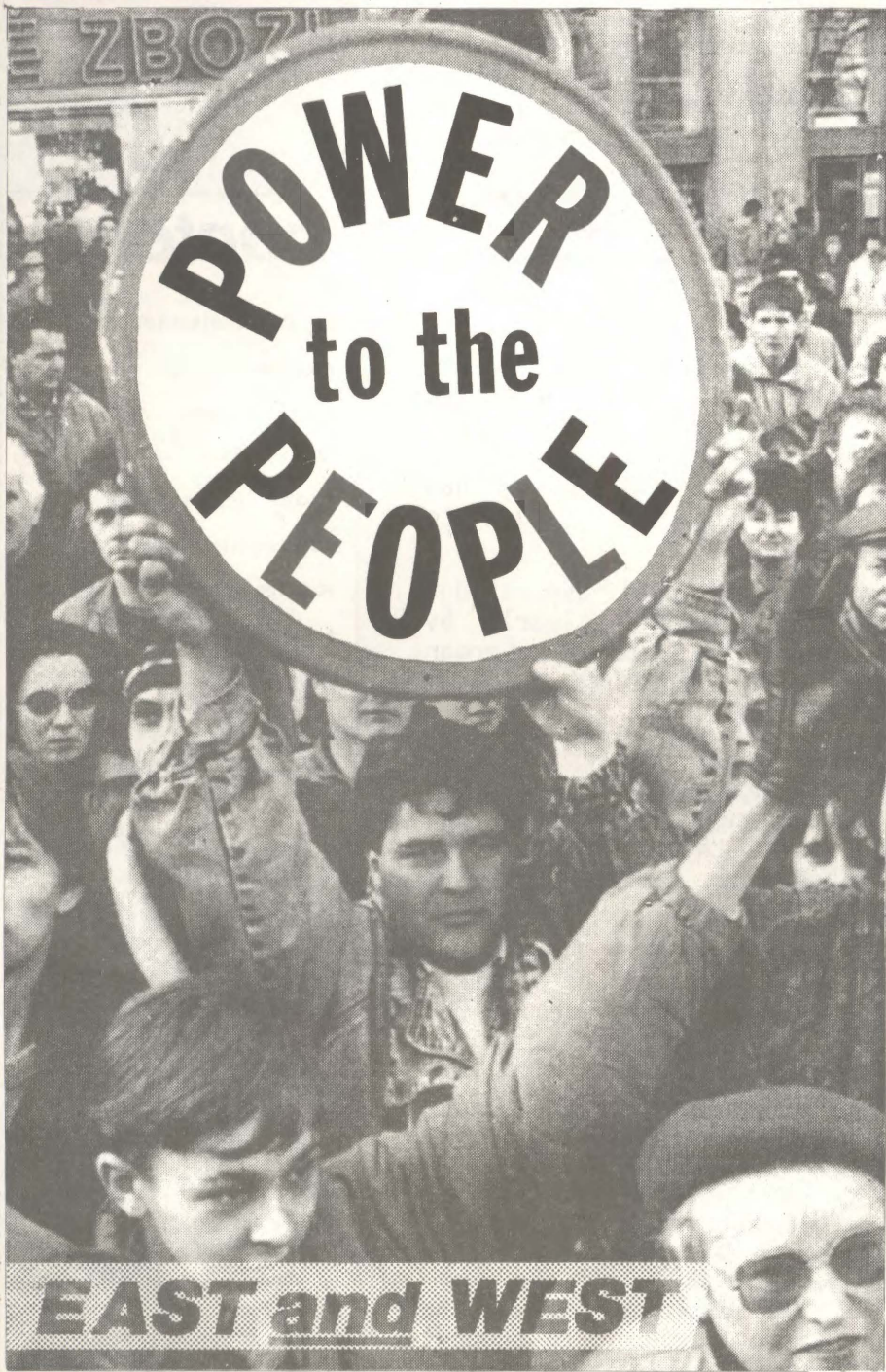


CLASS STRUGGLE

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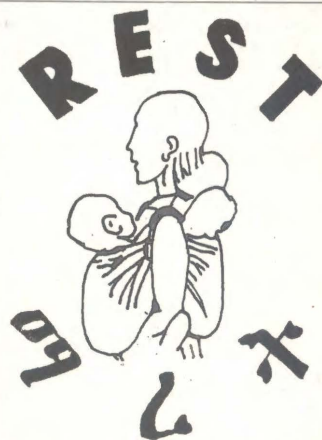
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EAST and WEST

EUROPE UN'BLOC'ED

The changing scenario of super-power politics CENTRE PAGES



REST - The people's relief organization in Tigray... Aid appeal

PI3

INSIDE

communities of resistance
anti-racist news
at home and abroad

ambulance crews - public service, public support

abortion
soon as possible, late as necessary

CLASS STRUGGLE

EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL

The Eastern European dictatorships are collapsing under the pressure of popular revolts. The so-called "Communist" parties of Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria are being forced to give up their monopoly of power. Those parties are authoritarian, brutal and corrupt representatives of class rule and national oppression. They are not communist.

The Soviet Union, became a capitalist country in the 1950's. It first developed into an imperialist power by imposing its control on the countries of Eastern Europe, making them its colonies and puppet states. Their economies were organised through COMECON to serve the interests of the Soviet ruling class. Through the Warsaw Pact the Soviet military controlled the armies of Eastern Europe and used them to serve Soviet imperialist expansionism. Soviet political domination was ensured by the threat of invasion, a threat exemplified by the events of 1968 when Soviet tanks rolled into Czechoslovakia to crush the people's aspirations for freedom.

The present Soviet leadership has recognised that it is overstretched and is implementing a policy of withdrawal and retrenchment. It has been greatly affected by its military failure in Afghanistan and Eritrea, as well as by the pressure of national resistance in the Eastern European countries. This new policy has opened the door for the Eastern European peoples to achieve their national independence.

The importance of the aspect of national aspirations in these struggles is shown particularly clearly by the developments in East Germany. At last the German people are free to exercise their right to national self-determination and re-unification.

Internally, the popular demands in the Eastern European countries are for political freedoms and human rights similar to those in the Western capitalist countries. There is nothing socialist about these changes, but they will be progressive. A bourgeois democratic system is an advance on the previous system.

From an international point of view, the freeing of Eastern Europe must be welcomed because it reduces the threat of war between the two superpowers. But its effect on the Third World may not be so positive. The overthrow of national oppression in countries like Poland and Czechoslovakia will weaken Soviet imperialism, even if only temporarily. But the victories of national struggles in Europe do not directly assist national struggles in the Third World. Imperialism is essentially a European phenomenon. The emergence of European peoples from colonial domination will tend to strengthen Europe as a centre of power in the world. This will inevitably increase European control and exploitation of the Third World. It becomes even more important to support the main struggle in the world today, the anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

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PUBLIC SUPPORT AMBULANCE WORKERS

by Joe Steel

At the time of writing, the ambulance workers' dispute has entered its eleventh week. Support from the 22,500 men and women involved remains solid.

Clearly the unions have got their tactics right. By starting with an overtime and rest day working ban, and then escalating to only providing 999 cover, they have been able to increase the action without losing public support.

Public support, so important in any action by NHS workers, remains solid. The ambulance workers collected over two million signatures on a support petition within a few days. Public opinion polls show that 85% of the public supports their cause. Even a majority of Tory voters supported the workers' action and were critical of Clarke's handling of the dispute. The non-urgent patients inconvenienced by the dispute, support them. The sight of strikers being prepared to maintain an emergency service, for no pay if necessary, is a powerful propaganda weapon in the war of words with the employer.

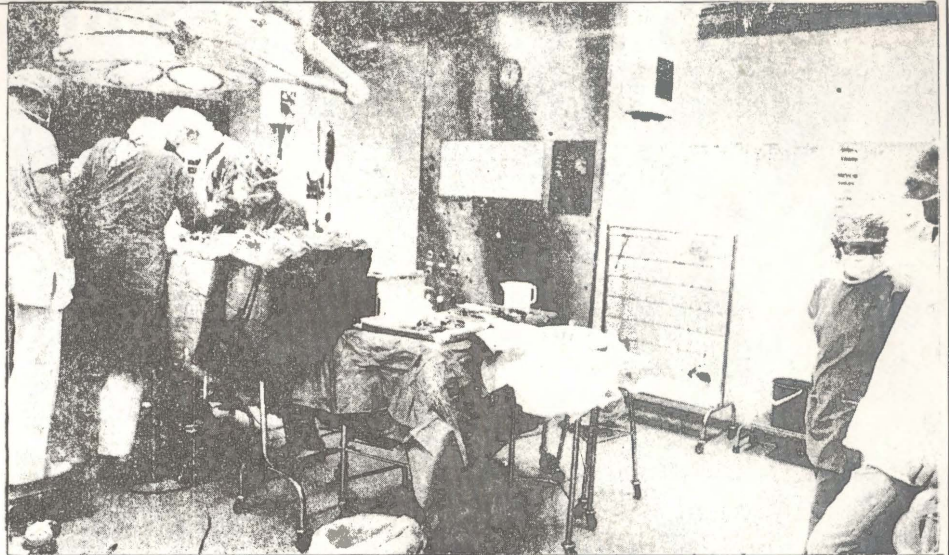
That commitment to the emergency service is not just a propaganda tactic. It sums up the problem faced by any NHS workers forced to take industrial action. Any action in the NHS inevitably affects patients. But without any industrial muscle, it is the only way they can take action.

It is sheer hypocrisy on Kenneth Clarke's part to try and lecture the ambulance workers about the danger to patients. It is his government that has cut money for the NHS. He is the one that has provoked this dispute.

MANAGEMENT TACTICS AND LIES

It is clear that the dispute is having an effect. That was highlighted at the end of November when controllers walked out in London, and elsewhere, in support of ambulance crews. They stated clearly that the police and army were not able to maintain the 999 service and that patients were dying unnecessarily.

Throughout the dispute, local managements have tried differing tactics to split the staff. Enormous pressure has been used to try and get the unions to back down, and when that failed, they suspended the workers.



The forces of the state (police and army) have been used to undermine the action, without success (although that intervention has prolonged the dispute.)

Tricks like combining two years' pay without actually increasing the money on offer have failed.

Attempts to start negotiations for the first time with the small (4,000 member) Association of Professional Ambulance Personnel are a tactic to divide the staff.

Leaks about proposals to privatise parts of the ambulance service may indicate the real reason for provoking the dispute in the first place, or may be just a tactic to put extra pressure on the crews.

Clearly, the government's view on arbitration changes to suit itself. Only six months ago, when faced with determined strike action by railway workers, the government was urging that the action be called off and arbitration used. Yet, when it is likely that the ambulance workers would get what they wanted through arbitration, then, of course, arbitration is impossible.

Clarke is bending the truth when he claims that all the other NHS workers have accepted 6.5%. NHS workers do not all get the same rise, at the same time. They are split into many groups. Some, such as speech therapists and laboratory workers rejected 6.5%. Other groups have got more because of re-grading exercises. All NHS workers will be pressing for substantial rises in the next pay round.

OTHER ISSUES

The unions' claim is for parity with the fire service. Currently the corresponding fire-fighter gets £3,000 a year more than an ambulance worker. Also, they want a similar no-strike, automatic

cost of living agreement. This claim has several important weaknesses.

Firstly, to give up the democratic right to strike, by any group of workers, weakens the whole working class. It also removes the unions from direct involvement on the basic issue of pay and incorporates them into the state.

Comparisons with the police are dangerous. They confuse those such as the fire-fighters and ambulance crews, who are part of the working class, with the police who are part of the repressive state apparatus.

It is questionable whether the fire brigade has done well out of such a deal. The complex and dangerous work done by the men and women fire-fighters only brings a basic salary of £13,000 a year, hardly a just reward.

The Labour Party expects us to have short memories. It was the last Labour government that used the army to break the fire brigade strike. Under that same government, health service workers were forced out on strike against poverty wages. Whether under Tory or Labour, the NHS and its workers get a bad deal.

THE FUTURE

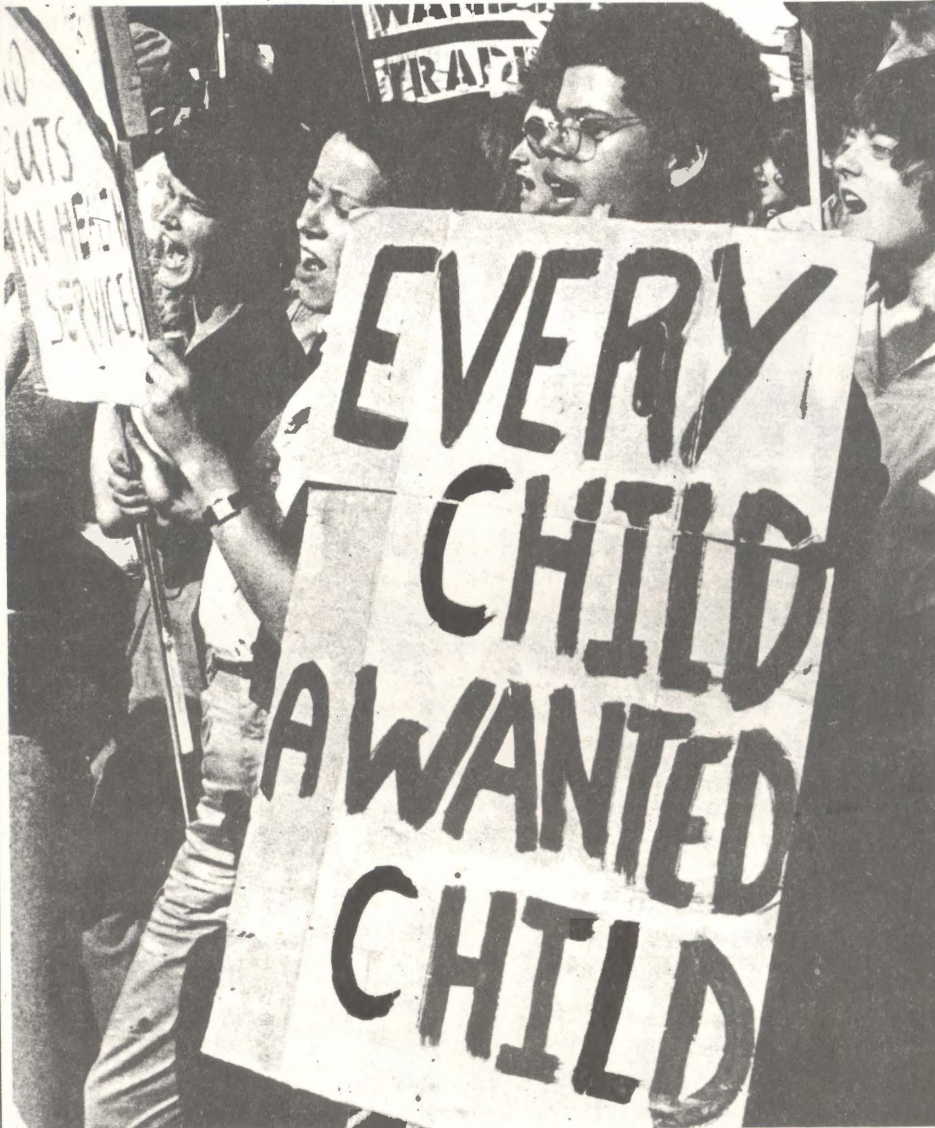
Clearly, the outcome of the dispute cannot be predicted.

The crews are geared up to a long dispute and the unions are preparing for hardship over the Christmas period.

There is some indication that management is trying to provoke an escalation by causing Glasgow ambulance workers to walk out and abandon the 999 cover. Or they may try and wear the staff down over a long period.

Either way, the crews deserve our ongoing support in what is a long, just struggle in a very anti-union climate.

Abortion: AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE



AS LATE AS NECESSARY

Yet another attempt to further restrict women's right to an abortion is underway this winter. By way of an amendment, or similar ploy, to the Warnock Bill, Parliament will be forced to vote on an upper time limit for abortion of 18, 22 or 24 weeks of pregnancy. This proposed restriction is at a time of international anti-abortion activity, with the banning of legal abortion in several states of the USA.

At present in this country, the law is based on the 1967 Abortion Act. Together with the Infant Life Preservation Act which simply states that it is a crime to kill a child which is capable of being born alive.

The outcome of this legislation is that in 1989, up to October, there have been 170,000 abortions and only 22 of these have been over 24 weeks. In 1986, there

were 172,286 abortions; 5,665 were over 18 weeks and 29 over 24 weeks.

Availability of abortion is very variable over the country and many women are still unable to get an NHS abortion. In discussing the demand for the right to choose an abortion, we must also remember that for some women, especially national minority women, reproductive rights shows its other face and they have to fight for the right to have children and not be to forcibly sterilised or injected with contraceptive drugs.

All women and medical staff would like to reduce the number of abortions performed after the early weeks of pregnancy. Late abortions are certainly a difficult choice and bring much anguish to women. However, the way to achieve this is not by criminalising abortions over a certain

time but to provide the facilities and the information to enable early abortion to be the normal rule.

ATTACKS ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The coming attack on time limits is but one of a whole series of attempts over the years, the last being David Alton's Bill to reduce the time to 18 weeks. This was talked out and defeated.

Each attack on our rights needs to be taken seriously as the anti-abortion lobby is powerful and influential. This attempt is particularly dangerous in that it has been given protected government time and will certainly come to a vote. MPs will be given a free vote and are therefore open, or should be, to their constituents' views and wishes.

Any successful setting of time limits, even at 24 weeks, is a step towards the removal of a women's right to choose. A time limit of 18 weeks would have a serious effect on many women, often the most desperate, who have not managed to arrange an early abortion for reasons of their youth, ignorance or fear, difficulty in coping with medical procedure, unhelpful GPs, or many other individual or personal reasons.

There are two groups of women particularly affected. Firstly, those women who have started seeking help early but have been thwarted by the difficulty in seeking NHS abortions. (In 1984, one in five women having abortions between 20 to 23 weeks of pregnancy had been referred to a doctor before the end of their twelfth week.) Secondly, those women who seek an abortion only after pre-natal testing, done at 16 to 18 weeks has revealed a severe congenital abnormality such as Down's Syndrome or spina bifida.

Women need to make their own choice about abortion. It is always a difficult one, and present legislation already restrains it by requiring the approval of two doctors, and by the practical difficulties women meet due to lack of facilities in many parts of the country.

Certainly, there is much to be done to cut down the number of late abortions. But this must not be done through criminalisation. Instead, we can take this opportunity to press for:

- * free, safe and widely available contraception for all
- * better sex education
- * early, free pregnancy testing
- * abortion on request, day-care clinics in every area.

For details of the campaign against any restriction on abortion rights, contact the Reproductive Rights Campaign, through your 'Class Struggle' seller.

Mandy's Diary

November 15th: There has been some good news about the proposed nuclear power station at Hinckley C. The inquiry was just about to end when the government announced that it was not authorising any more nuclear power stations for five years, including Hinckley C and some others. The one at Sizewell is still going ahead.

The inquiry was adjourned for a week. Meanwhile, the Central Electricity Generating Board said they would like the inquiry to be finished and a report to be written. They said that in future the situation might change and the plant at Hinckley might go ahead. Inspector Barnes QC, who is in charge of the inquiry, is writing a report to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State does not have to agree with his recommendation.

This is, in some ways, a disappointment for the local people, who thought they had won the battle against the building of the nuclear power station. On the other hand, there was a lot of important evidence given at the inquiry, and maybe it is worthwhile to get it written down in the form of a report.

At present, it seems as if nuclear power is becoming less and less acceptable as time goes by. It goes without saying that this is for economic reasons and not for reasons of people's health and safety.

November 19th: I read in the paper today that the Social Security Social Fund (which loans money to people in desperate need of essentials like furniture) will be running out of money by Christmas. Many Social Security offices have overspent on loans and Community Care grants, despite turning away applicants in increasing numbers.

This is hardly surprising. The government cannot continue to close its eyes to the terrible poverty created by its Social Security cuts and hope it will go unnoticed. Social Security provision was inadequate even before the cuts. The government knows it but does not care. Now thousands of families will have to depend on charity or become destitute.

November 24th: Women's organisations are going to launch a campaign to ban pornographic magazines from shops. Clare Short, MP for Ladywood, Birmingham, went into a WH Smith store in central London recently and grabbed dozens of magazines from the shelves, dumped them on the counter and demanded they be withdrawn from sale. She handed a petition



Clare Short strikes a blow against pornography

to the store's manager and warned: "This is just the start of a big campaign."

She said: Most women feel hurt when they go into shops and see pornographic magazines, but turn away from confrontation, still feeling angry. Women should protest in any way they feel. They could go into newsagents and refuse to buy newspapers or sweets until the owners stop selling porn."

Pornography is not just a bit of fun. It is offensive to women, and women should not have to face it every time they go into a shop. They should not have to think of their own bodies as objects for any man's fantasy. The system which views women as sex objects, regardless of how women feel, is the same system which accuses women of contributory negligence when they are raped, and consistently hands out lenient sentences to rapists. In the West Midlands alone, the numbers of reported rapes have risen dramatically in the last few years, while the figures for crime in general have fallen.

November 25th: It is a Saturday morning and I am sitting watching the television with my children. It is a cartoon programme called 'Defenders of the Earth'. "Yippee!" shouts the six-year old. "I like cartoons."

The rulers are all white-skinned. They have names and individual personalities and we can tell them apart. The ordinary folk are all brown-skinned. They

wear few clothes and live in villages and they all look alike. Several of them get turned into mindless clay robots who are slaves to the white people. But it doesn't matter because they weren't important in the first place.

But that is not all. The hero is a man called Flash Gordon. The villain is a woman called Astra. She utters a lot of empty threats but she hasn't any real power. She is ordered around by a male person called Ming.

My children, and countless others like them, sit glued to the telly while the most horrific racism and sexism is fed into their innocent minds.

December 1st: Since this incident, I have been looking more carefully at the information given out over the television (or more importantly, what information is not given), and the opinions it is telling us to have.

Two weeks ago, for example, a white couple were praised for travelling to war-torn Lebanon and bringing home a Lebanese baby girl whom they subsequently "adopted". The message that came over was that this is a good way to resolve the problems of Lebanese children. There was no mention whatsoever as to what happened to the girl's real parents. Did the white couple know, or even care, whether or not they were still alive? Did the child have other relatives who might be looking for her? That child was stolen!

On these two pages we carry reports on struggles against different forms of racism, whether it is the Immigration Laws, or police brutality, or racist attacks.

These are all aspects of national oppression faced by black people in Britain.

Police Charge the Victim of Racist Attack

For years the Khan family in Manor Park, Newham in London, were harassed by racist neighbours living opposite and next door. Newham has the highest number of racist attacks in Britain. On 3rd August, at 8 p.m. the Khan's neighbours attacked Mrs Khan and her niece with bicycle chains and dustbin lids. Mrs Khan was repeatedly punched and kicked in the stomach - she was nine months pregnant at the time.

Mrs Khan and her niece managed to scramble back into their home but the attackers then smashed the windows with rocks and chanted: "Paki bastards, go back to where you came from."

The Khans rang the police and the attackers responded by cutting the telephone wire. The police did not arrive and when Mrs Khan's brother, Mr Altaf, happened to come by, he was immediately attacked by six of the men wielding iron bars and wooden clubs. When he staggered into the house, the men broke down the door and one of them grabbed Mr Altaf from behind and shouted: "Kill the Paki. Kill him."

Another attacker cut Mr Altaf and then tried to stab him. Mr Altaf avoided the knife and the racist thug accidentally stabbed one of his fellow attackers instead. Many of the neighbours were watching and did nothing.

At this point, the police arrived and when Mr Altaf explained what had happened, they told him: "Shut your bloody mouth" and arrested him, leaving the racist attackers free to go home.

Mr Altaf has been charged with malicious wounding and the Khan family has been forced to leave their council house and move into bed and breakfast accommodation.

The campaign to defend the Altaf/Khan family is demanding that the charge against Mr Altaf be dropped and that his attackers be evicted. They ask people to write to: The Chief Prosecutor, Crown Prosecution Service, Solar House, 1-9 Forest Gate, London E7

POLICE STRIP SEARCH BLACK GIRLS

On October 7th of this year, Sophie Isaie (16) and Andrea Isaie (13), were on their way to a friend's birthday party on the Beaumont Estate in Leyton, London. As they arrived within sight of the block of flats, they saw a crowd of policemen, a police van and a few people struggling with the police. They had just turned around to go back home when two policemen grabbed Andrea and handcuffed her, while a policewoman handcuffed Sophie.

Sophie and Andrea were taken to Leyton police station and held for an hour. They were thoroughly strip searched. Andrea was stripped down to her underwear and searched, while Sophie was completely stripped and searched for drugs. Both girls were having their periods.

When the girls arrived home, their mother immediately rang the police station to find out why they had picked up her daughters and held them without contacting her. She was told by a policewoman that this was normal procedure followed when they pick people up as drug suspects. They only contact relatives after suspects have been searched.

The following day, the girls' mother was visited by Chief Inspector Hunt of Leyton Police Station, who came to apologise with a box of chocolates. This is not going to stop her protesting



HACKNEY MARCH

On Monday January 8th, 1990, the Third Hackney Annual Commemoration March will remember those who have suffered and died in police custody. Organised by Hackney Community Defence Organisation (HCDO), the march will assemble at 7 p.m. outside Hackney Police Station in Lower Clapton Road, E8.

Four people have died in police custody in Hackney: Aseta Sims in 1971; Michael Ferreira in 1978; Colin Roach in 1978 and Tunay Hassan in 1987.

In addition, on January 8th, 1987, Trevor Monerville had emergency brain surgery after he was held in Stoke Newington police station. January 8th, 1990, is the third anniversary of Trevor Monerville's ordeal.

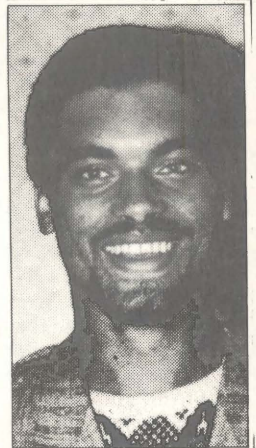
In 1989, senior Hackney police officers have said that police violence is a thing of the past.

However Hackney Community Defence Association has dealt with many serious cases this year.

These include:

1. Mr and Mrs Burke, two old age pensioners, dragged from their home and assaulted.
2. Bummi, a mother of four assaulted in Dalston police station.
3. Steve Edgar, assaulted by a police officer and then himself charged with assault.
4. Raphael Joseph, a 50 year old man, knocked off his motorbike and seriously beaten by police

Another Death in Police Custody



On July 1st of this year, Jamie Stewart, a 22-year old black man, was arrested near Archway, London, for an alleged driving offence. He was taken to Holloway Police Station. Within an hour, he was dead.

His family have set up a campaign demanding to find out the truth about Jamie's death. They point out that four people died in police custody in July 1989 without explanation. They are calling on the Home Secretary to set up a public enquiry. They can be contacted: c/o PLP, 48 Seven Sisters Road, London N7 6WA.

Kurds Persecuted



The Turkish state is stepping up its policy of oppression against Kurdish people and forcibly suppressing, by means of 400,000 armed troops, all national and democratic rights of the Kurdish nation.

About 3,500 Kurdish refugees fled to Britain in May and June this year, before a visa requirement was imposed by the Home Office. The Kurds come mainly from Kahramanmaraş, a poor region in South East Turkey. They are young and middle-aged men, many with wives and children in Turkey. They have suffered imprisonment, police beatings and torture in Turkey because of their support for the Kurdish struggle for national independence.

In August this year, some Kurdish asylum-seekers were flown straight back to Turkey on landing at Heathrow without getting off the plane or being allowed to put their case. They launched a High Court action against the Home Office for breach of international regulations under the 1951 Geneva Convention. In September, 36 out of 39 Kurdish asylum-seekers being held at Home Office detention centres, went on hunger strike, refusing water as well as food.

In October, about 2,000 people joined a demonstration in London carrying the body of Siho İyigüven, a Kurdish refugee who died after setting fire to his cell in protest, after being refused asylum in Britain. The police refused a request for a delegation to deliver a protest letter to 10 Downing Street.

Another Kurd, Dogan Arslan, who also set fire to his cell, was treated for 30% burns at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, and subsequently given temporary leave to stay.

Following these events, 25 Kurds were released from detention centres and prisons and given temporary admission for as long as it takes to assess their cases. The Home Office claimed that the release had no connection with the death of Siho İyigüven.

Several hundred Kurds have been picketing the Home Office in protest at continuing detentions and deportations back to Turkey.

About 200 refugees have been held in detention since May. The Home Office has now assessed 560 cases. 70 of these have refugee status and a further 240 are to be reviewed in a year's time.

STOP THE DEPORTATION OF BEATRICE

Beatrice Offeh was born in Ghana 25 years ago. Both her parents died by the time she was aged twelve, so she then had to leave school and spent the next few years living with different people until eventually she was able to stay with a friend of her mother's, whom she now refers to as her aunt.

About six years ago, her aunt brought Beatrice to the UK. Beatrice did not speak English at the time and her aunt had her passport and communicated with the Immigration Officer at the airport. Beatrice was unaware of what permission she had been given to stay in the UK. However, her aunt helped Beatrice to settle down and obtain work and then the aunt returned to Ghana. Beatrice never saw her aunt again and has remained in the UK ever since, not aware that she was here "illegally".

A few years ago, Beatrice met a British man named O'Neill, and they started living together. Last year, Beatrice gave birth to their son, Ricky. O'Neill then left Beatrice and Ricky. Beatrice continued to look after Ricky.

Earlier this year, Ricky was ill and Beatrice went to see O'Neill to ask for a lift to the hospital. Instead, O'Neill tried to take Ricky away from Beatrice and an argument developed and the police were called. Beatrice was arrested and Ricky was left with O'Neill. Beatrice was interviewed by an immigration officer at the police station and he decided that Beatrice should be deported, despite the fact that he had no idea what would happen to Ricky. That same night over the telephone, he obtained authority from his Chief to deport Beatrice, and she was served with all the relevant forms.

Fortunately, the immigration officer was persuaded to release Beatrice pending an actual deportation, and an appeal was lodged against the decision to deport. Ricky stayed with O'Neill for two days until Beatrice eventually got a police officer to go with her to get her son back. O'Neill however now continues to see his son.

But the only real chance Beatrice has to stay in the UK is through mass pressure on the Home Office. A campaign has been organised to support her and may be contacted at: c/o LAP, Evelyn Street, London SE8 5DB. Tel: 01-692-1308

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

OF 1992



People from Third World countries coming to Europe are treated differently from white people. Many people from Hong Kong have British passports which are now worthless.

by Edward Leonard

We welcome the opposition expressed at the recent Communities of Resistance Conference to the increasing racism inherent in the 1992 Single European Act.

But two points must be made. First, the type of control on black people forecast for the post-1992 era already exists in Britain.

Second, the black communities settled in Britain are not aptly described a "migrant" or "refugee" but as national minorities. Their presence here is part of the British imperialist oppression of the nations, like India, Jamaica, etc. from which they have come. Once here they are subjected to oppression as nationalities, and they develop their identity and their resistance as nationalities.

The racist implications of the 1992 Single European Act were the focus for about 400 community representatives and anti-racist activists at a conference held on November 11th, in Hackney, London.

Entitled 'Communities of Resistance', the conference speakers from community groups in Britain and Europe, voiced their concern that the member states of the European Community intend to establish different categories of citizenship to exclude the rights of "migrants" and "refugees" in the Single European Market.

THE SINGLE MARKET

The advent of the internal market of 1992 is designed to facilitate the emergence of large, technologically advanced trans-European corporations capable of competing with American and Japanese-based capital:

The essential feature of the Single Market will be mobility; the free circulation of persons, goods, services and capital between member states. But Europe will not be an area without frontiers. Economic liberalism by no means presupposes political liberalism.

The use of Third World labour as part of the manufacturing process, an elaborate form of sub-contracting, has increasingly broken down national boundaries for finance and production. Nationally-based economies can no longer cope with this international division of labour and European business seeks to resolve this through 1992.

However, as Mrs Thatcher has demonstrated in Britain, free market capitalism needs a strong authoritarian state. As the internal tariff barriers come down, the external frontier of the twelve member states will create "Fortress Europe".

The racist implications are clear as already the French politician, Barre, has called for a "common European frontier against new immigrants". As one activist based in Denmark, remarked: "Pan-European racism has heightened in the growing economic crisis since the 1960's."

Some black Third World communities in Europe have been settled here for over two generations. They were brought in to rebuild the industries of Europe in the 1950's. They have been confronted by racism at the workplace, housing, social services, etc. and have faced racist policing and street attacks.

The potential for vastly increased surveillance on, and harassment of, settled black people as well as the increasing illegalisation of "migrants" and "refugee" populations, lies at the heart of the 1992 proposals.

In the restructuring of European economies, such labour as black people provide is regarded as surplus by European capital. The workers and peasants of Southern Europe are now seen as the main source of cheap labour.

"FORTRESS EUROPE"

The official attitude towards "migrants" and "refugees" in "Fortress Europe" is shown by the bodies which have been given responsibility for them. The

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"Trevi" group and the "Schengen" Group, involving European government ministers, have responsibility for combatting terrorism, drug dealers and refugees. Lumping these together as European-wide "problems" points to the intensification of internal controls and burdens on those thought to be non-EEC nationals to prove the legality of their presence.

Since the 1970s, Third World "migrants" have been subject to restrictive immigration controls that have almost ended primary immigration throughout Europe. In the 1980s, asylum seekers have faced increasingly restrictive definitions and been forced into a twilight existence as "unauthorised" refugees.

The Single European Market Act will worsen the already precarious rights of "migrant" and "refugee" communities. They constitute suggested Ronnie Moodley, of the Refugee Forum, a "thirteenth state" of around 16 million in the EEC. But they are denied the same rights of movement, work and political activity, and rights of legal representation and appeals, as EEC nationals.

Furthermore, the institutions of the EEC have produced no regulations or agreements to safeguard the rights of "migrant" and "refugee" communities.

We have seen the implementation of stricter internal controls involving passport and other checks on immigration status prior to service delivery by local authorities or hospitals. These checks include the detailed cross-referencing between state agencies, "fishing raids" and the continual criminalisation of communities.

The conference was told: "In February 1989, a military-style raid of over 80 police and immigration officials at a Hackney dress factory resulted in over 40 arrests, of whom seven "voluntarily" left the country." (see earlier issue of 'Class Struggle' for details.)

Other speakers from Europe told the familiar tale of immigration controls and assimilation presented as integration, cataloguing the degrading racist experience in its European dimension.

MANIFESTO

The "Fortress Europe" of 1992 is not inevitable. Speakers pointed out that they welcomed the free movement of citizens in Europe but want those rights to also be the rights of "refugees" and "migrants".

In Britain, the Refugee Forum, an association of refugee self-help groups, has launched its own manifesto for equal rights and justice, and centres on ten points of direct concern to all "migrant" and "refugee" communities throughout the European community.

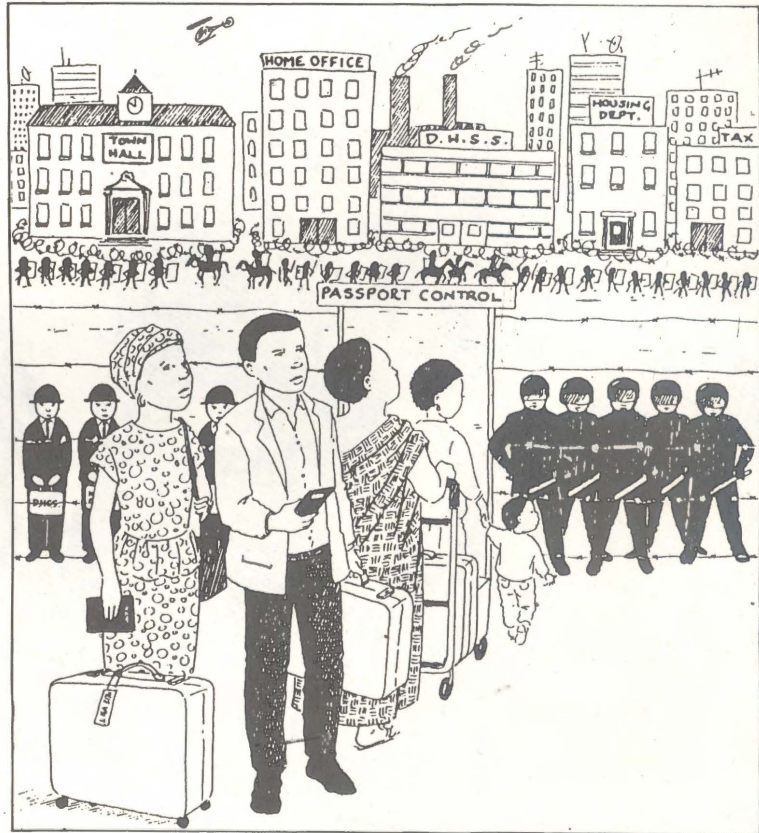
We will return to other implications of the economic and political integration of the twelve member states of the EEC in coming issues of 'Class Struggle'. At this stage, we endorse the call of the conference to build counter-vailing pressure on a European scale against the racist implications of 1992 and call upon readers and supporters to gear themselves for the struggle against a Europe of big capital!

For further information, contact:

Tony Panayiston, Refugee Officer,
Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street,
London E8.

Tel: 01-986-3123 ex. 3353

The Migrant and Refugee Manifesto
Refugee Forum,
54 Tavistock Place, London WC1.
Tel: 01-837-7162



THE REFUGEE CHARTER FOR EUROPE

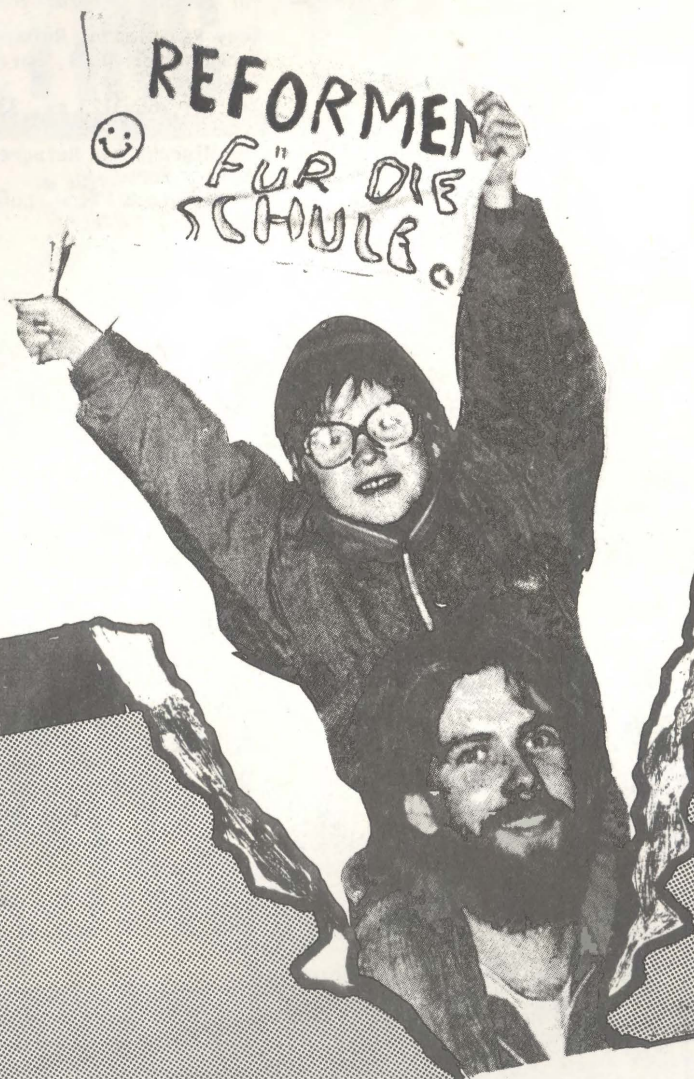
The Refugee Charter, in its six claims, highlights the most fundamental demands of refugees. It outlines the needs of refugees as human beings in terms of their basic human rights to freedom of movement and association, welfare, employment, education and housing.

1. Every refugee granted asylum by a member country of the EEC should enjoy the same rights of movement, work and political activity as a national within the Community.
2. As soon as the application for asylum is submitted, the applicant should be entitled to all welfare rights and benefits.
3. There should be an independent appeals system with legal rights for all those facing deportation, detention or repatriation. The criteria for assessing whether asylum seekers are refugees should be clearly interpreted, taking into account the conditions prevailing in the country of origin.
4. There should be an expeditious processing of applications for asylum. If the application is not disposed of within three months, the asylee should have the right to seek employment and/or study whilst awaiting a decision.
5. Refugees and those with exceptional leave to remain should be able to obtain permanent residence, and if refused, have the right of appeal.
6. At all points of arrival there must be a directory in English and all appropriate languages with the names, addresses and telephone numbers (including emergency numbers) of advisors, advisory and advocacy services. Their assistance should be available to refugees from any country. All asylum seekers must be offered such information and be given full opportunity, as of right, to contact such services or people.

But in the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania and - to a lesser extent - Bulgaria, the communists were relatively weak.

Nevertheless, the USA, Britain and the Soviet Union had virtually agreed on the division of Europe into spheres of influence at the Yalta Conference during the war, and the Soviet Union ensured that, by rigged elections and coups, the whole of Eastern Europe entered the "socialist camp".

Popular revolt against these regimes and their policies was always branded as "counter-revolution", behind which lay



THROWING
THE R

The opening up of gaps in the Berlin wall and the great easing of travel between the different parts of Germany is a very welcome development. It could prove to be the most important step in the process of ending the division of Europe into two blocs and rolling back the armed forces of the two superpowers back to their own countries.

After the Second World War, Europe became divided into two basic zones, one Soviet-dominated, and the other US-dominated. In the West, the USA, Britain and the weakened ruling classes of the European states did their utmost to weaken the position of the communist parties, which had been enhanced by the leading role they had played in the fight against Nazi Germany.

In France and Italy, the communists were serious contenders for governmental power, while in Greece, it took British intervention and heavy US aid, to prevent

the communist party taking power.

Through the Marshall Plan, the splitting of trade unions and progressive organisations, the fostering of fear about communism through the Cold War, the USA and its junior partners ensured that West European capitalism weathered the trials of the period following the war.

NATO expressed not only the anti-Soviet and anti-communist unity of the West European and North American ruling classes, but also the senior position of the USA among them. A conservative social and political order, within which there is a certain amount of flexibility, has been firmly in place ever since.

"SPHERES OF INFLUENCE"

In the East, communist parties had also increased their popular support through their role in fighting fascism. But conditions differed a lot from one place to another. Yugoslavia and Albania liberated themselves under communist leadership; in Czechoslovakia, the communist party emerged as the largest in the country.

the interference of western intelligence services. This was said of the revolts in East Germany in 1953, Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. Every time it was untrue: the people rose up for legitimate reasons, whatever advantage the West sought to extract from it.

East and West, governments justified their own oppression and arms build-ups by reference to the oppression and arming of the other side.

FIGHT FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

The Soviet Union has upset this system since Gorbachev came to office. Determined to reduce Soviet military expenditure and overhaul the Soviet economy, the Gorbachev leadership sought a reduction of tension with the USA, and abandoned the policy of trying to keep a tight grip on the rest of Eastern Europe.

Naturally enough, that has created problems for the leaderships in place there. That's a good thing. A government that does not have popular support does not have the right to rule, and parties which have alienated the workers and working people should be brought down a peg or two. They must start delivering the goods or go.

In Poland, elections led to Solidarity winning a landslide victory. Immediately, the left-right differences within it became more acute, confirming the analysis which the RCL alone on the left advanced, when it first emerged. Against those who glamourised it on the Trotskyist left and those who rubbished it among the Soviet Union worshippers, we said that it was a nationalist organisation rather than a class one, whose aim was that Poland

THROWING AWAY THE RULE BOOKS

by DAVID EVANS



should be in charge of its own affairs. Having essentially secured that, Solidarity is bound to fragment.

In Hungary, the local communists in the Socialist Workers' Party voted to transform it into a western-style social democratic organisation. Both there and in the German Democratic Republic, a multi-party democratic system seems to be on the way. Trends in Czechoslovakia are going the same way.

Despite all the cheering of the western imperialists, it is clear that things are not working out quite as they wish. If East Europeans want more and better food and consumer goods, they do not want to import a western economic system which will expand unemployment, widen wealth gaps, worsen welfare provision, etc. Even if it may not prove possible in practice, they want to pick out the better elements of the eastern and western systems and keep those - an approach which might have a certain appeal to many working people in the West.

Furthermore, with all that is now happening, it is much more difficult for the USA and other western powers to justify intervention in the Third World, including backing for fascistic dictatorships and colonial relics there, against liberation movements and popular movements, by the need to combat the "menace of

international communism".

THROWING AWAY THE RULE BOOK

Now the possibility of German re-unification is within sight. However Germans feel about this, it can only realistically take place by the agreement of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact on one side, and the USA and NATO on the other. That would be unlikely to occur unless it was agreed that the united German state should be neutral. But Germany is the main site of East-West military confrontation: neutralise it, and the Warsaw Pact and NATO will stand as absurd anachronisms.

There is then a possibility for a new, open Europe to arise. Not that everything will suddenly be marvellous. But exciting changes will be possible. The rulebooks of international relations used for the last 40 years can be thrown away. Pan-European progressive alliances will need to be forged, and the small nations and nationalities within states dominated by other national groups will be able to assert their rights more readily in an increasingly united Europe where all nations are minorities.

These developments will raise more sharply the issue of greater regional co-operation and unity in the Third World. How can Africa, Latin America or the Arab world not seek more integration when Europe is achieving efficiencies of scale and co-operation which simultaneously threaten and impress the rest of the globe? Yet such unity is not attainable

while classes and groups with an entrenched interest in the states as presently constituted rule the roost: the challenge of democracy and social transformation will be posed more acutely.

SOCIALISM IS ALIVE

The world is going through a process of upheaval. The western establishments point to events in Eastern Europe and China and say: "See, socialism has failed!" But socialism is still a relatively new system, and it was never truly established in most of Eastern Europe, coming as it did in most places courtesy of the Soviet Army.

A new, socialist agenda is needed, which draws out the best of past experience, but which totally rejects the "socialism" of the command economy and the show trial. It must stand for the subordination of economic development to popular needs, for a democracy which embodies the people's determination of their own affairs as a norm of life, not a voting exercise to be undertaken every few years, as well as the workers' control over their own work processes and key role in the determination of the uses to which the wealth they produce will be put.

Meanwhile, with Eastern Europe opening up and transforming what used to be called here "the Soviet bloc", it is time people in the West put more effort into breaking up "our" bloc, promoting arms cuts and working for the dissolution of NATO.

PHILIPPINES

SPEARHEADING THE MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE

Partido ng Bayan (PnB), the legal left party in the Philippines, was established in August 1986, on the initiative of released political prisoners like Jose Sison, Father Ed la Torre and Comrade Dante. It aims to arouse, organise and mobilise the Filipino people for the struggle in the electoral arena, for genuine national freedom and democracy. 'Class Struggle' spoke to one of the party's leading representatives during his recent visit to Britain.

The comrade described the political climate in which PnB operates: seven of its 1987 Congressional candidates were killed during the election campaign; five provincial managers killed and its offices bombed.

The comrade explained: "Before I left, I had to make sure that I had no definite pattern in my movements. For security precautions, I vary my life...."

Such arrangements are very necessary. Rolando Olalia, the KMU trade union federation leader, was until his assassination chair of PnB.

"Vigilantes are encouraged by Aquino's government, often religious fanatics in rural areas, "salvaging" beheading peasant organisers."

The situation now is worse than under Marcos in the sense that the leaders are being targeted.



Rubbish gleaners of Manila's "Smokey Mountain"

A POPULAR PROGRAMME

Partido ng Bayan seeks to establish a government that is nationalist, popular and democratic. The party's programme of action explains that it stands for: "Politics based on programme and critical issues, not on personalities and empty talk. Politics of national and popular concerns and public service, not of vested interests and divisions of spoils." PnB sees itself as complementary rather than a rival to others engaged in the struggle to complete the national democratic revolution.

Its objectives are: a participatory and pluralist political system; to transform the undeveloped economy of the Philippines to a progressive, self-reliant economy; the adoption of an independent foreign policy and promotion of a national, scientific and popular culture.

Taking advantage of the breathing space following Corazon Aquino's election to the presidency, the PnB stood 33 candidates and secured the election of two Congressional candidates in the 1987 elections. The PnB had more success at grass-roots level, achieving 234 Provincial seats and Mayorships.

MASS MOVEMENT FOR CHANGE

The bulk of the membership, drawn from mass organisations like the trade unions and peasant organisations, persist in political activity, in spite of all the intimidation:

"The mass organisations will not declare themselves illegal. They are engaged in electoral struggle as a valid arena to articulate the aspirations of our people. They are spearheading the movement for change.

"The space for the legal left has been constructed by the Partido ng Bayan. There has been an upsurge in the mass movements. People have been mobilised in big strikes: workers, teachers and government employees have

gained some wage increases. The students have struggled against increases in tuition fees. We have to maintain the momentum."

"... In Congress, the Partido ng Bayan has formed a bloc of progressives, encouraging dialogue on issues of the bases and debt. There is a coalition of 15 votes on certain issues. We've gained a beachhead. There are 142 millionaires in a Congress of 200 members. Our Congressmen can support mass actions, marching on the streets and undertaking fact-finding missions."



Corazon Aquino: the US pulling the strings?

The Congress is largely a Congress of landowners. Aquino's much-heralded agrarian reform has yet to make an impact on the wealthy. Ten percent of the people still own ninety percent of agricultural resources. The comrade explained that Aquino "represents the old rich. She is from an old land-owning family. Where land is transferred, there is no support system and landlords, through rural banks, obtain ownership of the land again."

The land question, the comrade emphasised, is central to the national democratic movement and only the outlawed National Democratic Front programme of land reform is gaining the support of the peasants. But Aquino has ordered the reconsecration of any land distributed. Whether that will be an enforceable order depends on the balance of forces in the locality.

The struggle will be won on many fronts.

SUPPORT THE PEOPLE'S RELIEF AGENCIES

Latest reports on the military situation are that the armed forces of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) are close to the capital Addis Ababa.

The Ethiopian regime has been using negotiations to try and stall its defeat. But it has successively been forced back to the negotiating table by its massive military defeats. As we go to press, there are separate talks being held with both the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the TPLF.

'Class Struggle' has regularly reported on the progress of the liberation struggles in Ethiopia and the basis for their success in their mass popular support for the political, economic and social transformation they have brought about in the everyday lives of the people.

While welcoming the great victories of the liberation forces and looking forward to the day when the whole of Ethiopia will be liberated, in this issue, we appeal to our readers to respond to the appeals of both the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA) and the Relief Society of Tigray for help with the immediate problems of lack of food for their people.

Clearly, the problems of famine and drought can, in the long-term, be solved by a political solution and the people's liberation. At the same time, the relief organisations of the liberation forces are the bodies who can most effectively cater for the people's short-term needs.

We reprint below extracts from recent appeals made by the two organisations:

REST LAUNCHES URGENT APPEAL FOR DROUGHT AFFECTED AREAS OF TIGRAY

Following the failure of this year's main rains in most parts of Tigray, REST is launching an emergency appeal to all governments, humanitarian agencies and the general public for urgent assistance.

2.5 million people are affected, of whom 2.2 million people will need food supplies over a period ranging from 4 to 12 months. REST calculates the total food requirements to be 329,000 metric tons. To move these supplies to the areas affected, 220 trucks are needed to augment REST's existing transport fleet.

Unless there is a significant and immediate commitment of aid, both financial and material, not only will people die but also progress made over the last few years towards addressing the root causes of famine and

underdevelopment will be seriously undermined.

People will sell their oxen and tools and walk to where they can get food, to western Tigray, Eritrea or Sudan, carrying children the aged and whatever they still own. Such migrations are destructive of local administrative structures and services, such as schools and clinics, built up at great effort - long term projects in terracing, soil and water conservation will be abandoned. They are also destructive to the rural economy because when people leave, the land is not looked after and no one is there to plant crops when the rain does come. Another year of dependency on food aid is then inevitable and the famine cycle continues.

In such migrations, it is the vulnerable who die: the children, the aged and the sick.



.....In the famine of 1984-5, the vast bulk of relief supplies was sent through the Addis Ababa military regime, which was essentially at war with the people of Tigray. Grave though the situation is today, the people in need can now be reached through REST, their own organisation. The military regime, pushed out of Tigray and most of the provinces of Wollo and Gondar and increasingly isolated, can no longer claim to be in any position to relieve the plight of those now in need.....

You can help by putting pressure through letters etc. to the major relief organisations and through MPs and MEPs'.

Raise funds or make a personal donation. REST's UK Support Committee has cards and other things that can be sold. They can be contacted at: Relief Society of Tigray, UK Support Committee, 27 Beresford Road, London N5 5HS. Tel: 01-354-2380

DROUGHT THREATENS IN ERITREA

In the Autumn issue of their newsletter, ERA warned that:

Information received from the Eritrean Relief Association... suggests that another major drought threatens the entire harvest in almost all of Eritrea's seven provinces:

In consequence, major food shortages can be predicted again for 1989-1990. Following the drought of 1983-1985 more than one million people became dependent on food aid. Last year's improved rains brought that number down to 612,000 but this year once more the numbers of dependent people can be expected to escalate.

Those affected will be not only the 80% of Eritrea's population who live in the countryside and earn their living through farming, but also the urban population who depend on the agricultural sector for their food supplies.

Food shortages will have catastrophic social, economic and ecological consequences. In addition to their human and social cost food shortages force rural people to such a heavy reliance on the existing vegetation, livestock and water supplies that the area's fragile ecology is also threatened.

Thus an enormous effort will be required not only to meet short-term emergency needs but also to reverse the long-term structural damage which is the likely result of the immediate crisis.



You can become an active supporter of and fund-raiser for ERA. If you want information on projects carried out by ERA in Eritrea or want to help, contact Berhane Gebre Hiwot at: ERA-UK, 96 White Lion Street, London N1. Tel: 01-837-9236.

THE OPIUM WAR

CLASS STRUGGLE

CORRESPONDENT

The production and sale of drugs of different kinds is a profitable business: from the drugs used in medicine; tobacco and alcohol; tea and coffee; to opium, heroin and crack. The illegality of these last three means the profits are high without any company accounts. Money is laundered and the big people behind the trade rarely come to light when there is a crackdown on street hustlers and smugglers.

In this article, we look briefly at the history of the trade in drugs such as opium and the part this trade has played in financing imperialist aggression in different parts of the world.

FOREIGN MUD

In the nineteenth century, the import of opium or "foreign mud" from India to China was central to imperialist, particularly British, exploitation of China. The smuggling and sale of opium was forced on the Chinese people and resulted in a massive drain of silver from the economy and further impoverishment of the people.

When the Chinese government tried to put a stop to the trade, Britain fought the Opium Wars to ensure continuation of the sale of opium and the expansion of the West into China by other means. By the mid-nineteenth century, the trade in opium has been estimated to have been the largest commerce of the time in any one commodity and was central to British control of both India and China.

Although Britain was the biggest opium-dealer, other powers also cashed in. The French established a monopoly in opium in their colonies in Indochina in 1880. In the period after the Second World War, the profits from opium financed their war to regain control of Indochina from the liberation forces.

THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE

It was in the same post-war period that American involvement in the opium trade grew, so that by the 1970's, the "Golden Triangle" of Laos, Burma and Thailand had taken over from the Middle East as the main producing area for opium, and the heroin that is refined from it.

In the 1950's, the CIA supported the remnants of the defeated Chinese KMT army that had fled from China in 1949. This army was supplied by the CIA and, at that time, carried out raids into Yunnan in China while extending its control over the opium trade in the Golden Triangle.

From these beginnings, the involvement of the USA, particularly through the CIA and its various operations such as Air America

and Air Continental, grew as did their involvement in the wars against the peoples of Indochina.

At one level, American policy in the area was to support reactionary forces who used their positions to make fortunes from heroin as part of their anti-communist strategy. But the CIA went beyond this and itself became involved in the trade, making individual fortunes and financing its own activities by encouraging the use of heroin among American GIs and back in the USA.

The growth of the trade also became part of American policy in relation to minority peoples who America was trying to use against the liberation forces.



It has been documented, for example, how Air America bought opium directly from the Meo people in Laos. One strategy was to encourage a change from subsistence farming to the growing of opium, paid for in silver and with rice to replace the food the people used to grow. If the people showed any inclination not to support US policy or refusing to send their young men to fight America's war, the rice supplies would be stopped.

Huge fortunes were made and powerful networks established by the CIA which have continued to fund and organise the counter-revolutionary activities of the agency in other parts of the world.

FUNDING THE MILITARY IN CENTRAL AND LATIN AMERICA

Part of these operations were, for example, revealed in October 1986, in the "Irangate/Contragate" scandal in the USA. Hidden operations, involving both arms and drugs deals, were enabling the CIA and sections of the American administration to bypass public decisions to stop arms supplies to the Contras fighting to overthrow the government in Nicaragua.

Following the US defeat in Indochina, countries like Peru, Bolivia and Colombia became more important as suppliers of the profitable drugs. At a time of growing indebtedness and dropping prices for "legal" commodities

produced in these countries, the profits made from drugs in the unofficial economy have become enormous. It is estimated, for example, that in Colombia, they are \$900 million a year. For the peasant farmers in these countries, the production of coca (from which cocaine is refined) can provide them with a better living than any other crop at the present time.

But President Bush's war against drugs in Latin America is no more aimed at stamping out the drugs trade there, than it is in black communities in the USA.

The "war against drugs" is being carried on as a smokescreen behind which the USA is implementing a counter-revolutionary strategy aimed at strengthening the military to put down growing popular and Congressional opposition within

revolutionary movements in these areas. There has been considerable opposition within the USA to direct and indirect intervention in the affairs of Nicaragua and El Salvador. This same kind of interference in Peru, Colombia and Bolivia, is being justified in the name of the war against drugs. As one commentator said: "The Drug Enforcement Agents sent to help the Peruvian government look rather more like counter-insurgency types from the Special Forces."

By October 1989, the massive sum of \$261 millions had been committed to this new war, mainly in the form of military assistance. At the same time, democratic rights are being further restricted and a state of emergency implemented. National rights of the Latin American people are being overridden. For example, people wanted in the USA can now be directly extradited from Colombia to the USA without passing through the Colombian courts.

The growing victories of the popular forces in Nicaragua and El Salvador will only heighten the struggles in the Latin American countries. We must oppose all American interference in Latin America, under whatever pretext, and demand that the British government stops its support for Bush's policies in this area and that the people of Latin America are left to resolve their own problems without outside interference.



Roberto d'Aubuisson

CLOSE TO FINAL VICTORY

"This is the beginning of the final counter-offensive We won't leave until we win or until we force them to the bargaining table." This was how a spokesman for the liberation front of El Salvador, the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) summed up the present situation in his country.

On Saturday night, 11th November, the armed forces of the liberation front launched simultaneous attacks throughout El Salvador, in all of its fourteen provinces and in the capital, San Salvador, as well as other important cities. At the time of going to press, this offensive continues and final victory appears close for the revolutionary and progressive forces.

Victory will be a major defeat for the USA, which is still supporting the military and right-wing government to the tune of one million dollars a day.

THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

Throughout the summer, in September and October, the FMLN stressed the need to seek a political solution to the conflict through peaceful negotiations. But the ARENA government failed to take the negotiations seriously and used them to portray talks as a sign of weakness of the part of the liberation forces.

Many of the middle forces in El Salvador have been supporting the struggle for peace through negotiations.

But it has been clear to most people, since the election of the ARENA government that there was little hope of peace with justice from them. Behind the facade of a parliamentary regime, the power lay in the hands of the army and politicians like D'Aubuisson, responsible for the death squads.

In September, this was already clear. Ruben Zamora, Vice-President of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF) who has worked for

peace in alliance with the FMLN, explained:

"The army is for the most part against negotiations and is the country's most powerful institution. Cristiani has no control over the army."

DEATH SQUADS ON THE MOVE

As reported in the September issue of 'Class Struggle', since the election, increasing numbers of people have been kidnapped, tortured and murdered, or simply "disappeared".

One typical example was reported in 'The Independent', on 27th September this year: "Human rights groups say 60 left-wing unionists, arrested last week were blindfolded, beaten by police, interrogated around the clock and deprived of sleep for three days..."

There have also been numerous bombings of carefully selected targets, including the National University, the Lutheran Church and the house of Vice-President, Ruben Zamora.

On 31st October, a bomb exploded in the dining hall of Fenastras, the headquarters of the National Federation of Salvadorean Workers, killing ten people and injuring over thirty. Among those killed was Febe Elizabeth Velasquez, who was in charge of international contacts for the union.

On the same day, the offices of COMADRES, the Committee of the Mothers of the Disappeared was bombed. In both cases, there are reports of soldiers seen in the area of the bombings.

After the launch of the offensive throughout El Salvador, a further atrocity was committed when six Jesuit priests, including the Rector of the Central American University, Ignacio Ellacuria, were murdered, as well as two other people who worked with them.

The FMLN issued a statement linking some of these bombings and murders directly to leading men in the

government and army. Their statement confirm what Cesar Martínez said when he recently defected to the USA. According to his evidence, the death squads are directly linked to the intelligence section of army units and killings are directly authorised by senior officers. Few people have any doubts that Chief of Staff, Emilio Ponce and Roberto D'Aubuisson are directly involved.

IN MEMORY OF FEBE ELIZABETH

The FMLN's offensive in San Salvador initially concentrated on the liberation of working class areas in the city - launched under the slogan 'Down with the Fascist! Long Live Febe Elizabeth!' Later the guerrillas moved into other areas of the city as a response to the indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas by the army. On 21st November, they temporarily occupied the Sheraton Hotel in Escalon. A spokesman explained: "We're taking Escalon because here the armed forces are not going to bombard people's homes. This is where the oligarchy lives."

The occupation of the hotel had the effect of highlighting the presence there of twelve US Green Berets who were said to be on a "routine training trip". It was reported that they were part of a "large but undetermined number of US military advisers helping the government."

No number of military advisers however will be able to save the government in El Salvador. It is clearly only a matter of time before the popular forces win victory. Those who continue to support the government of Cristiani and his murderous allies are now few and far between. Among them are Mrs Thatcher and President Bush. But they cannot now put off for long the day when the people of El Salvador are free to solve their own problems. They will win peace through their struggle and it will be a peace with social justice.

'Nation shall speak unto



It is worth re-stating Britain's record in Ireland, under both Tory and Labour governments, at a time when much is being said about freedom and democracy in Eastern Europe. This is how it was summed up by Sinn Fein President, Gerry Adams, at a press conference in London, on October 18th:

"Britain has the worst record on human rights of any signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights. It has been brought before the European Court on 31 occasions and been found in violation of the convention a total of 21 times.

Britain has been found in breach of Article 2 of the Convention for its "inhuman and degrading treatment" of republican political prisoners during the introduction of internment in 1971.

"In 1978 Amnesty International found that physical abuse of detainees was continuing.

"In 1988 the European Court ruled that Britain was in violation of Article 5 of the Convention because of its use of seven-day

detention orders.

"The United Nations, the National Council for Civil Liberties (London) and other leading human rights organisations have called for the banning of plastic bullets which have killed 16 people and maimed hundreds of others. Britain is the only signatory to the European Convention which uses this weapon, over 50,000 of which have been fired since 1973.

"The entire history of British involvement in our country has been to deny us our democratic rights, be they human rights, civil rights or our national right to independence and self-determination....."

One aspect of the denial of national rights to the Irish people and democratic rights to people here is the ban on broadcasting of Sinn Fein, imposed by the British government in 1989. Gerry Adams was speaking at a press conference called to mark the first anniversary of this ban.

We reproduce here extracts from the address given to the press conference by Gerry Adams. The

press conference was crowded with representatives from the world's media. But his words cannot, by law, be broadcast within the UK.

"The Thatcher government's censorship law has failed, one year after its introduction, to defeat Irish republicanism. It has however reinforced the self-censorship ethos within the British broadcasting media and it has ensured that only the anti-republican view is propagated.

"It has also denied citizens the right to information, Sinn Fein its right to express opinions, and Sinn Fein voters their right to have their views articulated in the broadcasting media. More importantly than all this the censorship law has succeeded in perpetuating the conflict. It has not made the war in Ireland disappear. It has merely insured an unbalanced coverage of the causes of the war. It has contributed to the development of causes of the war. It has not contributed to the development of an informed public opinion.

"On the contrary, it has helped to create an unbalanced view of the nature and the cause of the British occupation in Ireland. Rather than inform it has dis-informed. Rather than educate it has reinforced ignorance. All of this aids the British government and undermines the very basis of ethical journalism. And of course all this is exactly what it is intended to do.

"British censorship is not new in Ireland. It predates the current censorship laws. It has been most successful in the maintenance of the paper wall which the British government has erected around Ireland. The absence of even one permanent foreign correspondent from any of the main foreign media means that the rest of the world, most of the time, gets the British propaganda view. Writing or broadcasting about Ireland from London is like monitoring the

"that people don't hear what's happening, doesn't mean it's not happening"



nation'?

Vietnam war from Washington or the situation on the West Bank or the Gaza Strip from Tel Aviv...."

THEY HAVE MORE PRACTICE

"...After 68 years of partition and 20 years of direct British military intervention, the conflict, political instability and divisions remain as deep-rooted as ever.

"The system of religious apartheid upon which the northern state was founded and which fuelled the Civil Rights movement 20 years ago has not been removed. Rather they have been added to by new layers of repression and injustice as the British have struggled frantically to stabilise their colony. Censorship of democratically elected representatives of the Irish people is only one example of this approach. Other examples are, of course, more violent and brutal.

"The British military occupation of the North of Ireland differs from the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the racist government in South Africa only in its level of sophistication. That the British are more sophisticated is not coincidence. They have more practice. In every other way the tactics of the oppressors are identical. The direct or tacit encouragement of paramilitary death squads, the execution of political opponents, arrest and imprisonment without trial, torture of political detainees, mass show trials, punitive search operations, censorship, internal exile and exclusion orders are all tactics which the British government have employed and continue to employ against the nationalist community in the North of Ireland...."

no british solution

Gerry Adams went on to detail the numbers of those killed, tortured, interned, imprisoned, arrested and detained during the British occupation, as well as Britain's official record of violation of human and civil rights.

"The only real contribution Britain

"British censorship has been most successful in the maintenance of the paper wall which the government has erected around Ireland"

can make towards the creation of ... a just and peaceful society in Ireland is disengagement.

"While Britain remains, its military chiefs have conceded, the IRA will remain also. Why the IRA, a guerilla army active in the occupied zone, remains undefeated after 20 years is itself a question which the media, with a few notable exceptions has largely ignored.

"Instead apologists for British terrorism are given free rein to spew up their lies about "intimidation and criminals". Surely it is obvious that the reason the IRA is able to continue is because it has support. So too has Sinn Fein. Our percentage of the vote is 11.4%. We are now the second largest party in Belfast city, a fact completely ignored by our opponents.

"The British government has clearly failed to defeat us. Thatcher and her cronies should stop trying to achieve the impossible. They should talk peace. They should start this process now.

"The ending of partition and the restoration to the Irish The ending of partition and the restoration to the Irish people of our right to national self-determination, independence and sovereignty, remain the only solutions to the British colonial conflict in Ireland. The onus is on the British government to ensure a peaceful transition to a united and independent Ireland. The shape of that society is a matter for the Irish people themselves. Only when Britain recognises that right



and initiates a strategy of de-colonisation along those lines will peace and reconciliation between Irish people and between Britain and Ireland be established.

"In the meantime the right to information about the war in Ireland should be upheld by the media. To do less is to take sides."

PROTESTS

The anniversary of the ban was also marked by a range of activities around the country. The scale of the protests and the range of people active in them were significantly broader than has often been the case in relation to Ireland.

October 19th was a Day of Action co-ordinated by the Troops Out Movement and the ad hoc Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland and it ensured that media workers and the public at large were made aware of the implications of the ban.

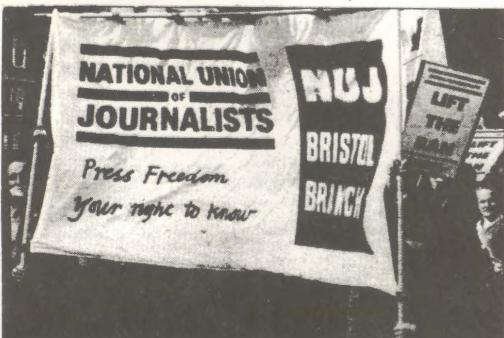
In London, October 19th marked the culmination of several days' activity. On 17th October, Gerry Adams spoke at a concert in the Hackney Empire, organised by the Campaign for Free Speech on Ireland, as well as addressing the press conference the following day.

On 19th, there were numerous protests all around London. Pickets were placed on the headquarters of all the main broadcasters in the city.

The National Union of Journalists held a march, followed by a rally at the Dominion Theatre.

In the afternoon, a press conference was held by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom and a petition handed in to Downing Street.

Other activities were held in other parts of the country by the Troops Out Movement, Irish in Britain Representation Group, Women and Ireland, Labour Committee on Ireland among others. NUJ members also organised protests in cities other than London.



LETTERS

Dear Editor,

ANTI-FASCIST ACTION

A massive police operation was mounted on Remembrance Sunday last month to protect the National Front.

The police protected the 300 fascists as they marched to the Cenotaph in London, throwing a cordon round Victoria and Trafalgar Square.

At one point, police blocked access to Parliament Square and the House of Commons to prevent hundreds of anti-fascists disrupting the National Front march.

The fascist ceremony at the Cenotaph was disrupted as some protestors chanted "Nazi Scum off our Streets". There were some arrests after scuffles.

The picket of South Africa House organised by City Anti-Apartheid was reinforced for the day by some who had marched in memory of the victims of fascism and racism earlier in the day.

The street opposition to the fascists, who came out second best in the few confrontations that escaped the police presence, meant that one of the public highlights in the fascists' calendar proved to be another failure, following on the fiasco of the musical event organised by 'Blood and Honour' last May, and opposition to the fascists' anti-Muslim rallies throughout the summer months in the north of England.

London Demonstrator



Dear Editor,

The article in last month's 'Class Struggle' on the Labour Party

conference stated that: "Women have never got a good deal from Labour". This statement, although true, is not as obvious as the writer implies. We have to be more concrete about Labour's policies towards women, particularly now when Labour is going all out for women's votes.

The Labour Party knows that women's votes could swing the results of the next election and that women are, in general, more angry about the present situation than men. Its glossy new policies include many promises to women. The following policies were some of those passed at the recent Brighton conference:

- *** a national minimum wage of £2.80 an hour
- *** equal rights for part-timers and homeworkers
- *** statutory maternity pay for all women
- *** increases in child benefit
- *** removal of tax on workplace nurseries
- *** statutory childcare for under-fives and after-school care for older children
- *** right to NHS abortions before 12 weeks

Labour Party women are also active in some progressive campaigns such as the current removal of pornographic material from the shelves of WH Smiths and other newsagents. Some unions are changing their attitude to women, at least on paper.

Few people would argue that these policies, taken as a package make up socialism. But many would argue that they are useful reforms that we should

support. Others would dismiss them as pre-election promises or simply the Labour Party bowing to pressure from women's organisations.

We should at least make a serious analysis of the Labour Party strategy on women and the context in which it is taking place. This involves looking at demographic trends which mean that capitalism requires more women to go out to work. Given that most European countries have better legal rights for women than exist in the UK, we should also look at the strategy in the context of the big push from the Labour Party to get Britain into Europe, and for the Social Charter.

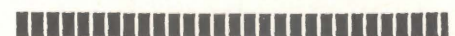
Given this context, it seems that the Labour Party strategy could bring some gains for some women, particularly in the area of legal rights.

While supporting such limited gains, we need to be clear about the difference between this and women's liberation.

Firstly, women's oppression cannot be overturned by piecemeal reforms alone. It is a fundamental aspect of our society and calls for fundamental change.

Secondly, such reforms will inevitably only benefit a limited number of women. It is noticeable that even the promises held out for a "social Europe" do not include many promises for national minority people. Similarly, it is likely that while bringing improved rights to some women, the concentration of big business in Europe will have devastating effects of many working class women's lives through, for example, job losses, casualisation and increased regional poverty.

Leeds reader.



Dear Editor,


The dangers of relying on the Labour Party for support underlie discussions within CND leading up to their national conference.

Now that the Labour Party's "coincidence of interest" with CND has disappeared, the attitude that saw the Labour Party as the campaign's natural supporters rather than political opportunists, has exposed such naivety.

The Labour Party leadership saw the issues as political capital and abandoned any commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament once the anti-nuclear bandwagon started to slow in the wake of improved superpower relations.

Since the general election defeat of the Labour Party, we have seen a return to its historic role as a parasite on extra-parliamentary struggle. In the Poll Tax Campaign, individual Labour Party members have to campaign against Labour Councils willing to obey central government instructions to enforce this

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unpopular anti-working class measure.

With the government, Labour has begun to court the "red-green" vote in the hope of building up electoral support to see it return to office.

Meanwhile, now spurned by Labour, many within CND look towards some environmental movement, in particular the Green Party, as their new partners in disarmament.

Perhaps the philosophy of some sections of Green politics are more in tune with CND's objectives, but for single issue pressure groups to seek patronage has inherent failings as demonstrated by the Labour Party's cynical use of people's desire for a safer world.

London reader

Dear Editor,

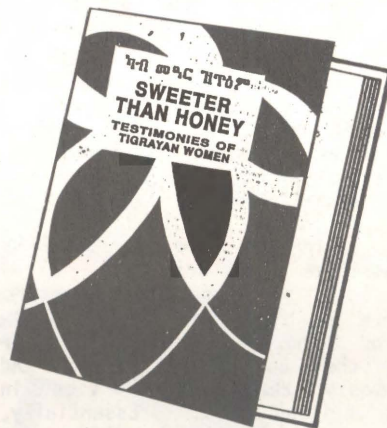
In a move that illustrates the inherent nature of modern revisionism, it was revealed last month that the Italian Communist Party was to organise a party conference next January to revise the Party statutes. The PCI plans to abandon the name of communism long after it abandoned the politics associated with Marxism. Its transformation into a liberal democratic party in the mould of the British Labour Party will show it can be trusted by the bourgeoisie.

This capitulation to bourgeois ideology has been a long time maturing and sown confusion about the identity and viability of communist politics. In Britain, the revolutionary heritage of the Communist Party has been spent and destroyed by revisionist politics. Today, the Communist Party is somewhat to the right of even left social-democrats, in Britain. The disintegration of the Moscow-orientated parties and ideological confusion generated by the full-blown adoption of bourgeois democratic forms and economic philosophy makes it even more imperative to re-establish the meaning of the communist project. Socialism is a much abused word, seemingly with a different meaning for whoever proclaims to be a socialist. There have to be lines of demarcation between those who recognise that socialism is a stage on the road to a classless society and those who proclaim socialism as a means of ruling a class society in which the bourgeoisie is in control.

With this in mind, I welcome the appearance on the back page of the column in the new look 'Class Struggle'. 'Where We Stand' should be a pointer to what politics are involved in rebuilding the communist movement.

North London reader.

BOOKNEWS



SWEETER THAN HONEY Testimonies of Tigrayan Women

Jenny Hammond & Nell Druce

"My revolution is like honey. She gets sweeter all the time."
Kiros Gebru. Tigrayan peasant. Repatriated after famine.

Tigray in Northern Ethiopia is associated with most people in the West with famine, poverty and underdevelopment. But since 1975 the people of Tigray have been transforming their society by a gradual process of revolution. Led and supported by the Tigray People's Liberation Front, they have set up an education system, health care and a democratic administrative structure, despite the impoverishment of the region and the Ethiopian government's continued military aggression.

"If the struggle were to continue without women, if that were possible then it would only be half the struggle." Lemlem Gesesse, woman fighter.

Sweeter Than Honey investigates the claims of this revolution and its effects on the lives of the people, particularly women. The extent to which women's interests are prioritised is an acid test for any society claiming democracy or undergoing revolutionary development. In Tigray, the women were the most oppressed group before the revolution and now they are its most ardent supporters. Through the voices of women recorded by Jenny Hammond over many months - farmers and famine-survivors, commanders and mechanics - it becomes clear

that the revolution is truly "sweeter than honey". This book is unique in its account of the situation in Tigray and in the editor's access to the diverse voices of ordinary Tigrayan people. 188pp.

£6.95

PROMISSORY NOTES Women in the Transition to Socialism

The experience of many women in post-revolutionary societies has not matched the theory of women's liberation. The contributors to *Promissory Notes* look at the status of women and progress to women's liberation in socialist-orientated third world regimes and Eastern Europe.

These essays examine 'The Woman Question' in Marxist thought from the classical position to contemporary reality and end in a round-table debate about the connections between feminism and socialism. £6.95

THE LAST SPEECHES MALCOLM X

This newly available book including Malcolm X's final two speeches given in the week prior to his assassination in February 1965, provide an indication of his political evolution during the last months of his life. 189 pp.

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IN TROUBLED WATERS by Ernest Marke

Ernest Marke is one of the longest surviving Black Settlers in Britain. His autobiography records his memoirs of seventy years in England from his arrival in 1917 as a stowaway from Sierra Leone. He speaks of his experience of the Liverpool 'Race Riots' of 1919, and the social discrimination that led him to unconventional careers as gambler, tipster, herbalist and hawkier throughout Britain. 164 pp.

£4.95

WAR WITHOUT HONOUR Fred Holroyd

Holroyd is an old soldier who found the 'dirty war' fought by the British in the occupied Six Counties distasteful and said so. Along with Colin Wallace, Holroyd has been subject to a smear campaign to discredit his evidence about Captain Robert Nairac's involvement with the killing of the Miami Showband musicians. The book also contains his account of the planning that went into the attempted assassination of Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe.

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Britain developed into the leading world power in the late nineteenth century through its subjugation of a large proportion of the nations of the world.

After World War Two, British imperialism was gradually driven out from one colony after another, although it maintained much of its control in a neo-colonial form. Throughout the period of colonial rule people from the oppressed nations had come to Britain, some to stay and some to return. With the specific needs of the post-war economy, this migration escalated sharply and relatively large settled communities of people from the ex-colonies began to form. These were the black national minorities.

They were fragments of their nations of origin which were oppressed by British imperialism. Their presence in Britain was a result of that national oppression which had impoverished their own lands and deprived them of livelihoods there. And the national oppression continued in Britain, taking the form of racist oppression with all its violence, discrimination and cultural deprivation.

The national minorities drew on their common origins to organise against their oppression on mainly national lines. Groups like Indian Workers' Association, Pakistan Workers' Association, Bangladesh Workers' Association, West Indian Federation, Afro-

Caribbean Self Help Group were in the forefront.

The response of the ruling class vacillated between two extremes - the "hard" and the "soft". The hard approach is summed up as repatriation. The soft approach is assimilation - the policy of destroying national identity and trying to make the national minorities "Black British".

There is a left form of assimilation too, strikingly similar to the bourgeois policy, and probably the dominant view in the British left. Essentially, it regards national differences as negative, merely an impediment to "workers' unity". This view is summed up in the general slogan "Black and White Workers, Unite and Fight".

Reality does not correspond with this view. Firstly racist oppression is not confined to the working class of the national minorities, nor is the resistance to it. All members of black national minorities suffer racism, and even the capitalists can be brought into the struggle against it.

Secondly, resistance is not just a negative struggle, against racism. It is a struggle for positive and definite national rights. Black national minorities are not prepared to be assimilated, by the right or the left. National identity is too precious and too powerful a weapon.

National minorities struggle for their language, their culture, their religion, their traditions of struggle and their links with their homelands, and they use these to build unity in the resistance to oppression.

As Communists, we utterly condemn assimilation and support the right to national identity. And we go further, for we demand the right to free national development for all oppressed nationalities. National minorities have settled in close communities, both for protection and social solidarity. An important aspect of free national development is that the national minorities have the right to control the areas where they are concentrated.

Faced with a continuous national oppression involving everything from extreme physical violence to systematic destruction of national identity, national minorities are entitled to demand national freedom. It is the role of Communists to support this demand. One of the most important ways of doing this is to explain free national development to the white working class and to convince them of its correctness.

Only then will it be possible to build the alliance between the working class and the national minorities on which the overthrow of British imperialism depends, and only through the overthrow of imperialism can national freedom be achieved.

PUBLICATIONS

Class Struggle: Political paper of the Revolutionary Communist League.

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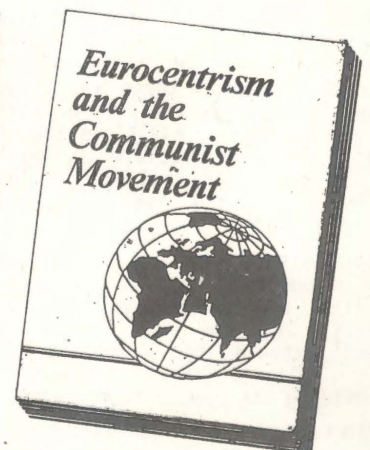
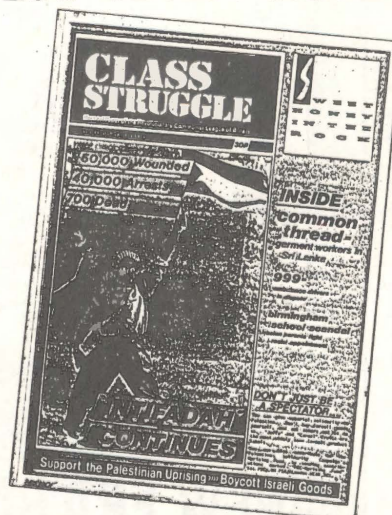
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