and Zimbabwean forces continued support for Mozambique helped tilt the scales further in the government's favour.

As a result of diversifying its ties with the rest of the world, Mozambique was able to mobilise additional foreign political and economic support, as well as to obtain further military assistance.

AMNESTY

In December 1987, Mozambique's parliament, the People's Assembly, decided to offer an amnesty to any RENAMO members who gave themselves up. The

offer was to last for a year. Eventually, 3,000 of the terrorists surrendered themselves to the authorities.

In his New Year message to Mozambique, President Chissano announced that the People's Assembly had decided to extend the amnesty for a further year "to allow us to save lives and promote the harmony of the nation". He said that "special attention" should be paid to those who had given themselves up "so that they may feel pride in their praiseworthy decision to abandon terrorism in order to contribute to the construction, rather than the destruction, of their country."

Chissano stressed that the fight to eliminate these RENAMO forces which had not surrendered had to be the "principal task" for Mozambique in 1989. The main aim of the defence forces should be "to step up combat in order to eliminate the enemy completely". At the same time, as the national armed forces were strengthened to fulfil this goal, the organisation of citizens' self-defence units should be extended. Chissano urged that initiatives be taken to find work for unemployed people, even if only on a temporary or occasional basis. This will help provide for their needs, and increase the unity of Mozambicans against the threat they still face.



Mozambique has clearly made progress against the force set up by the Smith regime in Rhodesia 12 years ago. The extension of last year's amnesty not only shows the concern of the Mozambique government to do all it can to save lives, it shows the growing strength and self-confidence of a society which has passed through a serious challenge to its survival with its commitment to economic and social reform intact.

LOSSES



Palestinian man holding photos of 4 of children killed by the Israeli bombing raid in Lebanon.

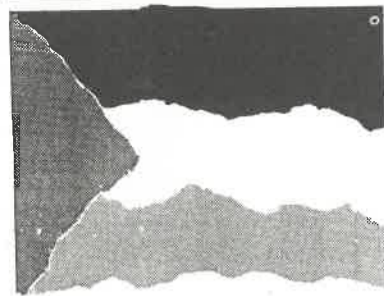
Following the PNC meeting in November and the eventual establishment of another Likud-Labour coalition government in Israel, repression was increased in the 1967 occupied territories. Live ammunition is being used more readily, with the result that in December, 33 people were killed. Eight died over one weekend in Nablus, on the West Bank, when Israeli troops opened fire on a funeral procession on Friday, 16th December.

In January, the Israeli authorities also moved against Abna' al-Balad (Sons of the Village), a Palestinian nationalist organisation whose members are citizens of Israel, and which sees itself as being in the process of becoming a Marxist-Leninist organisation. The movement's paper, 'Al-Raya' was issued with a warning that it would be closed down within the month. It has given enthusiastic backing to the Uprising, and tried to mobilise increased support among Palestinians inside Israel for their fellow-Palestinians, which has resulted in support for the organisation growing steadily over the last year.



Palestinian women see their own emancipation tied to the liberation of their homeland.

THE LIVES!



I tell you not a tale
Daughters of Palestine
Sons of Palestine
I too know the taste of
pain unleashed
Like vinegar darting across
a gaping wound
Like the sting of
a slave driver's whip
Stalking my sisters' barren back
way
down
there in Mississippi
Like the silent wail of
a Guatemalan orchid
as the US adviser
jerkily plucks its petals
on the lawns of
the Presidential Palace

I too know
the tangy taste of pain
Yet, by the sturdy olive tree
I stand, stubborn
When the whirlwind unfurls
menacing,
threatening to uproot Palestine

I too know
the taste of pain
I was there in
KAFR Kassem
Deir Yassin
Sabra Shatila
Perhaps you saw me there
Perhaps too in the smile of
an eight year old Arab child
as she hurled her first stone
on the face of an Israeli soldier

Can this be
the deed of the orphaned Jew
to whom Lord Balfour
and the United Nations
bartered my birthright?

I tell you not a tale
Daughters of Palestine
Sons of Palestine

I too know
the taste of pain unleashed
Like the shame of
an Arab child
having to write
the word Israel
on the map of
her native land



نتيج، نقائل، ونواصل السيرة صامدين

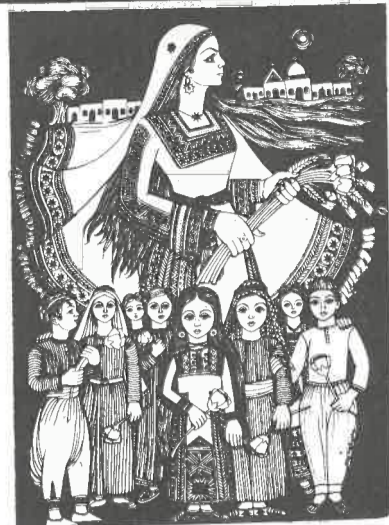
Like the sorrow of
Samih al Qasim
burning to bake a poem
in his homeland
Like our names,
stolen
Glorious names
Names whose ring
speak the language of
the Gods and the Goddesses
Galilee, Nazareth,
Shafr' Amr, Umm el Fahm
Golan Heights, Gaza
Jerusalem, Bethlehem

"We produce, fight, and carry on our resistance", by Abd al-Rahman al-Maslin

I too am Palestine
the morning dew
drops drip. Dripping
Liquid seed
The rainbow
clinging at
the mouth of the cataract
The blade of exile
mangles my insides
but I have buried my heart
And my umbilical cord
deep at the foot of
a young olive tree
And I have lent my songs
spun in the homeland
like the finest bridal cloth,
to migratory birds
to drop over the barbed wires
and the rooftops of Palestine

I too know
the joy of living
The aroma of the homeland
I too like
to visit old friends
pick an orange
a date or two
in Grandfather's field
sit at the feet of
old Aunt Fatima
delightfully
sucking her wrinkled cheeks
whilst narrating
her favourite story
how she once
with her bare hands
strangled an Israeli soldier
who raped and killed
her seven year old
Cousin Fadwa

Let the PLO flag
fly high in Palestine
as it does in my heart
she said
Let Kalashnikovs
sing in unison
and the chorus of cannons
merge with the symphony of
bullets.



Intifadah
Tremor of the earth
Tremor of the earth
Intifadah
Red ink
on Lord Balfour's sleeve
Intifadah
Ray of light
in the fertile heart of
Palestine.

I swear, I tell you not a tale
Daughters of Palestine
Sons of Palestine
I too am Palestine
I swear
on the greying beard of
Yasser Arafat
I too am Palestine
on the shoulders of
the United Leadership of
Intifadah
I too am Palestine
on the potent pen of
Fadwa Touqan
Mahmud Darwish
Samih al Qasim
I too am Palestine
On the defiant gaze of
a Gaza child
I swear
I too am Palestine
INTIFADAH
Weave us a garland of
bullets.

INTIFADAH

I too was there
in Lebanon
choking in the fumes
by a pile of empty
South African shells.

Did you hear my throttled sobs
at the siege of Beirut?
Did you hear me curse
as my watery eyes,
bulbs of my being,
time bound
raced back to Dachau
Belsen
Auschwitz

Can this be
I asked
the deed of the orphaned
sons and daughters of
the holocaust?

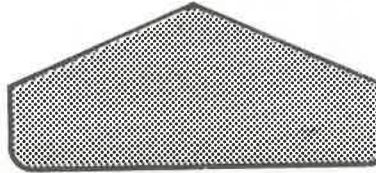
I too am Palestine
the ascending lisp of
a distended catapult
in Soweto
I am the voice of Haiti
Mighty Haiti
Black Haiti
I routed Europe's armies
My palms reach out to
the Native American
the Arawak
the Eritrean
the Armenian
the Saharoui
the Aborigine
the Irish
and the Azanian
and the Untouchable
and the Wretched of
the Earth.

the homeland
shall grieve no more
Daughters of Palestine
Sons of Palestine
We shall ululate pearls of sound
as only the homeland folks
know how
We shall knead bread
for those to come
and then we shall dance
the rain dance

Intifadah
I too am Palestine
Intifadah
No hint of fading!
Intifadah
Particle of sand
Intifadah
Atom of hope
Split to infinity



(C) Ahmed Sheikh
London, December 9th, 1988.



WOMEN

New Year's Day: So that was Christmas. All over for another year. I wonder now what all the fuss was about.

Looking through a pack of playing cards my daughter was given, I see there is: a male golfer, a male soldier, a male baker, a male artist, a male butcher, a male motorist, a male swimmer, a male fisherman, a male policeman, a male footballer, a male singer, a male farmer, a male airman, a male cricketer, a male postman, a female cyclist (!) and an ugly, unwanted Old Maid. Is somebody trying to tell her something?

January 9th: Back to school. For my daughter, that is. All parents got a glossy brochure from the Minister of Education. In English only, of course. Most of my daughter's school-mates are Asian. It's about parental choice. We are not fooled. There might be some parental choice for pushy white middle-class parents in Sutton Coldfield and Solihull. After all, those are the parents who matter.

But this is not all. There is worse to come. Can it get worse? It can. Now education will be made subject to market forces. Schools will manage their own budgets. They will be paid according to the number of pupils they have on roll. So schools will be in direct competition with each other for pupils, because more pupils means more resources.

Exam results will be published, and pushy white middle-class parents will get their children into the schools with the best results. All will be geared to exam results. Schools literally cannot afford to do otherwise. The schools with the best results will get the most pupils, and therefore the most money, and will be able to afford the most experienced teachers and expensive equipment. Those who already have the advantages will get more advantages, and those who are already disadvantaged, well, who cares?

January 19th: Didn't we get a lot of news yesterday? Like buses, it all came at once. The Labour Party chose a good day to launch their recruitment drive. What a lot of issues they could campaign on:

Mandy's Diary



*** It was the day that police dragged Viraj Mendis out of a church to face deportation and possibly death in Sri Lanka. MPs say that reports of his imminent death are exaggerated. Unfortunately, there's only one way to prove them wrong.

*** It was the day that a hospital worker stated in a television interview that she takes home £78 for a 39-hour week.

*** It was the day a man was sentenced for stabbing an unknown black woman to death on the London Underground. He has been involved in violent crime since he was 13, and was released from prison after he had sexually assaulted another woman. I can see what will happen next. Women will be advised for their own safety not to travel on the Underground and if they do, and they are attacked, they will be found guilty of 'contributory negligence'.

*** It was the day they posed the question: When electricity is privatised, will it be run as a service, or will it be run to make a profit?

Do they think we don't know the answer to that? Pull the other one. It's got bells on!

*** It was the day the man responsible for the Kings Cross Underground disaster was appointed in charge of a bigger tunnel, the Channel Tunnel. Now there's an appointment to inspire confidence!

On these and many other issues, the Labour Party cannot be said to be leading an effective opposition. To judge from their propaganda, they don't even intend to. 'Membership of the Labour Party is not about boring meetings', it said. 'Members can even get holidays out of it.'

We have received this letter on child abuse from a reader in Birmingham, and have reprinted it in full below:

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the book review 'Unofficial Secrets' in November's 'Class Struggle'.

The problems of child abuse and child sexual abuse are complicated and raise more questions than they resolve.

CLEVELAND

What happened in Cleveland was that many children were taken into care who had not actually been abused. This led to a demand to strengthen parents' rights against state intervention, led (surprisingly?) by a Labour MP. In all the emotionalism about protecting the family, some of the awful facts about child abuse were forgotten. It is a fact that child abuse, both sexual and otherwise, is unfortunately very common. It is estimated that something like one child in ten has been sexually abused in this country. Most of the perpetrators are never brought to justice because children are afraid to speak up, or when they do speak up, they are not believed.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN NOT VALUED

But it is not simply a matter of individual fathers (or mothers) ill-treating their children. No behaviour in our society (or any society) occurs in isolation. In capitalist society, children and women are regarded as men's property, not as human beings with equal rights. Women and children are not valued. Their needs are not considered. Their views are not sought.

The occasional horrific case which hits the headlines creates a public outcry, but meanwhile mothers of young children struggle on through sleepless nights, baby crying, nappy changing, feeding, struggling on buses with baby and toddler and pushchair and shopping, with no money, no help, no relief and nobody cares. Many women in this situation will admit that at times they have been close to battering their children. They are hidden away from the people with power to make decisions which affect their lives: the white male ruling class who think only in terms of making profits and not in terms of what people need.

A CLASS QUESTION

As with everything, it is ultimately a class question. Those who can afford private nannies, private health, private education, don't know what it means to reach the end of their tether and don't give a damn about the rest of us.

There are also pressures on working class men, which, if these were resolved, would prevent many of the tragedies which do occur. But instead, capitalism steps up the pressure and the punishments.

Child sexual abuse is also something which does not occur in isolation from class society. Capitalism and imperialism have distorted sex in order to make huge profits. All over the world, but particularly in Third World countries, women's and children's bodies are used and abused in pornography and prostitution, for the benefit of wealthy Western businessmen. The ideology of any society is the ideology of its ruling class, and that ideology promotes and perpetuates the sexual abuse of women and children.

CAN STATE INTERVENTION HELP?

One aspect of this issue on which I would like some dis-

cussion is: To what extent should there be state intervention in cases of suspected child abuse? The role of the welfare state needs to be analysed in this context. All agents of the state, working with abused children (social workers, doctors, even the police) are in a contradictory position. Their role is to protect children from their parents. If they split families up, they are wrong. If they leave the child in the family and the abuse continues, they are wrong. Individual employees may be very caring and concerned about individual cases, but the state which employs them is oppressive to the working class as a whole.

THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

The other difficult contradiction is the family itself. The ideology of the family which is promoted by the ruling class: a haven from the outside world, where individuals are loved, cared for and supported, contrasts strongly with reality for many people, especially women and children, for whom the family is their greatest source of oppression. In some circumstances, state agents who remove children from their families may be doing them a service. But what happens next? The capitalist state does not have any satisfactory alternative to offer abused children. Children's homes are a poor substitute to family life in a society where everything is geared to living in families, and children are made to feel inferior if they do not.

Capitalism does not encourage genuine community care. So-called 'community care' is in reality an excuse for placing yet more burdens on the shoulders of individual unpaid, unvalued, unsupported, wives and mothers.

In the short term, there does not seem to be any easy answer to the problem of child abuse. The demands which we would wish to make on the capitalist/imperialist state are demands which it is very unlikely to grant: things like adequate nursery provision; good housing; more educational facilities; better health-care; adequate state benefits. The trend of the present government's policies is in the opposite direction. They are demands which we should nevertheless continue to make, while working towards socialism, which alone can provide the sort of society which meets people's needs.

Social Worker, Birmingham.

(This subject is, as the letter-writer says, complicated and we welcome further contributions from readers.)

Even the facts of what happened in Cleveland are a matter of dispute. The book 'Unofficial Secrets' claims that many children who had in fact been abused were returned to their families. As the letter-writer says, evidence is difficult but there are some indications that some of the parents - fathers - who protested were in fact abusers. Sorting out the facts became impossible in the atmosphere created by the media etc.

We would also agree with the writer that we need socialism to begin to eradicate abuse. However, demands made now must include giving resources and power to women. In the vast majority of sex abuse cases, abusers are men and children do not need to be separated from their mothers: Ed.)



Women do two thirds of the world's work, earn less than five percent of the world's income, and own one percent of the world's assets.

RESISTANCE TO STATE

NEWS CORRESPONDENCE

At dawn, on Wednesday 18th January, over fifty policemen smashed the doors of the Church of Ascension in Hulme, Manchester and dragged out Viraj Mendis who had for two years, sought sanctuary there from deportation. He was imprisoned in Pentonville and hurriedly deported to Sri Lanka on Friday, 20th January.

The Home Office may have succeeded in defeating the campaign for Viraj Mendis to stay in this country. But they have highlighted once again the inhumanity and racism of Britain's immigration laws.

The weekend following the deportation, Douglas Hurd reiterated the need for "fair but firm" immigration laws. He said they were essential for maintaining good race relations. In spite of some noisy protests over Viraj Mendis' deportation, it is also a policy advocated by the Labour Party in opposition and enthusiastically carried out by them when in power.

National Oppression

Britain's "firm but fair" immigration policies rarely cause any problems for white people. Zola Budd, who obtained British nationality in a few days, was only the most notorious example.

Immigration control is an important weapon in the hands of the British state against Third World people and is an extension of the oppression of the peoples and nations of the Third World by British imperialism.

It is the past and present history of British imperialism's oppression of Third World nations that links the two main groups of people at present worst affected by the vicious immigration laws.

Settled Communities

The first group are those who are part of black national minority communities settled in Britain. People came from the Indian sub-continent, the Caribbean, Hong Kong or Malaysia, to work in response to the needs of the British economy at home.

As members of black national minority communities, they have never been welcome. Over the years, tightening immigration controls have divided families and criminalised whole communities.

In the Bangladeshi community, for example, many families have been divided for years. Men who have worked here for years have been told that their wives and children are not "genuine" and they have accordingly been refused entry.

Recently, DNA bloodtests have been used to establish scientifically the family ties. For example: Mr Surab Ullah first applied to bring his 15-year old son here in 1983. He was refused. Now DNA tests have shown that the chances are 7,000 million million times more likely than not that the relationship is as claimed.

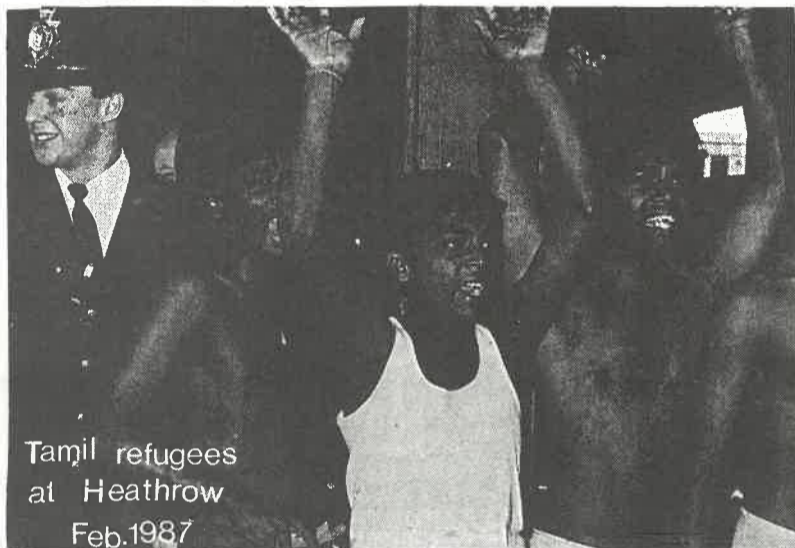
Many other examples could be given. In some cases, the children are now over 18 and the Home Office still refuses to allow them in. They are also threatening to refuse legal aid for further DNA tests.

Amir Kabul Khan is a Kashmiri from Pakistan. He and his wife, Zahtoon and their two children, 4-year-old Anzoo and 2-year-old Ramiz, are another family threatened with separation by the immigration laws.



Refugee in a holy place: The Khan family seek shelter from immigration authorities in Birmingham's Central Mosque. Photograph by John Wildgoose.

RACIST OPPRESSION



Tamil refugees at Heathrow Feb. 1987

Mr Khan said: "They are trying to deny me what is mine as of right. My wife is a British citizen with rights of residence and our two children were both born in Britain."

The Home Office wants to deport Mr Khan on the basis that his marriage is not "genuine". The family has taken sanctuary in Birmingham's Central Mosque and, like many others before them, is campaigning for their right to stay.

Fleeing Oppression

The second group are those who seek political asylum, fleeing from persecution, imprisonment and often torture or death in their home countries. In most cases, as with people from Sri Lanka, Britain has a direct responsibility from its colonial past and neo-colonial present, for divisions within Third World countries.

Even compared with other Second World countries, Britain has an appalling record in granting asylum. Most recently, the Carriers' Liability Act was brought in in March 1987, to make airlines liable to a fine if passengers do not have the right papers. In its first 12 months, 4,366 demands have been served on carriers amounting to some £4.8 million. This, of course, ensures that many political refugees, most of whom by definition, do not have correct papers, do not even reach Britain in the first place.

Those refugees who do manage still to get to Britain face long periods of uncertainty, often while they are held in detention centres in inhuman conditions. They often face final refusal and if granted leave to stay, it is often conditional and temporary. It has been documented that

refugees who sought asylum here from Iran and Sri Lanka and who were sent back, faced imprisonment, torture or death.

At present, there are many Kurdish people seeking asylum in Britain. 'The Independent' of 28th December described the situation of "Anwar" who fled Iraq:

"He says that he and his room-mates were locked up like prisoners from 8 pm to 7 am (while in detention: Ed) with a dustbin for a lavatory. They were given £1.50 each a week to spend on extras such as sugar, soap, cigarettes and telephone calls.. "Before people come to this country, they have heard something about the civilised people here, but when they face this kind of treatment it is a real shock for them", he says."

He now lives in uncertainty as to his future, having been given temporary leave to stay.

Resistance

National minority communities in Britain have always led the opposition to the immigration laws. In the 1960s and 1970s, campaigns were built to oppose the tightening up of control. More recently, the emphasis has changed to building support for individuals or groups of people threatened with deportation or divided families. While many of these have been successful, the number of deportations and refusals of entry has risen each year and further controls have been brought in.

The campaigns round individuals must go on and can still succeed. Lisa Huen recently won her right to stay as did Rajwinder Singh who took refuge in a Bradford gurdwara last year.



Lisa Huen
Lisa Huen wins right to stay

At the same time, the movement has broadened and, as the Viraj Mendis campaign showed, drawn in new forces. Most notably some people in the churches are building a 'Sanctuary' movement to shelter those under threat. Although the established church has stressed the need to keep within the law, many believe that the church has a duty to break the law where that law has been shown to be unjust, and in the case of the immigration law, racist.

At present, there are 52 people living in what the British Council of Churches describes as "hidden sanctuary". An "Underground Railroad" has been set up based, according to its organiser, on the Resistance in the Second World War. Its members risk a fine of £2,000 or up to six months imprisonment.

The strategy and tactics of resistance to the immigration laws must be discussed and adapted to the different circumstances of the people involved and different tactics of the state. But whatever means the state may use, that resistance is growing and broadening.

BOOKNEWS

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February 1989

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FREEDOM FOR IRELAND

TIME TO GO

—British troops in Ireland '69 - '89—

1989 marks the 20th anniversary of the occupation of the North of Ireland by British troops. It is important that we work to build a broad withdrawal movement in this country.

We reprint below an article from the paper of the 'Troops Out Movement', of December/January 1988/89. The authors of the article, Bob Rowthorn and Naomi Wayne have recently produced a book 'The Political Economy of Conflict' dealing in detail with the arguments for withdrawal. In this article they summarise the arguments against the "bloodbath" scenario, often put forward by those opposing withdrawal by the British army.

As the second decade of the present "Troubles" nears its close, few believe there will ever be a primarily military solution to the Northern Ireland conflict. Even the most optimistic British Government ministers rarely speak about victory nowadays. Catholic hostility to British rule remains widespread. The IRA has not been defeated, nor, in spite of fluctuations in its level of support and occasional severe setbacks, is it likely to be.

Since nothing else has worked, and deaths on all sides continue to mount, it is surely time to re-examine the old nationalist solution to the Northern Ireland conflict. Should not Britain withdraw from the province, re-unite Ireland and thereby reverse the historic mistake of partition? Nowadays this possibility rarely merits any consideration amongst politicians and the media, where, if mentioned at all, it is usually dismissed out of hand as completely unacceptable. However, public opinion polls indicate that withdrawal commands consistent majority support amongst the British population, and as IRA attacks on British soldiers continue, this support is likely to grow.

THE "BLOODBATH" THEORY

Perhaps the most common objection to British withdrawal derives from the assumption that it would be impossible to secure Protestant consent, and that without such consent, there would be a general bloodbath, with very large numbers, both Catholic and Protestant, being killed. Outside Republican circles, this perceived danger is taken so much for granted, even among people who would otherwise support withdrawal, that it is rarely subject to any scrutiny whatsoever.

Were Britain simply to pull out and dump the North, cutting off all aid and abandoning responsibility for what followed, the result would be chaos. The province's already bankrupt economy would finally disintegrate and there would be a bitter struggle by the rival factions battling for supremacy. Tens of thousands would flee and the Republic would eventually be forced to intervene and single-handedly pacify the region.

Such behaviour would clearly be a gross abdication of

Britain's moral obligation. However simply dumping the North is by no means the only option available. Perfectly feasible instead would be a phased and responsible withdrawal.

LIFE WITHOUT BRITAIN

To begin with, by making a firm unequivocal decision to leave, and an equally firm commitment to a united Ireland, Britain would cause a profound crisis in the Northern Protestant community. For the first time in their history, the Protestants would seriously have to

quite different factors: war weariness and economic self-interest.

Many Protestants are heartily sick of the violence. If genuinely convinced that Britain was going, some Protestants would emigrate, while many would accept re-unification as a fait accompli. Those who genuinely wished to fight would be relatively few in number.

ECONOMIC REALITIES

One theoretical possibility would be for the Protestants to declare UDI, repartition

Protestants, Britain should offer substantial aid for 15-20 years, until the economy of the North had been rebuilt.

Were Britain to act in the responsible manner here described, the risk of a widespread bloodbath would be reduced to almost negligible proportions. The risk of a short spate of sectarian killings would have to be weighed against the virtual certainty that thousands more will die in the coming years if Britain remains in Northern Ireland.

Catholics have refused to accept Northern Ireland for nearly seven decades. Would not Protestants forced into a united Ireland be equally disaffected? If this were true, the violence would not end. Enforced unity would simply mean replacing Catholic guerrillas by Protestant ones.

This comparison, though widely made, is quite specious. Many Northern Catholics are prepared to support armed struggle because they have a clear objective to aim for and some prospect of success. They want to unite with a state which already exists alongside them, and which will continue to provide a goal to which to aspire. With some justification they can reason that if they keep up the struggle long enough, Britain will lose heart and leave.

The situation of Northern Protestants within a united Ireland would be radically different. What would they fight for? Having actually withdrawn from the North, Britain would not return as every Northern Protestant would realise. The most the Protestants could do would be to try and set up a new and smaller statelet in the most north-eastern corner of Ireland. However, the new and independent state could not survive without British economic support.

"A central theme of this book is that Northern Ireland is a British problem. Britain is responsible for the present situation there, and only Britain can find a solution. It was Britain which first conquered the island of Ireland; and Britain which partitioned this island in 1920. It was Britain which created the statelet of Northern Ireland, whose main reason for existence was the preservation of Protestant privilege. It was Britain which allowed Protestants within this new statelet to oppress its Catholic inhabitants. And for the last two decades it has been Britain which has been trying to put down Catholic rebellion and maintain Northern Ireland in being. Finally, it is Britain's refusal to leave Northern Ireland which perpetuates the present violence and killing."

'Northern Ireland: The Political Economy of Conflict' by Bob Rowthorn and Naomi Wayne, published by Polity Press, £7.95 is available from New Era Books.

TROOPS OUT!



contemplate life without Britain. The certain knowledge of British withdrawal would itself produce confusion and disunity. To ensure and to capitalise on this Protestant disarray, Britain would need to act decisively, getting the process of withdrawal clearly underway, organising the transition to a united Ireland and making it absolutely clear that, no matter what, the decision to go home was irreversible.

Immediately, of course, Britain would also have to take steps to minimise the potential for violent resistance from the Protestant community. In particular, this would mean disbanding the UDR, thus greatly reducing loyalist paramilitaries' access to official weapons arsenals. The RUC might require disbanding and/or disarming too, but not necessarily. It would depend on whether the RUC's discipline held, which would be much more likely to happen if the future employment, and pension rights of those who obeyed orders were to be guaranteed by the British and Irish governments.

Such measures would still leave a great many light weapons in Protestant hands. Even so, it is unlikely that a significant number of Protestants would actually fight. Most Northern Protestants are opposed to British withdrawal, and they recognise that their best bargaining counter to prevent it is the threat of massive bloodshed. But to threaten is one thing, to deliver when the time comes, is quite another. In fact, more relevant here than the Protestants' military strength are likely to be two

the North and set up their own independent state. Quite apart from any military considerations such a state would be a complete non-starter from an economic point of view.

The economy of Northern Ireland is utterly dependent on British aid and goodwill. To destroy a breakaway Protestant state would require no military campaign by Britain - merely a few weeks concerted economic sanctions. Northern Protestants know this already - and if the British Government decided to withdraw it would have to make absolutely clear in advance its willingness to apply such sanctions if required. Such a threat would itself be a powerful deterrent, both discouraging militants hoping to block re-unification and undermining their support in the Protestant community at large.

Equally important would be the positive side of the re-unification process. Northern Protestants would need re-assurance about the kind of future they could expect if they co-operated. They must actually be welcomed into the new state, with specific guarantees over such matters as civil and religious liberties, employment policy and the future of the Northern economy.

Thus, simultaneously with the threat to use her economic power as a weapon to undermine resistance, Britain should offer to deploy her economic resources to help shore up the new state. Provided she received guarantees that the money would be spent on the North, and that satisfactory arrangements would be made for the future employment and civil liberties of



EVENTS

Wednesday, February 8th
8 p.m.

West Indian Centre, Leeds 7

MOTHER IRELAND
Showing of banned video

Mother Ireland, produced by Derry Film and Video for Channel 4 TV was due to be broadcast on British television, but has now been cancelled because of the new censorship legislation imposed by the British government on October 19th.

The production examines the image of Ireland as a woman in Irish culture and nationalism and examines the tensions in the Women's Movement, and the struggle of women involved in resistance to British rule in Ireland.

Sunday, February 12th

ANNUAL COMMEMORATION
to honour the memory of
Frank Stagg

outside Wakefield Prison
1.30 p.m.

Sunday, March 12th

International Women's Day
Solidarity with
Irish Women Political Prisoners

for details of activities,
contact PO Box 540,
Sparkhill,
Birmingham B11 4AU

April 1st-2nd - London

ANTI-NATO CONFERENCE

40 Years of NATO
40 Years of Danger

BRITAIN OUT OF NATO!

Campaign for Non-Alignment
The Red Rose Centre, 129 Seven
Sisters Rd, London N7 7QG
01-263-9450

Saturday, April 8th,

Health Care Collectives
The Second Conference

Collectives are NHS practices
where all the workers share
equal pay, power and responsibility
and are committed to
skill-sharing.

Grays Inn Resource Centre,
1a Roseberry Avenue, London EC1

Sunday, 23rd April
1 p.m.

10 Years On.....
...Remember Blair Peach

Memorial Meeting and March

Assemble 1 p.m.
Southall Park, Uxbridge Road,
Southall.