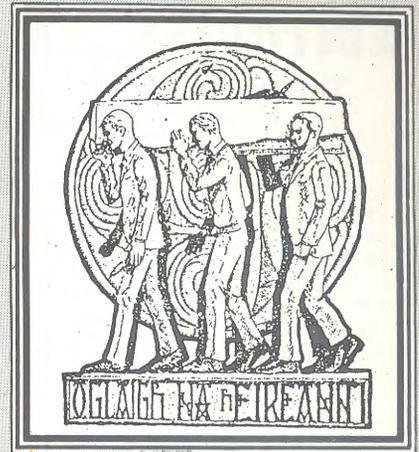


CLASS STRUGGLE

Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

VOL. 14 NO. 4 MAY 1990

30p



**Remember
Hunger Strikers**

MARCH

BIRMINGHAM 12th
LONDON 13th
MAY

INSIDE

women in asia

* GOVIND KELKAR
ON RELIGION

* YAYORI MATSUI
BOOK REVIEW



1989 -- RISLEY WHERE
1990 -- STRANGWAYS NEXT?

CAN'T PAY ... WON'T PAY

**ANTI-POLL TAX
CAMPAIGN CONTINUES**

CLASS STRUGGLE

EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL

This year's May Day marches will be joined by thousands protesting against the poll tax, the focus of popular anger against Thatcher's government.

The poll tax represents a massive shift in taxation to make the poor carry more of the cost of services provided by local authorities. Its imposition is part of the overall strategy of cutting public expenditure, the welfare state and our living standards.

The last eleven years have also seen a major offensive on the right of the working class to organise collectively - on many different fronts, through propaganda in the media, economic policies, new laws and, of course, outright repression when, as in the case of the miners, workers fought back. The result is that wages in the UK are amongst the lowest in Europe and in terms of the right to organise, we have fewer legal rights or protection.

But it has been the poll tax that has turned the majority against Thatcher. Now the Labour Party is trying to ride the anti-Thatcher tide, while keeping quiet about what concrete policies they would implement, if in power.

There are clear signs of dissatisfaction with Thatcher on the part of big business not only in the UK, but also in Europe and the USA. The Labour Party is trying to prove that it is now "responsible" enough to run the British economy, and is promoting the 1992 Single Market and European unity as the way out of its crisis for British imperialism.

European unity, with either Thatcher or Kinnock in power, in the present situation means greater power for Europe's monopoly capitalists to increase their exploitation of the working class of Europe and of the peoples of the Third World.

That is why we have to build on the anti-poll tax campaign and unite with all those oppressed and exploited by imperialism, whether it is black people threatened with deportation; women demanding reproductive rights; the freedom fighters of Ireland, Britain's oldest colony, and all those around the world fighting against oppression and exploitation in all its forms.

For May Day 1990, we must work to bring closer the unity of the working class and oppressed people of the world in their common struggle to destroy imperialism.

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A Long, Sharp Shock

Once again, the Home Office wants to deport a black person from the UK, on the grounds that his presence is "not conducive to the public good". Basil 'Andy' Anderson, from Manchester, is in danger of being separated from his family, Farida Ali, their two sons Marcus and Jamal, and a new baby soon to be born. All the legal appeals have been exhausted and support for a campaign to stop this deportation is urgently needed.

The story of what has happened to Andy illustrates starkly the racism of our system of immigration laws, the interpretation of "public good", the immigration appeal system and the hypocrisy of those who uphold "family values" unless it is a black family in question.

Andy is from Jamaica. He has lived here since 1976 and was given permanent residence in 1978. He is married to Farida Ali, a British citizen. Their twins, Marcus and Jamal are about to start school and another baby is expected soon.

In April 1987, Andy and Farida were convicted of possession and supply of cannabis. Farida was freed in August 1987 and Andy, on parole, in May 1989. While he was in prison, Andy was served with a notice of deportation. An appeal against this was lost.

Andy is being punished twice for the same offence. Even though the judge at the original trial had the power to sentence Andy to deportation, he chose not to. It is the Home Office who want to inflict a double punishment. "Permanent residence" is no barrier to deportation.

At the appeal hearing, numerous witnesses from the prison and other professional services, gave evidence that Andy had "reformed" while in

prison. They spoke highly of the use he had made of prison education services, his commitment to his family and his determination to "settle down" once released.

Ironically, the Parole Board decided to release Andy on the basis that he was no danger to the public and that his freedom was for the public good as well as his own. The Home Office, however, knows better and its actions totally contradict those of the Parole Board and numerous other

witnesses, including officials from the Home Office in the prison service.

Farida has said that she will accompany Andy if he is deported to Jamaica. This would be an uprooting of the family from their network of friends and relatives. But, many witnesses have also spoken of the great loss this will be to an organisation to which Farida has committed time and energy since her own release from prison - the Partners of Prisoners' Support Group.

WHOSE GOOD?

The decision to go ahead with the deportation was made in spite of strong witnesses on behalf of Andy and Farida. It seems that the majority hearing the appeal judged Andy on the basis that he was a Rastafarian, with dreadlocks, and speaking with a strong Jamaican accent. On the basis of these impressions, they made the racist assumption that he would continue to take drugs and supply them in the face of overwhelming evidence from what they termed "experienced and impartial people".

The one black member of the tribunal offered a dissenting opinion. "In my view, the confidence of the prison/probation and other services, who must have a deeper insight of the appellant's prospects, ought not to be undermined by the scanty knowledge of him elsewhere or the tribunal's

adversarial assessment of him in the witness box..... In my view, it would be inconsistent, unfair and a lack of a broad human approach to remove this appellant from the stability of his established family home, educational and job prospects in this country to an uncertain future in Jamaica."

A campaign is now the only way to stop the deportation. This article has been written from much more detailed information supplied by the campaign. They urgently need your support. Their leaflet sums up:

"The campaign for Andy Anderson, Farida and their children is not asking anyone to condone either the use of or the dealing in drugs - whether hard or soft. However it is asking everyone to take a stand against racism. Andy

is not being deported because he dealt in cannabis. This is the excuse. He is being deported because he is black and a Rastafarian. A typical racist image is to equate black people with drugs and Andy in a real sense is a victim of this image.

For more information, contact: Andy and Farida Anti-Deportation Campaign, c/o NACRO education offices, 2 Hulme Street, Manchester M15 9A. Tel: 061-205-2720.

SONIA MALHI



CAMPAIGN

Sonia Malhi has been living in this country for the last seven years. The British government now wishes to send her back to India and refuses to take any account of the hardship she will suffer. They say she cannot appeal against the decision because of a law they passed in 1988.

Sonia first came to England in 1983. She got married in 1986. However, her marriage broke down because of her husband's violence, and she had to leave him and go and live with her sister. The following year her parents in India died so now she has no one to return to.

The campaign holds regular meetings to which everyone is invited. To find out more, contact: 101 Villa Road, Handsworth, Birmingham 19. Tel: 021-551-4518 or

021-554-4900

VICTORY FOR WOMEN'S CHOICE



3,000 people march through Cincinnati, Ohio, in defence of the legal right to abortion.

Anti-abortionists were roundly defeated in Parliament with a clear majority vote for an upper time limit of 24 weeks and the passing of three liberalising measures to the present Abortion Act.

The "pro-life" lobby, at last having government time for the debate, and after their normal emotional and aggressive campaigning, went into the voting confident of reducing the upper limit to 22 weeks or less, which would have been a real disaster for women.

Despite the complicated voting arrangements, the results were very clear: an easy rejection of all time limit changes, except to 24 weeks, and then large majorities for the liberalising exemption clauses. The vote on the final package was 335 for and 129 against.

The liberalising measures remove any upper time limit for abortion on the grounds of "grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman"; removal of any upper limit on grounds of foetal abnormality and the separation of the Infant Life Preservation Act from the abortion law which removes the threat of criminal prosecution of doctors performing late abortions.

Women demonstrated outside Westminster for two nights

with over 3,000 on voting evening, organised by the campaign for women's right to choose. Inside Westminster, the "pro-life" lobby talked about babies being murdered and sent every MP a plastic model of a 22-week foetus.

But there was more reasoned debate as well. David Steel, author of the Abortion Act of 1967, pointed out that legalising abortion saved women's lives. Before the 1967 Abortion Act, figures were little different except that abortions were illegal, unsterile and dangerous operations. In the three years from 1961 to 1963, 160 women were recorded as dying as a result of abortion and for the years 1985 to 1987, the number of deaths was four. Many speakers pointed out how rare late abortions were, with only 22 being carried out after 24 weeks, last year.

LACK OF FACILITIES

The real problem for women seeking abortions, and one not really raised in the debate, is one of lack of facilities. We now have one of the most liberal abortion laws in Europe. But it is still impossible for many women to obtain an abortion because NHS facilities are not there. Many areas limit the number they will do each week, causing waiting lists which force women into late

abortions. Some areas put their own restrictions on NHS abortions such as an upper limit of 12 weeks or no second abortions. There is much to be done to turn our law into reality, especially as the NHS faces continuing under-funding and privatisation.

We can certainly be pleased at having so roundly defeated the influential anti-abortion lobby. Their strength and influence had seemed to be increasing and, internationally, there have been some worrying successes. In the United States, some restrictions have been passed and abortion clinics are regularly harassed. It was reported last month that the Roman Catholic Church will spend up to \$5 million to hire the professional political consultants used by Ronald Reagan and a PR agency, to help the church plan and mount a new anti-abortion campaign. The goal of this is to introduce a formal amendment to ban abortion under the US constitution.

It is evident that this sort of attack is being internationalised, with groups from the US visiting Europe and attacking clinics here, too. However, the pro-choice lobby is strong in the US, too, with half a million demonstrating in Washington last year. The pro-choice lobby everywhere will take great heart from our victory here.... It's not often we have good news from Westminster!

Betty Paterson Remembered

About forty relatives and friends of the late Betty Paterson met in London on April 7th to pay tribute to her and share happy memories. Speakers included: her first husband, Peter Mauger, who has been a lifelong friend and shared political work with her since the 1930's; a representative of the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding where Betty worked as Secretary for seven years during one of the most difficult periods in China's recent history, the Cultural Revolution; comrades from the Revolutionary Communist League who spoke of her deep commitment to communist ideas, in theory and practice and her capacity for sheer hard work; also, personal friends of different nationalities who paid tribute to Betty's warm welcome, care and interest in people. Betty was a dear friend and comrade to so many and is sadly missed.

Mandy's Diary

April 10th: The rates bill for our small terraced house used to be something like £300 a year. The Poll Tax bill for our household is £812: an increase of over £500. There is no way I can pay my share of this (£406) on my small part-time salary. So I went to the local Neighbourhood Office to enquire about a rebate.

"It wouldn't matter if you were a full-time housewife", they told me. "You wouldn't get a rebate because your husband is working and you are assessed as a couple".

"What do you mean?" I said. "The bill was addressed to me as an individual and I am individually responsible for it. I thought this was the whole purpose of the Poll Tax - to make every adult responsible - or don't women count as adults?"



I've been through this before. Before we married, when we had just started living together, I made the mistake of being ill at the same time as he was unemployed. I couldn't get Sickness Benefit because I hadn't been working long enough to qualify, and when I applied for Supplementary Benefit, as it was then, they told me that I would get nothing, and they told him that they would give him an allowance for me as a dependant. I saw red. I had never been a dependant in my adult life and I wasn't going to start now. I was totally ignored. All correspondence was addressed to him. When I phoned the Social Security office, they refused to speak to me, because I wasn't a claimant. I was a non-person.



We appealed, of course, but we lost. I remember the verdict as though it were yesterday.

"The fact that you have your own job and your own bank account and separate finances is irrelevant" they said. "What matters is that you sleep together".

That was fifteen years ago and here was the same sexist mentality again. I made a final attempt to get my point across.

"How do you define a couple?" I said. "I've got my own job and my own bank account and pay my own way, so how come he's responsible for my Poll Tax bill?"

"If you don't know whether or not you're a couple, darling," he sniggered, "I'm sure I can't tell you".

April 20th: I have been reading an interview with Janice Raymond in 'Spare Rib'. She is co-founder of an international network that monitors the effects of the new reproductive and genetic technologies on women. I don't agree with all her views, but I was quite horrified by some of the things that are going on:

"As the West promotes surrogacy, it promotes cheaper versions of surrogacy, and where are these cheaper versions going to come from? They are already coming from the Third World. Women are literally being hired for a pittance to produce children for wealthy Western couples who want to adopt....And of course surrogacy is only one dimension of the different ways that women are used in this international network of reproduction and breeding. Women are also forced into selling their own children for money. A woman may be forced

to sell her child out of economic necessity because she has four or five other children to take care of. This happens all the time.

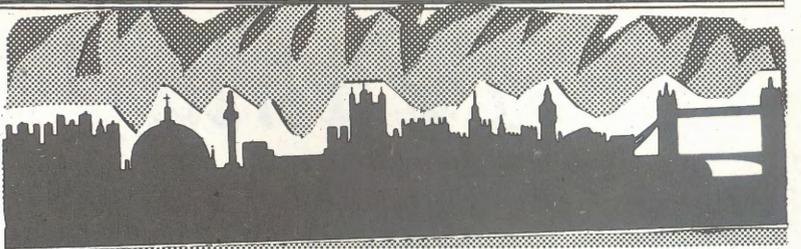
Children are also stolen. Adoption brokers scavenge refugee camps and poor neighbourhoods....There is no distinction made between poor children and abandoned

children, so if a child is on the street, it is presumed to be abandoned, and kidnapped right off the street. The child is probably out earning money for the family....

(Western people) say: "We're sure that we're giving this child a much better life than he or she could have had in a poor Third World country". There's this paternalistic notion that because a family or a mother may be poor, she can't bring up her (own) child."

April 27th: So the debate on abortion is over, and although it is in some respects a setback, it could certainly have been a lot worse. I'm sorry that the time limit was lowered from 28 to 24 weeks. Every reduction in the time limit is against the interests of women, especially the most disadvantaged and the most vulnerable women. But on the other hand two quite important gains have been made. For the first time the principle has been established that an abortion could be performed at any time if there is a risk to the mother's life or if the foetus is handicapped. Secondly, the anti-abortionists have been forced to concede that a reasonable time will elapse before they make another effort to reduce the time limit on abortions. How reasonable is reasonable? I suppose we shall have to wait and see.

31st March 1990: Oxford and Cambridge crews battle with their oars in the 136th Boat Race: Strangeways prison, Manchester, prisoners take over the building by force fired by the overcrowding and poor conditions: Back in London, police and crowds wage war at the end of a peaceful Anti-Poll Tax demonstration.....



LONDON'S BURNING

The anti-poll tax people say

CAN'T PAY WON'T PAY
 Left right left right
 march march
 we're hitting the road we're hitting the bins
 coz tomorrow the hated tax begins
 the Left the Right the Left the Right
 march march

until we become one person united
 and still they are crushing the poor
 and we are paying their wages
 and today they are paying for it
 their morality is our mortality

NO POLL TAX NO POLL TAX

A police van accelerated into the crowd
 on the south side. Outside
 the National Gallery I am raised
 to the sky my bag falls crash
 of broken glass
 WE'LL GET YOU FOR THAT
 Will someone paint this scene
 and display it for posterity?

From Lambeth five hundred and forty eight
 to Westminster with its royal estate
 Maggie Maggie Maggie
 OUT OUT OUT
 Maggie Maggie Maggie
 OUT OUT OUT
 Maggie OUT Maggie OUT
 Maggie Maggie Maggie
 OUT OUT

They are getting carried away
 I am carried away split
 into three clenched fists
 one on each arm the third has my feet
 YOU FUCKING BITCH she says
 and they offer me struggling
 to the god of law

Outside No.10 Downing Street
 the crowd sit down in protest
 against this mockery
 of democracy that by law
 helps the rich to crush the poor
 Yes, this poll tax transcends politics
 the Left the Right oppose its threat
 but it's illegal to sit in the street
 in peaceful protest YOU'RE UNDER ARREST
 sticks and bottles are flying
 the horses are charging
 and London's burning London's burning

but I fall free
 again they grab somehow
 evidence is on my side
 I find the words to state my defence
 my case is dropped onto the paving slab

London's burning London's burning

Maggie Maggie Maggie
 OUT OUT

Outside in St Martins lane
 someone sets fire to a Jaguar
 flames rage into complacent sky

London's burning London's burning

Community charge community attack
 community charge community attack
 banners are banned riot shields
 are wielded as weapons and they hit hard
 and we fall down get up fall down get up
 because we are anti poll tax
 and our chant is still intact

Outside Tower Records in Regent Street
 someone breaks the law it makes
 a smashing sound and a beautiful pattern
 it happens again and again and
 every shop window is a spider's web

London's burning London's burning

Maggie Maggie Maggie
 OUT OUT OUT
 Maggie Maggie Maggie
 OUT OUT

Outside the South African Embassy
 someone sets fire to the adjacent building
 the smoke smells good. It should have been
 the other building smouldering

Outside in Westminster
 Out Out
 outside in Westminster
 OUT OUT
 Outside in Westminster

London's burning
 London's burning
 London's burning
 London's burning

London's burning London's burning
 And we are told to move back by eyes of hatred
 and we hate back

(to fade)

and we are pushed back
 hard as Hillsborough

1st April 1990
 Patience Agbabi



ON ILKLEY MOOR B'AHT TAX

Throughout Yorkshire, April saw a growing number of protests against the poll tax, which officially became payable from April Fools Day. Marches accompanied by the public burning of poll tax bills took place in Leeds, York and Halifax, which had its biggest demonstration for years. In many smaller towns, public meetings have been held and the response to them has been totally amazing. In Pudsey, nearly 400 turned up to the first meeting, while at nearby Morley, the largest public rally the town had ever seen took place. There, a motion to support a mass campaign of non-payment was backed by around 600 votes to 2. In Harrogate, two young hairdressers organised a march. They would have been pleased if a hundred people had turned up. They were more than pleased by what happened. **Twenty times that number marched!**

TEACHERS AND SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Opposition is also surfacing in many other ways. In early March, on the day Bradford Tory Council met to set the poll tax figures, the teachers held a one-day strike. At the end of April, over 400 angry school governors confronted the city education bosses over the new budgets which will mean cutting back on teachers' jobs.

GRASSROOTS ORGANISATIONS

Equally important to this outright show of public opposition has been the steady growth of organisation at the grassroots level. For example, the Anti-Poll Tax Federation in Leeds has at least 34 support groups around the city, many of which are in the process of building up organisation of street contacts. And at the big public rally held on April 28th, it was revealed that anti-poll tax groups were being set up in a number of workplaces, particularly among local authority workers.

Running right through the campaign so far in Yorkshire has been the theme that **only a mass campaign of non-payment will stop the poll tax.** Thousands of people in the region just cannot afford to pay. Slowly, they are coming to accept that the only hope of success is bound up with a campaign of mass non-payment on a huge scale, for: **"They can't put us all in jail. They're full, already."**

THE LABOUR PARTY

Against this background, it is a bit of an eye-opener to observe the role of the Labour

Party on this major issue. Officially, their view is that because it is law, and because the law has to be obeyed, then no matter how much you may disagree, the poll tax must be paid. Their view is, not surprisingly, that the only way forward is to wait for the election of a Labour government who will proceed to repeal the existing legislation. An example of this view is found in the election address of the present Labour councillor for the Holbeck ward in Leeds: **"Until there is a change of government, we are stuck with this Tory tax, which is grossly unfair on us all."**

but he also writes: **"Unless the Tory tax is collected, we cannot pay for teachers."**

HELPING LABOUR

As a result, the Labour Party is playing little part in the growing mass campaign. It is however hoping to pick up votes in the local election. In this they appear to be getting some help from some groups on the left. At the Leeds demonstration, a few people seemed to be more keen to sell 'Socialist Worker' with its front page headlines 'Vote Labour...but prepare to struggle' than to give out leaflets about the poll tax campaign.



The rebate system is a con. To qualify for a rebate you have to be on or near the same level as income support. For example, a single person under 25 with a poll tax bill of £300, earning as little as £57.53 a week, will have to pay the full poll tax; a couple with two children will BOTH pay the full amount if their joint income is more than £135 a week. No-one will get a 100% rebate - unemployed, students and pensioners will all have to pay at least 20% of their poll tax.

Another view circulating in Labour Party circles is that denying the local authorities their income will mean that council services will be destroyed long before the government is brought down. In a recent interview, the Labour leader of Leeds City Council, could only see a cataclysmic vision of bankrupt councils, services being cut, street lights going out and council jobs lost. **"Supposing there is a successful campaign to deny the council their income, it is hard to know how it would achieve the downfall of Thatcher except at the expense of our own communities and their services!"**

A similar view is found in the election address from the Labour candidate to voters in Shipley West ward in Bradford. He does not like the poll tax

THE LEEDS RALLY

Following the march, a rally was held on the steps of the Leeds Civic Theatre. George Bolton, President of the Scottish TUC, referred to some experiences from Scotland and also how the government were popularising the concepts of greed and avarice, but describing them as self-reliance.

But it was the last speaker from the Bramley Anti-Poll Tax Federation who really struck a chord with the crowd when she declared: **"This far and no further. Today is not the end: it is only the beginning of the end. We are not just running this campaign until polling day. Keep it up until we have won."**

THE SILENCED

Spring 1990 has seen a major revolt at Strangeways prison, like Spring 1989 saw Risley remand centre erupt. Strangeways provided the spark for disturbances at twenty custodial units up and down the country, as prisoners took desperate measures to protest against their inhuman conditions.

Paul Taylor, the prisoner who started the fightback at Strangeways, shouted from the roof: "At no time did anyone have any wilful intention that it should develop into a riot." He said the reason for the action was the brutality of prisoner officers. Other complaints were low prison "wages", control of prisoners by drugs and negligent doctors.

Bill Gould, an ex-prisoner who has spent five terms in Strangeways, told the press that some prison staff use drugs as a "liquid cosh". He said: "The prison should have been burned down years ago. It is a barbaric regime ruled by brutality and drug abuse."

The editor of the 'Manchester Evening News', Michael Unger, who went inside Strangeways as an observer, listed the prisoners' grievances, including mental and physical brutality, poor food, cramped conditions and the misuse of drugs in controlling prisoners. A prisoner told Mr Unger: "We are doing all this because of the oppression in the prison. No one is listening to us, which makes the situation a lot more tense."

AN OFFENCE AGAINST DECENCY

Strangeways is a local prison, housing both convicted and unconvicted men. Under a "reforming" governor, it had recently been getting a good press. Judge Tumin, Chief Inspector of Prisons, in his report published in the week before the riot, waxed lyrical about "a delightful appearance

of the wing ironwork, especially the spirals, cast iron landing stairs seen silhouetted against the gable windows." While the prisoners enjoyed these sights, they also suffered conditions described in Tumin's annual report: "Cell windows and outside walls will be smeared with excrement and parcels of faeces wrapped in newspaper or clothing will litter the ground outside. In prison after prison, men are still having to exist in conditions which offend against any reasonable standard of decency."



Strangeways is, like most British prisons, extremely overcrowded. In the two months before the riot, numbers increased by 200 to 1,647. In Victorian times, when it was built, the prison housed 1,000. Prisoners are now kept three to a cell. Because work has been unavailable, they are locked up 23 hours a day in tiny cells. For a toilet, they have a loathsome stinking bucket which they must use in front of the others and empty only once a day. Thus the shit smeared on the windows and thrown in parcels to the ground.

Even the government has had to pay lip-service to reducing numbers in prisons in Britain, which has the highest prison population per head in Europe (including Turkey). The new White Paper stresses non-custodial alternatives. But this is talk - Tories talk of persuading judges and magistrates not to be so tough. Labour talk of a "sentencing council" to curb their worst excesses.

DEATH IN PRISON

So long as thousands are dumped in jail by the courts, deprived of liberty and away from the public gaze, the outrages against them will continue. Brutality by officers is no myth. The systematic violence against the Birmingham Six in Winson Green is well documented. The recent Brixton example of the death of Germain Alexander provides contemporary proof. Alexander was the ninth prisoner to die in Brixton within a year. He was on remand and was known to suffer from a psychiatric condition.

Alexander died from heart failure, but he had 80 marks on his body, and two front teeth were found embedded in the back of his throat. Another prisoner testified at the inquest that he had seen Alexander face down on the landing, handcuffed to the railings. An officer was saying: "Shut your fucking face or I'll do you." Alexander said: "The needle, the needle, it hurts." Another officer said: "I can't get his fucking knees down." His colleague replied: "Then jump on them." which the officer did.

PEOPLE REBEL



RULE 43 PRISONERS

In reporting the Strangeways affair, the press have homed in on allegations of brutality by prisoners, especially to sex offenders, isolated at their own request (under rule 43). The press exulted in sensational reports of murders by prisoners, although, in the end, it emerged that there was only one death.

There is no doubt that sex offenders are victimised by other prisoners. But this is mainly the result of the inhumanity of the system and is encouraged by many warders.

A researcher for the Prison Reform Trust, Adam Sampson, wrote: "It is evident that the Home Office accepts the persecution of vulnerable prisoners. It gives other prisoners a perfect, almost legitimate, target. The nonces become scapegoats,

hidden away in a corner of the prison as a focus of inmate discontent. Persecution goes on all the time, sometimes with the connivance or active participation of prison officers."

There is no need for Rule 43, if the conditions of prison life are changed, as experiments at places like Grendon Underwood have shown.

The end of the Strangeways siege will result in warden persecution of the hard core of the uprising. The link between this violence and the violence against Rule 43 prisoners was shown during the siege when warders shouted "Beast, beast" at Paul Taylor, trying to turn the other prisoners against him. "Beast" is the prison slang for sex offender, and Taylor has a conviction for rape, an offence he has always denied.

SPECIAL TREATMENT

What will happen now is summed up by Sampson: "The regime will be of the most restricted order. Eventually there will be some efforts made to re-integrate them, or to deal with them in a special unit, such as Hull. In the past, there have been many allegations of physical mistreatment of prisoners in the aftermath of a riot, and the Strangeways prisoners must be fearful of their future."

The Home Secretary has responded by threatening harsher criminal penalties against prison rebels. He fails to approach the real problem - imprisonment itself. If he wanted, he could reduce numbers overnight by using his power of "executive release" of all non-violent prisoners six months early. He welcomed recent figures, showing the first drop in numbers since 1973. The same figures projected an increase by 1998 of 13,000 to 14,000!

To imprison thousands of people, especially in the foul conditions of British jails, is barbaric. Most of the "crimes" are against property and arise from poverty and inequality. Most violent offenders are ill and require help. Very few need to be locked away and none benefit from it.

Until the state realises this, prison revolts will increase. Paul Taylor may not be a great leader and hero. But he fought back. The riots have not addressed all the problems, particularly the vastly disproportionate number of black prisoners and the special oppression they face through racism.

But the prisoners' struggle against their oppression must be supported. In time their leaders and organisation will emerge to force real changes in the system.

It is important to understand that the prisoners who kept up the fight at Strangeways were not those who had nothing to lose.

Only one, Alan Lord, was a lifer. Glyn Williams was due to be released in the week before the siege ended. Darren Jones was on remand for joy-riding. John Murray was also on remand. Martin Brian was serving three years. Paul Taylor was serving three and a half years. Mark Williams was serving nine years.

The reason why they rebel is because there is no other way for their voices to be heard. Prisoners cannot vote. They cannot give press conferences or call Nick Ross. They are the silenced people.

Govind Kelkar: WOMEN AND RELIGION



This is the third section of an interview with Govind Kelkar, woman activist from India. The first two sections were carried in previous issues of 'Class Struggle':

The role of religion in India is very important, in the sense that one clear distinct trend in this election was the fundamentalist forces. But important does not mean positive. There have been serious Hindu/Moslem and Hindu/Sikh riots, which were actually an attack on the minorities from the majority communities.

And what is the role of religion? Again, the Marxist-Leninist groups are divided on this issue. You have to differentiate between the Hindu fundamentalists, because it is the majority community, and the minorities which are Sikhs and Moslems, who tend to assert their religion as a measure of their identity.

Women's groups and socialist feminists are very anti-religion - any religion anywhere. They think in any case that religion is a very limiting factor with regard to the position of women. Even when the minorities strongly put forward their religious framework, it always impinges on women in an adverse way e.g. when the Sikhs tried to revise their personal law, they said that a man has the right to marry his brother's widow, because this was provided in their tradition, but the women opposed it, because there has to be the

consent of the woman also.

And there was a big debate two or three years ago among Moslem women. The right of maintenance was denied Moslem women. It was not provided according to Moslem law. At that time, the women realised that if you revise these things it tends to affect women adversely because it is actually the men who are deciding for the women. Moslem priests, Sikh priests, and of course the Hindus, are the worst kind of oppressive forces with regard to women. So women have been saying that any kind of religious or cultural fundamentalism is oppressive for them, and they are fighting against it unitedly, women from all religions. This does not mean that there are not differences among women, but no trend in the women's movement has supported religious or cultural revivalism at any stage.

Among the Marxist-Leninists, there has been a debate whether religion is a false consciousness or not. They have been ambivalent. They have attacked the religion or cultural fundamentalism of Hindus, but they have not really attacked it among Sikhs and Moslems, treating it as part of the assertion of their identity as a community.

Dalits (Untouchables) win seats

There is a welcome trend among Dalits: they have won some Parliamentary seats in the elections. There are two Dalit parties: one is the Republican Party. The other Dalit party has won three seats. This is very encouraging that they are asserting their rights. In the district around Bombay in February this year, there was a split in the Republican Party, on the issue of whether they should support the Congress Party (the party of Indira Gandhi) or the right wing party. The new government which has come is the National Front and it has the support of the two right wing parties, besides having support from the left also. It is a minority government. One has to face this fact. If you support Congress candidates, that means you are supporting the former rule which was very oppressive and very fundamentalist. There are only these two groups. If

you support the right wing parties, then you are supporting Hindu chauvinism, so both are bad and what do you do in this situation? So one group has decided to support the right wing party because they want to support the National Front government, and the other group has decided to support the Congress candidate. They think that even in this kind of situation the Congress party was better than both the right wing parties combined, because they have already got some seats, and the idea is to check the right wing forces. Could they stay out of the election? Well, some people do that, e.g. when I was in Delhi, these two candidates were there and I decided not to vote. But a lot of people questioned me as they would question others, also. They say that by staying outside the parliamentary system and the elections, how are you going to change the state?

Because you are not really a force to change the state.

And now there has been a change in the character of the government. This is also a bourgeois government. It will not bring any fundamental change but it has provided some freedom. Delhi and other cities are not so militarised. People do not feel so repressed, either the indigenous people or the people who were opposing the state. Everyone was being controlled at the point of a gun. So the question is whether if you do not support this kind of change in the new government, you are planning to bring back the old system which was much more repressive. It is a complex thing. It is important to take decisions. You cannot easily decide to stay outside the elections. As a large political group you have to decide which forces you are going to support.

book
review

"We Japanese women play a double role: we are discriminated against in Japanese society and, at the same time, we benefit from the exploitation of other Asian women.... We are both victims and oppressors."

Yayori Matsui: WOMEN'S ASIA

In the introduction to her book, 'Women's Asia', Yayori Matsui explains her own background as a journalist in Japan, following experience of racism as a student in the West and her development as a feminist and activist with Asian women's groups.

As a correspondent based in Singapore, Yayori visited 17 countries in Asia. While pointing to their rich diversity of culture, tradition and religion, she picks out what they have in common: "...they are all part of the Third World and have experienced severe poverty as their economies have been dominated by those of developed countries and the superpowers... their people experience the same grinding poverty."

The burden of this poverty falls most heavily on women, and this is the subject of this book. Yayori describes the three-fold oppression that Asian women face as: 1. economic, political and military control by the developed countries of the North (including Japan) 2. as working class women oppressed by their own ruling class 3. discrimination due to patriarchal traditions.

But the book is also about the organisation and resistance of women: "During that decade (1980's:Ed.) oppression and discrimination against Asian women had become more serious but, at the same time, more women were becoming aware of their situations, and... in most Asian countries, new

women's movements were organised to work for change."

Separate chapters cover different parts of Asia or different aspects of women's lives: Bangladesh; women in modern factories; migrant women working as domestic workers in Singapore and Hong Kong; the sexual exploitation of women in Thailand and the Philippines; dowry and rape; religion, particularly in the Indian sub-continent; women in Burma, in the Philippines and in Korea.

This is not a book on political economy or of detailed analysis but of good committed journalism. A reader with a deep knowledge of any of these countries will no doubt find the information quite superficial. But as an introduction to a big subject, the book is lively, well written and translated. What

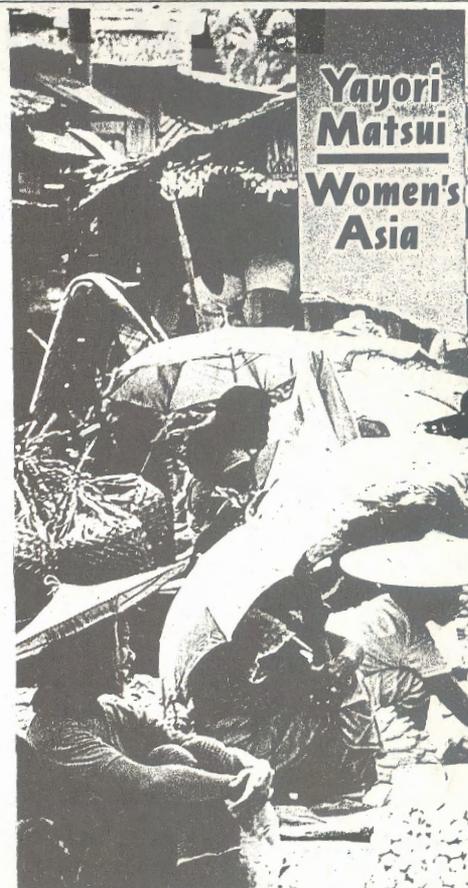
is remarkable about it is that it is not just an account of suffering victims but of how women in each country are organising to bring about change and making links with each other as well as with women around the world.

For example, the chapter on sexual exploitation tells of the horrific treatment of women as prostitutes, including girls as young as eight or nine. But it also tells of Chantawipa Apisuk, founder of the Empower group, which brings women working in the sex industry together to try and improve their situation. Among other activities they publish their own newspaper.

The chapter on factory work tells of women working on Japanese assembly lines in Malaysia and the Philippines: "The situation of women workers in Malaysia is very similar to that of women workers in Japan itself. They are given the meanest jobs and are never given an opportunity to develop a career. Because they are cheap labour, they are expendable, and there is a high turnover as they themselves choose to quit."

The chapter also relates the story of the famous strike in the Philippines Bataan processing zone when about 15,000 workers, mainly women, went on strike.

The chapter on Burma is of particular interest in that women here have more equality than elsewhere in Asia. The position of women in Burma shows how this varies from



country to country, and from time to time. No doubt the fact that Burma was never fully colonised and is still relatively independent, if poor, is one important factor.

WOMEN FORGING A FUTURE

The concluding chapter 'Women Forging a Future', summarises the different women's groups and their development. While covering groups in most of Asia, it points to GABRIELA in the Philippines as the most advanced. Its basic principles were spelt out in a report prepared for a conference: "The report clearly defines the strategy of a women's movement for liberation from such oppression as requiring three principles: it must be rooted in the people, based on feminism and inseparable from national liberation and class struggle."

While there is bound to be debate and disagreement about some of the analysis in this book, it is a valuable introduction to this subject, full of rich details. It is particularly important not just as description but as an attempt to see the relationship between class and sex exploitation in Japan with Japan's exploitation of Asia. Someone should write a similar book making British imperialism the starting point. **Women's Asia** is published by Zed Press, and available from New Era Books, price £7.95.

EASTERN BLOC

In less than a year, the old regimes in most of the states in Eastern Europe which formerly styled themselves 'socialist' have been swept away. Except for Albania, the remainder are in crisis.

Since the mid-60s, Marxist-Leninist organisations have maintained that the countries of the Soviet bloc were not socialist. For years we maintained that what existed there was a form of capitalism, in which workers and farmers were exploited by a bureaucratic capitalist class which had taken shape at the top of the state and 'communist' party machinery.

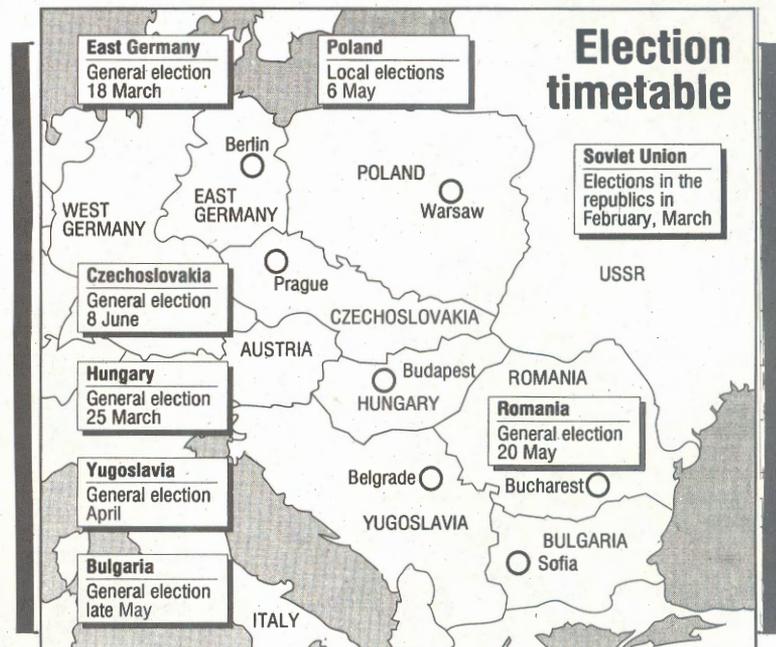
While the passing of the old order is basically positive, because it opens up a space in which genuinely progressive trends can emerge and develop, there is a down side to these developments which has to be taken into account too.

The aid given by the states of Eastern Europe to Third World liberation movements and states in the past was generally part of the Soviet Union's struggle for influence with the Western imperialist states, even if it was via a subordinate state. It was often conditional, and given to build up certain forces in the Third World states and liberation movements against others. Aid was given to some liberation movements but not others, depending on the state of the Soviet Union's relationship with those they were fighting, or upon their readiness to accommodate themselves to Soviet policies. Nevertheless, there were genuine liberation movements which gained from such help, including the now victorious SWAPO in Namibia, and the PLO.

Others who received valuable assistance were countries seeking to develop themselves free from exploitation, like Nicaragua or Angola. Such movements and countries now feel very vulnerable. They feel they have lost the support of a force which could help them tackle powerful enemies backed by the USA and other western imperialist powers, whose strength remains great.

While people in Eastern Europe are generally happy to have got rid of the old regimes, they are not sure what they want in their place. Multi-party democracy and a free press are fine, but the problems of feeding, clothing and housing millions of people remain, and there are quite a range of opinions on how to make a better society, and indeed on what would constitute a better society.

by David Evans continuing impact of the changes



Those who see western capitalism as the model to follow have started off in a strong position. Some are dazzled by images of western wealth; others see themselves as quickly moving into business, managerial and high-powered intellectual and political roles such as exist in the west.

But many, particularly among the working class, are asking questions about where their countries are going. Workers in Poland have held strikes and demonstrations to protest against the unemployment which has arisen from official efforts to 'rationalise' the economy, to comply with the wishes of the World Bank and western countries to which the Polish Government looks for aid. Western experts reckon Poland will need to go through 10% unemployment before its economy can be got into shape. Some of the social services in Eastern Europe compare favourably with those in the west, and those portions of the populations of Eastern Europe who need them most do not want to lose them, e.g. East Germany's provisions for working women with children are superior to those of any EEC member state.

STRENGTHENING OF THE FAR RIGHT

The failures of the old regimes, and the corruption of state officials such as Honnecker in East Germany, are widely seen as having finally discredited socialism. An ugly right-wing nationalistic trend has developed in some places: anti-semitic in Poland

and Hungary, anti-Hungarian in Romania, anti-Turk in Bulgaria, and Neo-Nazi in East Germany. But these developments have had a much wider impact, feeding the far right in the west, as well as fundamentalist religious tendencies of all kinds globally, eager to assert that humanity can only find its salvation in a God, not through its own endeavours.

REBUILD AND ADVANCE!

Marxism-Leninism has undergone many distortions and misrepresentations at the hands of those who supposedly stood for socialism, as well as those of its avowed enemies. It would be easy today to run for cover, find refuge in alternative lifestyles and specific narrow-issue popular movements and ditch socialism. But that will not do any good. Capitalism remains a cannibalistic system under which most of the world lives in poverty, which cuts short the lives of hundreds of millions, destroys the environment, and incorporates within its structure the profits of drug-dealing and arms sales. We must learn from experiences such as those in Eastern Europe, with both positive and negative sides being recognised, and we must incorporate those lessons into the theory and practice of tomorrow's socialism. But the debris that has to be cleared away is such that what needs to be undertaken now in many lands is the revitalisation of the communist ideal.

SF Belfast conference

"The reality, which the British accept but which they cannot come to terms with, is that there is no British solution and there is no partitionist solution to the problem of British interference in Irish affairs."

"The Republican struggle is a direct response to the British occupation of our country. It is not going to go away. Ten years ago, Thatcher declared, in the run-up to the historic hunger-strikes, that the IRA was playing its last card. Ten years later, the struggle remains as strong and determined as every. It will outlive Thatcher. It will last just as long as the British occupation of our country lasts. The British have accepted this reality, yet they refuse to accept its consequences."

These words are taken from Gerry Adams' speech to over 300 delegates at a special Sinn Fein conference held recently in Belfast. Its purpose was to examine the present position of the struggle for national self-determination and the role of the Republican movement in taking forward that struggle.

THE PRIMACY OF POLITICS

One theme running through the day conference was of 'the primacy of politics' and the need to broaden Republican politics and activity in order to build a struggle which will include all who have a common interest in ridding Ireland of imperialism.

In the first major debate, Sinn Fein General Secretary, Tom Hartley, dealt with the party's development since its re-organisation in 1976/77, a process that was accelerated by the hunger strikes and the mass mobilisation which accompanied the H-Block and Armagh protest campaigns.

COMMON SELF-INTEREST

Referring to the Hillsborough Agreement, Tom Hartley described the current strategy of the British state's attempts to defeat the Republican struggle as resting on the "common self-interest and collusion between five main elements": the British government, the leadership of the churches, the SDLP, the Dublin government and elements of the media.

Reviewing the development of the Republican struggle in the 1980's and paying attention to



SPECIAL INTERNAL PARTY CONFERENCE REPORT

the danger of Sinn Fein failing to break out of the narrow band of political activity into which it had become locked, led Tom Hartley to his final remarks: "The first step in reversing the limitations set upon the organisation by censorship and the new array of legislation aimed at isolating and marginalising Republicans was an immediate programme of work blending internal party activity with external political activity". He



© Signing of Hillsborough Agreement

concluded: "It is important for everyone to realise that internal party building is dependent upon external political activity."

STRATEGY FOR VICTORY

Derry City Councillor, Mitchel McLaughlin, introduced the second debate entitled 'Confronting British power: the Movement's role in building a Strategy for Victory'. Mitchel McLaughlin began by talking about the effect that a vibrant Republican strategy with clear popular involvement would have

on international public opinion and on the British ability to maintain their presence in Ireland. Then he spoke about the main components of Republican activity: armed struggle, electoral strategy, street politics, publicity and broad front activity.

He described the armed struggle as a political option that anti-imperialists and Republicans may or may not use and to be considered only in terms of achieving the political aims of the national liberation struggle: "The British government continues to act against the wishes of the majority of Irish people by a commitment to maintain partition and at present shows no indication of withdrawing its political, military and economic interests from the Six Counties. While this remains the British position, then, regrettably, so will the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland find armed struggle a valid option."

In a wide-ranging address, Mitchel McLaughlin also spoke of the organisation's failures, one of which he described as "allowing Republican publicity to be dominated by issues of repression whilst either ignoring social and economic issues or, at best, working on a reactive agenda determined by our opponents."

The speaker then proceeded to list priorities for the coming year as developing the party organisation and improving the publicity output to overcome the effects of censorship and developing longer (two to five year) programmes of work which stress external activities.

"What is required now, given the major advances in the politics of the struggle, is a clear and rational political programme which is designed to bring generations of sacrifice and struggle to a successful conclusion."

(Information on this conference was taken from 'An Phoblacht/Republican News'.)

In their speculation about this conference, some are asking are we reconsidering our support for armed struggle. Our answer is clear. We want an end to the armed struggle. But it must be an honourable end. A British commitment to a programme of withdrawal will bring an honourable settlement for everyone. Until then the struggle which has many different elements, all equally important, will continue.

Concluding comments to the conference from Martin McGuinness.

by Joe Steel

Why we remember them

The significance of the 1981 Hunger Strikes

The five demands:

1. The right to wear their own clothes.
2. The right not to do prison work.
3. The right of free association within their own prison confine.
4. The right to educational and recreational activities.
5. The right to full sentence remission for good conduct.

Although the Hunger Strike failed to win those demands, it would be wrong to see it simply as a defeat.

It won wide support worldwide and exposed the true nature of the British occupation. It destroyed once and for all the British lie that the Republican movement had no support amongst the people. It once again raised the question of national liberation within the 26-county neo-colony (Eire).

THE KEY QUESTION -

IRISH NATIONAL LIBERATION

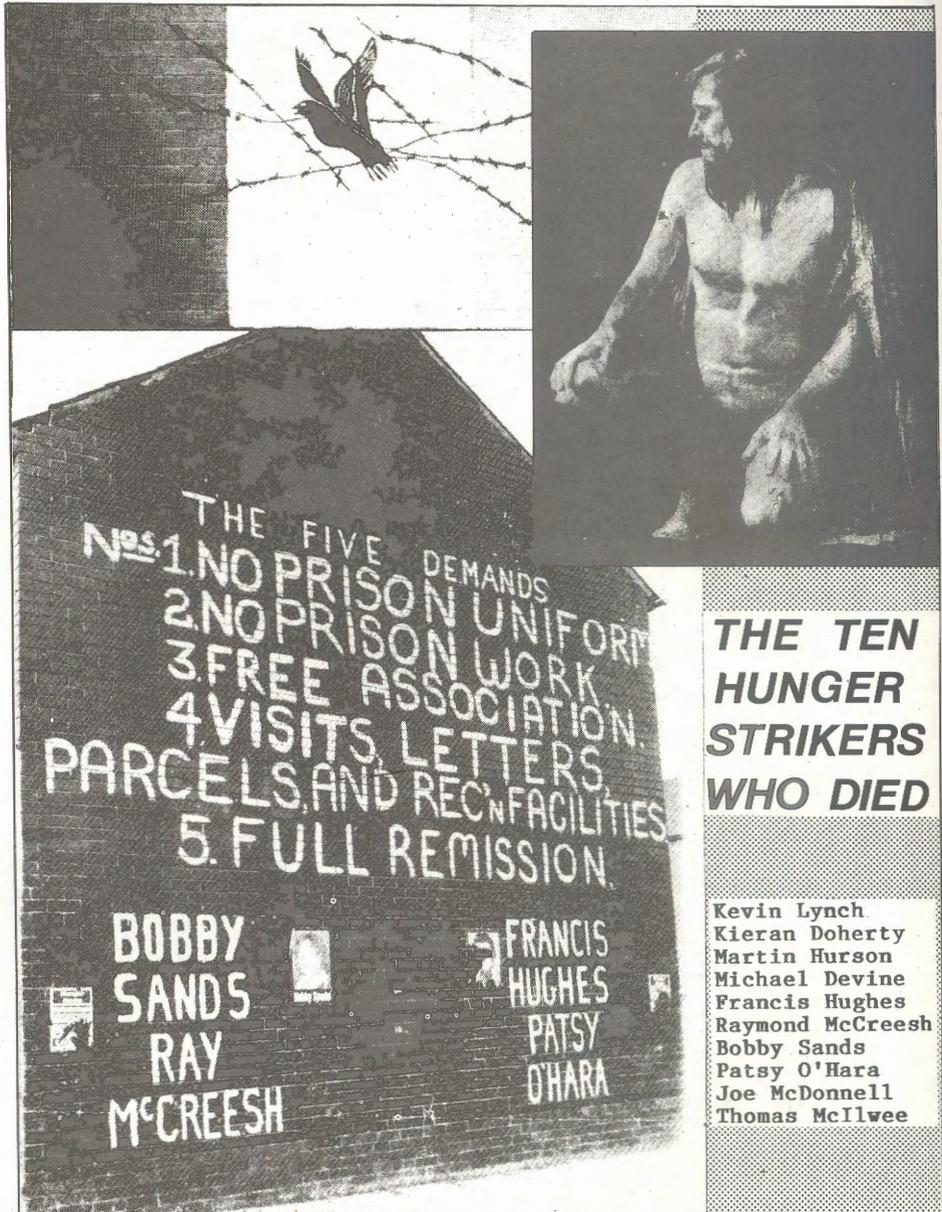
The Irish people have struggled for centuries to rid themselves of British domination. They, like any nation, have the right to decide their own future, free of foreign interference. Theirs is a national liberation struggle.

British imperialism has never left one of its colonies voluntarily. Peaceful protest in Ireland has always been met by British oppression and violence. British occupation is the cause of all violence in Ireland. Opposition to British occupation by whatever means is not a criminal act but a political one.

In the 1918 All-Ireland general election Sinn Fein won 73 out of 105 seats: a clear mandate for an independent Irish republic.

The British response was to send in the troops and ban the Dail Eirann (new Irish assembly). Once again the Irish people were forced to use armed struggle to try and uphold that democratic vote. The British army was unable to defeat the IRA, but in 1921 the struggle was sold out by elements in the Republican leadership and the artificial state of Ulster was created.

Historically Ulster is nine



THE TEN HUNGER STRIKERS WHO DIED

Kevin Lynch
Kieran Doherty
Martin Hurson
Michael Devine
Francis Hughes
Raymond McCreesh
Bobby Sands
Patsy O'Hara
Joe McDonnell
Thomas McIlwee

counties. The six-county British creation gave the pro-British unionists an artificial majority (they are only 20% of the Irish population) and enabled Britain to divide and rule Ireland as a whole.

The partitioning of Ireland and creating an artificial state (which deprived half a million nationalists of their basic democratic and civil rights) is the central issue that determined the situation facing the Irish people.

Peaceful struggles by the nationalist minority failed to reform this British creation. In 1968, the protests

developed into a mass movement for civil rights. Once again, these peaceful protests were met with force, and in 1969 the Labour government sent in the British army. The Irish people were left with no option but to turn to the IRA to defend them. The latest phase of the national liberation struggle had begun.

The nationalist people were to be faced with massive oppression: internment without trial, no-jury courts. Thousands were arrested and imprisoned.

continued over

THE HUNGER STRIKES

In 1972, a combination of a hunger strike and mass action by the Republican movement had won the five demands, establishing that Republican prisoners were political prisoners, not criminals.

In 1976, the Labour government opened the notorious H-block prisons at Long Kesh and took away the political status of Republican prisoners. They tried to criminalise the Republican struggle.

H-Block prisoners began their blanket protest to regain political status. Naked except for a blanket, and denied the right to remove urine and faeces from their cells, they carried on their protest until October 1980.

On 27th October, 1980 seven men (later joined by three women from Armagh gaol) began a hunger strike. This was called off on 4th December 1980 with Sean McKenna close to death. They thought they had won the five demands. But they were tricked by the then Tory government.

On 1st March 1981, a new hunger strike began. Bobby Sands refused food. He was joined by other H-Block prisoners. Ten of these were to die, murdered by the British state. This time they staggered the start of their protest, to maximise the effect.

During the protest Bobby Sands became MP for Fermanagh/South Tyrone, winning over 30,000 votes. H-Block/hunger strike candidates won 42,798 votes in elections in Eire. After Bobby Sands' death, on 5th May 1981, his election agent, Owen Carron, retained the seat with an increased majority.

Throughout the world, there was massive support for the hunger strikers.

On 10th August 1981, Micky Devine became the tenth and last hunger striker to give his life in the struggle for political status.

On 3rd October 1981, the hunger strike was formally ended.

Once again, when faced with the just demands of the Irish people for self-determination, British imperialism's answer was brutality and murder. What British imperialism has failed to grasp is that it cannot win.

The ten dead hunger strikers gave their lives knowing that their struggle weakened British imperialism, and hastened the day that Ireland and its people will be free.

Commemoration DAY

1.00pm
Sunday May 13th
Conway Hall
Red Lion Square
London WC1
Holborn tube

James Connolly executed by the British Government 1916



Speakers include:

- Dodie McGuinness
Sinn Fein Councillor
- The Reverend Kiyul Chung
General Secretary of the International Committee for Peace and Re-unification of Korea
- Jeremy Corbyn MP
- Txema Montero MEP
- Herri Batasuna
- Basque National Liberation Movement



Bobby Sands MP
died on Hunger Strike 1981

EVENTS

IRISH HUNGER-STRIKE COMMEMORATION MARCH & RALLY

BIRMINGHAM

SAT MAY 12TH

ASSEMBLE 12 midday
SPARKHILL PARK stratford rd
RALLY at CENTRAL EXHIBITION HALL

Strategies for Revolution in India

Class, Caste, and National Identity

PUBLIC MEETING 7.00 PM, Thursday 3rd May 1990
Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1

(opposite Euston station)
SPEAKER: Dev Nathan

Dev Nathan is a revolutionary activist and writer based in Bihar. He is the leader of a section of the Communist Party of India Marxist Leninist

Details: SOUTH ASIA SOLIDARITY GROUP, BM BOX 3974, London WC1 N 3XX.
Tel 01 267 0212

march MAY 26

the upington 14
must go free
they are innocent

The Upington 14 are:

- Kenneth Khumalo (33) • Wellington Masiza (27)
- Eric Gubula (30) • Zonga Mokgatle (32)
- David Lekhanyane (25) • Andrew Lekhanyane (29)
- Myner Bovi (29) • Booi Japhta (24) • Xolile Yona (25)
- Evelina de Bruin • Gideon Madlongolwane (60)
- Zuko Xabendlini (32) • Justice Bekebeke
- Albert Tywilli (27)

For further information about the campaign phone

City AA 01-837 6050

ASSEMBLE 12 noon
HIGHBURY FIELDS
ISLINGTON (nearest tube Highbury)
MARCH TO SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY TRAFALGAR SQ.
FOR RALLY

Speakers include:
RELATIVE OF ONE OF THE UPINGTON 14

PAC
KEITH VAZ MP
JEREMY CORBYN MP
Rt Rev WILFRED WOODS, Bishop of Croydon
BROADWATER FARM DEFENCE CAMPAIGN
FRANK CRITCHLOW Mangrove Community Association
RCG, WRP,
ROSS GALBRAITH
Granby Plastics dispute Sacked for opposing apartheid
City AA
+ BATUCADA MANDELA!

WHERE WE STAND

The first May Day march was held in Chicago in 1886, with a general strike and march of 80,000 people demanding the eight-hour working day. It was a time of growing radicalism and organisation among the working class, both men and women workers, with the May Day march being followed two days later, by a march of women workers, labelled "shouting Amazons" by the press.

It was not just a time of economic militancy. Revolutionaries of different kinds were influential among the working class and were called "Commune-ists" because of their support for the ideas of the Paris Commune.

In Britain too, the late nineteenth century was a time of growing militancy, with different forms of socialist movements flourishing. But it was not in the industrial countries of Europe or the USA, as had been expected, that the first socialist state was built, but in Russia, the weakest link in the imperialist chain.

The capitalist system in Britain had developed into a fully developed imperialist system by the end of the nineteenth century. The ruling class managed to extend and increase its domination on a world scale and, at the same time, to stave off revolution at home.

Throughout the years, revolutionary working class traditions have been kept alive, within Britain and other imperialist countries, marked particularly on May Day. But communists have looked to the Soviet Union in the 1920's and 1930's, and after 1949, especially to China, for examples of socialist societies in practice.

Throughout the twentieth century, and particularly since the Second World War, as a result of the development of imperialism as a world system, the tide of revolution has been strongest in the Third World. It has been the

oppressed peoples of the Third World who have dealt the heaviest blows to imperialism. In the era of imperialism we cannot talk about proletarian revolution in the imperialist countries without linking this in a profound way with the liberation movements of workers and peasants of the Third World.

There are those who say that 1989 saw the "end of history", by which they seem to mean the historic defeat of socialism, communist ideas

and Marxism-Leninism. There are also many who used to call themselves communists, who are dropping the name, while openly rejecting the ideas of Marxism-Leninism. In doing so, they are taking on board the ideas of individual freedom and choice at a time when anti-working class politics are being preached and practised more openly than for many years and when millions in the Third World face total impoverishment at the hands of imperialism.

We stand by the basic ideas of communism as being as relevant today as ever. Of course, mistakes have been made. We have to analyse and learn from them. But compared with the long history of bourgeois rule, there is still little historical experience of building a socialist society. The great historical experiences of the Soviet Union, China and other countries are still important and an inspiration to us.

May Day 1990 marks a time when class and national contradictions are growing sharper in Britain, as around the world. As in the 19th century, women are one of the main forces fighting for change. The need to fight for socialism is greater than ever. The only class that can take the struggle through to the end is the working class. As in 1886, we need to fight not only for the short-term interests of the class, but also its long-term interest in the complete overthrow of the imperialist system itself.

PUBLICATIONS

APPEAL FOR FUNDS

We would like to thank all our readers who contributed to the appeal for money for new equipment for the production of 'Class Struggle'. We are happy to report that we achieved our target and have bought a new word-processor which should improve the look of the paper as well as make its production more efficient. We always welcome further donations as the production and distribution of the paper needs constant fund-raising.

OCTOBER

The latest issue of October, which contains an analysis of the Dublin lockout of 1913, among other items, is still available from New Era Books. Price: £1.75 + 39p P&P

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203 SEVEN SISTERS RD., LONDON, N4 3NG

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