

CLASS STRUGGLE

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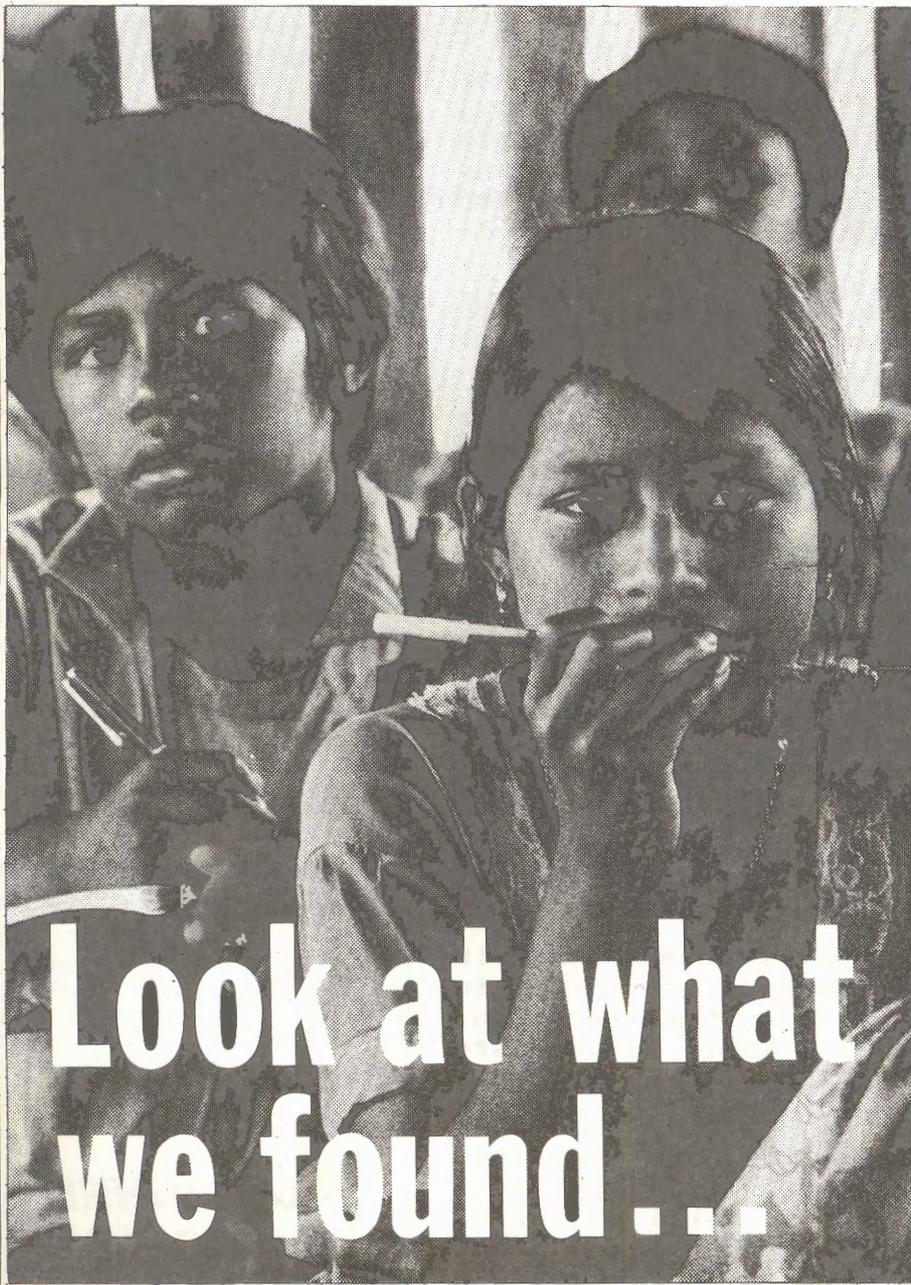
IMMIGRATION – THE
DOOR CLOSES

INSIDE

What future
for socialism

Ireland – who
are the real
terrorists

NHS – unwell,
underfunded



Look at what
we found...

WHEN COLUMBUS CAME TO AMERICA ITS PEOPLE "DISCOVERED"

500 YEARS OF SLAVERY & GENOCIDE

The "discovery" of the "New World" by soldier-adventurers from Europe marked the expansion of European trade and the beginning of the plundering of the American continent and the genocide of its peoples. It was on this basis that the great colonial empires were built and the economies of the European countries, with Britain in the lead, expanded so that first capitalism, and then imperialism, stretched to every corner of the globe.

The twentieth century has seen the turning of the tide of history, as nations and peoples of the Third World struggled for their liberation. The first socialist revolution took place in the Soviet Union. In 1949, one quarter of the world's people were liberated in China. In the following period, many other countries fought for and won their independence, if not full liberation.

In response, Western imperialism has regrouped, developed new ways of controlling and exploiting the Third World.

The rise of a united Europe is part of this re-grouping, in competition with the other major economic powers, the USA and Japan. This is reflected in its internal policies, towards black people living within the EEC, or refugees from the Third World seeking asylum.

1991 saw the Western powers, led by the USA, launch a massive attack on Iraq. The challenge from the Soviet Union, which had long since lost any trace of socialism, had lost its power and even China supported the attack, in the name of the United Nations.

Temporarily, the USA seems to hold unchallenged power. But this appearance of strength is greater than the reality.

The US and the British economies are in crisis. Increasing numbers of people in both countries are hit by the recession: poverty, unemployment and debt are widespread.

For people in the Third World, including the indigenous peoples of the Americas, there is no alternative but to fight back. In 1992, our task is to build alliances with all those fighting for a different society in which imperialism has no place.

POLITICAL
PAPER OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY
COMMUNIST
LEAGUE.

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EAST BIRMINGHAM HOSPITAL

AN EXPENSIVE SHAM

In the September issue of 'Class Struggle', we reported on the campaign to stop the opt-out of the East Birmingham Hospital. In October, Minister of Health, William Waldegrave, announced that, along with many others, the hospital would be allowed to become a self-governing trust.

MASSIVE OPPOSITION

By the end of our campaign, 17,796 responses had been sent in to the health authority in answer to the campaign's call. The health authority only received 279 in favour of opting-out. 91% of the staff opposed the opt-out. 97% of local residents who voted were also against. A poll of patients and visitors showed 94% against. When local GP's were asked, 45 were against and only six were in favour.

Despite this clear expression of people's views, Waldegrave gave the go ahead for East Birmingham Hospital to opt out as a self-governing trust next April, along with 98 other parts of the NHS.

Clearly the consultation was an expensive sham. People power is all right on the streets of Moscow but not in the eastern part of Birmingham. Patients' choice is to be encouraged unless they choose to keep their local hospital the way it is.

Our campaign achieved all it set out to do. We gained massive support from the people and the staff. We managed to use the media well. Clearly, the government intended to press on with the disintegration of the NHS whatever the opposition.

TURNING POINT

Next April will be a turning point for the health service. The combined effect of the first and second waves of trusts will mean that one third of the non-GP part of the NHS will be opted out. It is also predicted that a further 1,700 GP's will join the existing 360 practices that already control their own budgets. These trends will encourage further trusts. It is predicted that by April 1993, over 50% of the NHS will be opted out.

The changes starting next April are enough to cause the disintegration of the NHS as a national, planned network of healthcare. Also starting next April, the effects of the internal market will start to

show. Although it is true that NHS patients will not have to pay for healthcare, the real question will be that what healthcare is available will be put on a narrow commercial basis.

Narrow cost considerations and competition between parts of the service will decide what is available. Long-term planning and setting of priorities dependent on what patients need will be replaced by competitive pricing. This will be the case whether or not a hospital has opted out. Trusts are the leading force in this competitive market.



No-one in the NHS knows how, or if, the internal market will work. Existing trusts are running into trouble. The government's NHS reforms are motivated by ideology more than practical reality. They are gambling with patients' healthcare and the tax-payers' money.

THE REAL ISSUES

All the political debate about the Tory reforms divert attention from the underlying problem of the NHS: underfunding. Britain still spends a much smaller percentage of its gross national product (GNP) on healthcare than the rest of Western Europe or the USA.

The recent increase in NHS spending announced by the Treasury will not meet the shortfall. Factors such as the real rate of inflation, higher inflation on medical equipment, the increased demand for healthcare because of an ageing population, all mean the actual money goes a lot less far than it appears. In addition, a certain amount

of the money is not real but is assumed from "efficiency savings". Last April, East Birmingham hospital had to cut services by 2% because of efficiency savings assumptions.

Commercialisation of the NHS actually costs money. Already it is estimated that the NHS reforms have cost £400 million to implement. There is also evidence from the USA (which spends twice as high a percentage on healthcare) that it is inefficient. One third of the US population have no access to healthcare. (They cannot afford it!) A lot of money is spent on accountants and chasing unpaid bills.

It is important to identify what is actually going on in the NHS. Although it is true that there will be an expansion of private beds, particularly in the trusts, and an increase in the trend of joint ventures between NHS hospitals and the private hospitals, it is wrong to portray this as a step towards wholesale privatisation, as the Labour Party does.

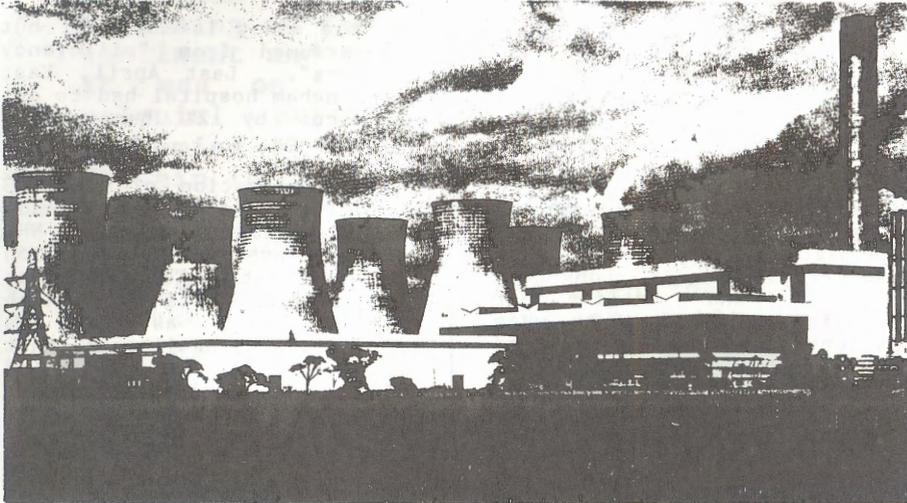
It is true that the commercialisation and competition within the NHS undermines the whole basis of the service. But it is simplistic to say this is privatisation. It leaves the Tories with a chance to undermine opposition and to divert people from what is really going on. The Labour-Tory row over privatisation may win Labour votes but it obscures the issues.

Staff will also lose out as the NHS is divided up and the staff divided up. No longer can all the staff doing a particular type of work combine to get better pay and conditions. They will be split up among different employers (trusts). Their bargaining power will be weakened.

Healthcare will continue to be undermined as long as the NHS remains a low paying employer. Increased pressure on staff to do more, to be more cost-effective, will increase the possibility of mistakes occurring. Patients will suffer.

Few of these, the real issues, are being debated at the moment. The Labour Party is more interested in winning the election than in debating the real problems facing the health service or listening to people's ideas about the kind of health service they would like.

After Privatisation



A large element in the government's economic programme has been to change state-run industries into privately owned businesses through the policy of privatisation. Making them leaner and fitter in a hard competitive world has been how supporters have described it. Selling off the nation's assets cheaply and lining the pockets of the rich has been an alternative view.

The outcome of the first few years has generally been a high rate of return on capital invested by the new shareholders and massive increases in pay for the top executives on the one hand; job losses, little improvement if any in service and declining morale for most of the workforce on the other.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY INDUSTRY

What is happening in the electricity supply industry is probably fairly typical, if the news coming out of the country's biggest generator of electricity, National Power, is anything to go by. In the financial year ending on March 31st, it made a pre-tax profit of £479 million. After tax and the payment of certain extraordinary items, the actual profits were £206 million.

With such high profits, an outsider might well believe there was a bright future ahead for its employees. However, that is just not how most of them see things.

LOW MORALE

In August, a report into staff attitudes, drawn up by Hovack Adler Associates, an independent consultancy, was leaked to the national press. According to a subsequent

article in 'The Independent', this report showed that the morale of the staff was very low. The employees of National Power were accusing their management of "short-termism", false economy, wasteful spending on image-building, cutting back on training and retaining perks for senior employees while axing jobs. There was an "atmosphere of cynicism and mistrust" with communication from the top "bedevilled by inconsistency, distortion and selectivity based on an individual manager's taste for the information he was meant to pass down".

The research had been carried out only a few weeks after the company had been privatised, but before details of John Baker's massive salary increase from £85,000 to its present level of £240,000. Since then things have only got worse, for during the summer plans to further restructure and rationalise National Power were made public.

BIG JOB CUTS

In June, it was announced that half of all staff who were not employed directly at a power station would lose their jobs. This would be completed by September 1992 hopefully by voluntary severance, which for many of the older employees with long service would mean quite large amounts of cash. At the same time, the company would introduce changes to the way it ran its business.

NEW BUSINESS METHODS

Many areas of work, which in the past had been carried out centrally within the CEGB were now to be devolved to the individual power station. In

the future, they will operate as 'stand alone business units', in competition with all other power stations, to sell electricity to the National Grid.

MORE CUTS TO COME

Many employees of National Power sense that there will be more moves to cut back on jobs once the present round is finished. This will be done as part of a plan to achieve what is known as the "international best practice in station manning and plant operation". It will probably mean reducing the number of permanent staff to a relatively small core and contracting out most of the ancillary services and certain specialised work. Already, canteen catering, cleaning and even station security is being carried out by private companies. It is a common practice in America and one that is becoming the trend here.

It is also feared that the company will try to get rid of many existing union agreements. Already as many employees have noticed, it no longer talks and consults with the unions. Now it just tells them what it is going to do.

CHANGING TASKS

Before privatisation, the main task of the CEGB as a state-run industry was to generate and transmit electricity to the local area electricity boards throughout the country. It even had a legal obligation (now removed) to perform that task.

Now the main objective for those who run such companies as National Power has changed. The company will operate like any other private business in a free market capitalist economy. As well as ensuring that they themselves are well-paid, the main responsibility of the executive directors will be to the share-holders. Generating electricity for the whole economy will be replaced by the drive to make maximum profit, the basic economic law of capitalism.

Closing down "inefficient" power stations, reducing spare capacity, getting rid of staff and losing much specialised knowledge and expertise in the process, may well make sense to the accountants in the short term. But as winter approaches, whether it will continue to provide a guaranteed supply to our homes is quite another matter.

CLOSING THE DOOR



TONIGHT'S WEATHER CLOUDY
Evening Standard
 LONDON, TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER, 1991

What happened when A N Wilson met Julie Burchill
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FROCK HORROR
 An A-Z of sex and stitch-ups in the fashion world
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£100,000 MONEY GAME
 TODAY'S WINNING NUMBERS ON PAGE 20

'STEM THIS TIDE OF IMMIGRANTS'

Hurd wants Europe to bar 500,000

from Charles Reiss, Political Editor
FOREIGN Secretary Douglas Hurd today called for Europe to unite in order to keep out a flood of up to 500,000 bogus refugees.

He warned Britain's European Community partners that the Government will be pressing for tougher, more effective controls to stop illegal immigrants slipping through the net and to stop delays which mean thousands are wrongly allowed to stay.

The numbers coming in Europe-wide each year already top the 400,000 mark. Mr Hurd told the Conservative Party conference in Blackpool. The great majority were people looking for a more comfortable life, but leaving their own countries because they were unable to find work. Some were still black. Many were able to stay in the country because of the length of time taken to process cases. This is shared problems on which the EC need to co-ordinate. The focus must be stopped. Action is needed. Every responsible politician in Europe knows it.

Mr Hurd's call, to the start of his conference speech, was a line which Home Secretary Kenneth Baker is expected to include in his speech.

More conference reports: Pages 14 and 15



The Marquess with wife Becky. She wept as he was sentenced.

12 weeks jail for Marquess

by Tim Bayliss

THE Marquess of Blandford was jailed for 12 weeks today after being convicted on two counts of driving while disqualified and without insurance.

An immediate request for bail pending an appeal was granted by magistrates. His appeal will be heard at Winchester Crown Court tomorrow.

The Marquess, 50, went to court with his wife, Becky, who stood impassively at his side. He was charged with driving while disqualified and without insurance on two occasions in the last 12 months.

He was given six weeks' imprisonment for each offence, to be served consecutively. Magistrates imposed six penalty points for each offence, totalling up to 12 points which prompted the bench to disqualify him for two years. Blandford was also ordered to pay costs of £10.

His wife, Becky, wept at the back of the court and hugged the Marquess's sister, Lady Henrietta Spencer-Churchill.

The court heard that since his wife had a "catastrophic" effect on his life. Chairman of the magistrates, Mr Keith Hillier said: "An increasing number of motorists are taking chances and driving through periods of disqualification."

"They should be warned that those who choose to offend in this way do so at their own peril and risk of serious consequences."

"The court cannot show a complete disregard of road traffic law over several years and driving without insurance while disqualified means I must pass a custodial sentence."

The court had earlier been told that

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to take up tomorrow. Labour has already accused the Conservatives of "steering the race card" in the run-up to the election.

But the Foreign Secretary stressed he wanted to help, not hinder those genuinely fleeing oppression. "It is no service to the real refugees - the persecuted dissident - to keep him in with those using asylum as a device to better their standard of living," he said. He also wanted to see better Europe-wide co-operation to tackle crime, particularly drug and terrorism.

The speech sought to send a message of confidence to the party that the negotiations conducted by Mr Hurd and the Prime Minister would lead to a successful outcome at the Maastricht European summit in December.

Mr Hurd told a Tory Reform Group fringe meeting he was "reasonably hopeful" of a deal on Europe that will avoid splitting the party this winter. He was hoping for an agreement by November that "will go well for us as the bottom line for Labour and John Major" but he reiterated the bottom line for Labour and John Major to the speaker.

ACTY LEADERSHIP BUSINESS DAY 29-34 LONDON LIFE 23 ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE 46-48 CLETTERS 43 CPATRIC WALKER 44

HISTORY OF MIGRATION

Most people migrated to Europe in the period after the Second World War when there was a labour shortage as the Western economies rebuilt. Some countries like Britain and France, drew on labour from their colonies. Others, like Germany, had no colonies and recruited thousands to work in their industry from Turkey, in particular.

Whether there was a direct colonial link or not, there was a common pattern in the relationships between relatively rich European countries and poorer countries of the Third World. The impoverishment of these countries which forced people to look elsewhere for work, was a direct result of the history of Europe draining their resources over hundreds of years.

This unequal relationship continues today in a neo-colonial form. For every £1 that the countries of the North give to those of the South, in so-called "charity" or "aid", the South pays back £3 in repayments of debts or interest.

But since the 1960's, there has been little migration for work to Europe. The main issue has rather been that of uniting families split by previous migration, particularly as immigration laws were tightened up and entry made more difficult.

It is no accident that the present racist campaign is aimed against refugees, with the purpose of making it even more difficult for them to get asylum in Europe. Many of those moving to Europe now are the victims of civil war, unrest and instability in countries like Iraq, Sri Lanka or Uganda. The instability of the situation in many of these countries can primarily be traced to a neo-colonial relationship in which Western powers have aimed to control and manipulate governments to their own benefit.

For people such as the Tamils or Sri Lanka or the Kurds of Iraq, Europe still offers a prospect of escape from torture, war or suffering. But the Single Market of Europe no longer needs labour. Economic restructuring is concentrating capital and creating rising unemployment, within the twelve countries of the EC. There is, at any

It is obvious that there is an election coming up when 'The Daily Mail' concentrates its anti-immigration stance into a week-long series, 'The Invasion of Europe'. It coincided with last month's Tory Party conference where Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd called for tougher controls to "stem this tide", as London's evening paper headlined its report.

EURO-RACIST CAMPAIGN

Hurd's outburst is in tune with a wider Euro-racist campaign against so-called "bogus refugees". Just when the European Community (EC) is moving to abolish internal barriers, there are calls to reinforce the external "perimeter fence" and the forging of stronger links between the police forces of the twelve EC states. Already the Trevi Group, set up quietly in 1976, equates the issue of drug traffickers and terrorism with illegal immigration. Next year, 1992, is the year of white Western European integration. The free market comes into force.

It is being ushered in with a racist upsurge at all levels of the EC.

Lord Waddington (former Home Secretary, now Tory leader of the House of Lords), called for the unilateral dropping of the 1951 United Nations (UN) Convention on Refugees. Meanwhile, an internal Labour Party draft on the Convention argues that it is in drastic need of updating to cater for a changed world. Polite language for greater restrictions. Labour will oppose what it sees as illiberal aspects. But its objections are, in essence, procedural only.

Prime Minister, John Major, joined the chorus at the EC Luxembourg Summit in July, calling for an urgent clampdown on "the rising tide of immigrants and asylum-seekers". In the House of Commons, he spoke of the "potentially massive" movement of economic migrants. The new anti-immigrant codeword, "economic migrant" conceals the real benefits to Europe of migrant labour.

CONT. FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

rate, a massive pool of labour near at hand in the crisis-ridden economies of Eastern Europe.

At the same time, it is highly convenient for politicians to play this racist game, in the pre-election period. They try and convince people that it is immigration that is responsible for all the social and economic ills of the system that has won the "Cold War" but is still in economic crisis itself.

In Britain, we can see the link between the renewed racist campaign and the election coming up soon. But politicians all over Europe are playing the same dirty game.

Mainstream politicians in France echo the sentiments of Le Pen's 'National Front'. Former President Chirac speaks of the "noise and smells" of "immigrant neighbourhoods". In the past two years, more than 170 Jewish cemeteries have been attacked while Arab residents are subject to street attacks and politicians raise the alarm about Europe being "islamicised".

Racist violence has flared up across unified Germany with murders, attacks on asylum hostels and arson attacks, all the recent work of gangs of fascist youths. Chancellor Kohl denounces the neo-Nazis but insists that the real problem is the abuse of asylum laws. The German slogan - 'Auslander Raus: Foreigners Out' can be heard throughout Europe.

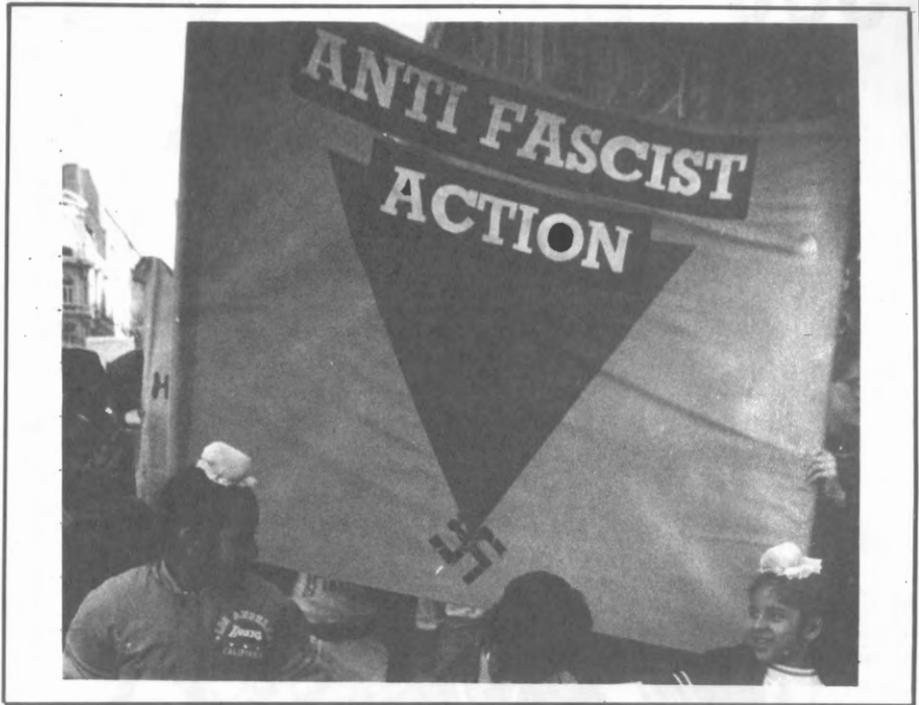
In Austria, the neo-fascist Freedom Party trebled its vote to 18% with unashamedly racist policies.

In Sweden, although only six months old, the New Democracy Party gained 7% in national elections after a "rabble-rousing" campaign.

In Romania, the largest selling daily newspaper regularly carries editorials denouncing Gypsies and Jews.

This deep bigotry in Western society is reflected in the institutional racism seen only too clearly in the behaviour of the police, criminal justice system and the media. According to one opinion poll, for the 'Independent on Sunday', 67% of white Britons agree that British society is racist. Yet anti-racism for the British left remains largely peripheral, or reduced to a matter of individual injustice.

TIME TO ACT



TACKLING THE FASCISTS

Ever since the demise of the Anti-Nazi League, a decade ago, the left's attitude to "our own" fascist thugs has been complacent. "No more than a hard core of extremely isolated fanatics," said the SWP recently. Meanwhile, the far right can go ahead, unchallenged, with its recruiting, planning and organising. It may be that they will go on the offensive before the left wakes up.

Our anti-fascist activities should be based on an understanding that these fascist gangs are only one aspect of racism in our society. We need to tackle racism in all its forms: from state racism in all its forms to racism in education, culture and everyday life. But the unwillingness of the left to confront the activities of the fascist and racist gangs on our streets at present, reveals an underestimation of their strength.

RACIST VIOLENCE

The extent of racist violence is such that there are an estimated 70,000 attacks a year. But many of these pass without comment. In East London alone, nearly 250 racist attacks have been reported in one ten-month period on the Teviot Estate in Poplar. The left is thin on the ground challenging this, a planned racist offensive that wants a "race war" to polarise working class estates.

The Greenwich Action Committee Against Racist Attacks has repeatedly called for Bexley Council to remove the nearby British National Party (BNP) headquarters at Welling in South London, saying that "the influence of the BNP, racist graffiti, and racial harassment exacerbates the situation" around Thamesmead.

The BNP aims for an East End revival. They held three marches and stood five candidates in local elections in East London in 1990. In the St Peters ward election (Bethnal Green, August 1990), one in eight voted for the BNP. Every Sunday, the BNP and National Front hold a paper sale at the top of Brick Lane and they have leafleted local estates on several occasions. With another general election on the horizon, the fascists have declared that they will stand a candidate in East London and will inevitably use this to cause more trouble.

For this reason, a national march against racist attacks was organised by Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) on November 10th in East London.

Racism which has long existed on the local level is now becoming manifest on the European level.

Anti-racists must organise and confront racism and fascism, in whatever form and at whatever level they appear.

Anti-Fascist Action can be contacted at Box BM 1734, London, WC1N 3XX.

500 YEARS OF GENOCIDE



'Where today are the Pequot? Where are the Narragansett, the Mohican, the Pokanoket, and many other once powerful tribes of our people? They have vanished before the avarice and the oppression of the White man as snow before a summer sun.

Will we let ourselves be destroyed in our turn without a struggle, give up our homes, our country bequeathed to us by the Great Spirit, the graves of our dead and everything that is dear and sacred to us? I know you will cry with me, 'Never! Never!'

Tecumseh
Shawnee Nation

While the white rich states of the USA and Western Europe celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of Columbus' "discovery" of what we now call the American continent, the indigenous people of the Americas see things differently.

In fact, if the Tainos people had not discovered Columbus and his expedition and rescued them, they would probably never have survived. Columbus was lost. He had no idea where he was.

Columbus' real historical significance was that he played a role in developing slavery and racist ideology. His journal only contained passing references to the peoples he found in the Americas. They were marginalised as inferior beings compared to Europeans. He himself enslaved men, women and children.

Before his return voyage, in February 1495, he had enslaved 1,700 Tainos people. His voyages laid the basis for the subsequent plundering, destruction and colonisation of what was to become known as the American continent.

In the first hundred years after Columbus arrived, the population of one hundred million indigenous peoples had been reduced to ten million. Wave after wave of European settlers invaded the continent, destroying whatever established societies and peoples they found. These peoples had lived there for thousands of years, and developed different types of societies. Cultures and civilisations were swept away. The people became unwanted in their own lands.

Columbus unleashed a century of genocide.



Guatemalan children living as refugees in Mexico

'Indians discovered the colonial pirate Christopher Columbus who was hopelessly lost and floundering on the high seas. For that we continue to suffer 500 years of deceit and treachery from these colonial intruders who have invaded our sacred lands. In retrospect, we, the Indian people, would be better off today had we taken Columbus and his ragtag crew by the napes of their scruffy necks and the seats of their ragged trousers and thrown them back into the riff-raff and flotsam of the sea from whence they came.'

Wabun-Inini
aka Vernon Bellecourt
Anishinabeg Nation



Innu land rights struggle, Canada

'October 12 is International Day of Solidarity with Indigenous Peoples. From Tierra del Fuego to Baffin Island, Indigenous people remain a testimony to almost 500 years of resistance...We continue to speak out against the destruction of our communities...The struggle of Indigenous people is a land struggle. So long as we have land, there will be corporate, military and industrial-state interests who seek to control our land and our lives. That is why, as long as the industrial-state continues its consumptive military domination, there will be a struggle and our resistance.'

Winona LaDuke
Anishinabeg Nation
President of the Indigenous Women's Network

Indigenous women speak

The following is an extract from a statement issued by the Women's Commission at the First Continental Meeting of Indigenous Peoples in Quito, Ecuador, July 1990.

1. As women we particularly identify with our Mother Earth. We recognise that the Earth is life. We must respect ourselves as women so identified. This Mother Earth is the only one that we have: we must respect her, care for her, love her. In every country people are destroying and violating our Mother Earth. She is dying, so we the people are dying. We take our responsibility seriously. We defend the Earth.

2. The invasion of a non-Indigenous value system has negatively changed the relationship between women and men in the home, and the role of women in our communities and nations. We have all been victims of this oppressive system, of western vices, of addictions, of the violence of a system that is anti-life...

We must reclaim our traditional values, our Indigenous ways of organising ourselves, of conducting ourselves as communities... In order to re-establish the balance in our homes and in order to realise the self-determination and liberation of our oppressed peoples, women and men must participate equally in accordance with the traditional values of our Indigenous Nations...

3. The churches must respect our religions as we respect theirs. We have the right to practice our native beliefs, to have our sacred sites and our sacred objects. Instead of celebrating the 500 years in 1992, the churches should ask our forgiveness and observe our time of mourning and pain. We must have the right under law to our religious ceremonies in accordance with our Indigenous beliefs. We must protect our sacred sites and our sacred burial grounds.

4. Militarism is anti-life, anti-Earth, anti-women. Militarism is the destruction of our ancestral culture, the destruction of our way of thinking and acting. We stand against military recruitment which robs us of our sons and brothers and turns them into bullets in the hands of the oppressor. When they return to their homes, they no longer know how to live with respect and in community. We have the right to live in freedom in peace, without military intervention, without war.

5. We recognise that in isolation, we cannot achieve the goals of our struggle. Within the oppressor's system we are alienated as Indigenous Nations, as women. We suffer from a lack of information. The mass media distorts and deletes our truth. For example, very few of us were aware of the Indigenous uprising here in Ecuador prior to coming to this Gathering.

6. We agree that as Indigenous women of this hemisphere we will participate in a coordinated manner in the different activities, opposed to the so-called discovery of America, declaring a Day of Mourning for Indigenous Peoples.

7. From here on, we will actively participate in the national and international tribunals, in order to guarantee the representation of Indigenous women. We no longer accept the intermediary role of intellectuals who use us as objects of folklore.

8. We are very concerned, and have discussed in detail in our commission, the lack of training, education and health resources for women... Here in this gathering we are laying out the basics. The real work begins when we return to our communities and our organisations. We work together for our own development, one which reflects our values as well as our needs: organisational training, an end to illiteracy, eradication of addictions such as alcoholism and drug addiction, rescue and development of our traditional medicines without throwing away the technology developed for the good of humanity, and rescue and development of our own agricultural and nutritional systems.

9. To live according to our Indigenous values is to assume responsibility for the well-being and the harmony of all, putting an end to poverty and inequality. We need all people, each person has their place, the old and the young. We must support the widows, the orphans, the single mothers and the elders, as has been the way of our peoples.

10. As women and as Indigenous People, we feel a connection to the Earth. In order to bring closure to this gathering in balance with the Earth, we must be here at her breast, where we have our sacred fire.

The Future of Socialism

What are we to make of developments in the USSR and China? The League recently held a conference to explore the implications of this question.

As Marxist-Leninists, we were not taken by surprise by events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Since the League was founded in 1977, we have always argued that the system in those countries was not socialist. Going further than many trends on the left, the League did not simply see them as "degenerated workers' states" but as exploitative regimes, oppressing their own peoples.

In this, our views coincided fairly closely with the masses in those countries, because when they had a chance to express themselves, they chose to scrap the regimes.

Developments in China came as more of a shock. But we were at least forewarned: Chairman Mao Zedong had, after all, pointed out, before he died, that class struggle continues under socialism, and there is a possibility of capitalism being restored.

Thus basic Marxist-Leninist ideas have stood up pretty well in the light of recent history. But this is not to deny that there have been some serious inconsistencies and shortcomings in our understanding of socialist societies, and it was overdue for us to face up to these.

In doing this, we can now proceed from what is probably a more mature standpoint, one of seeing socialism as a complex social formation, containing elements of socialism and various extraneous elements - capitalism, possibly pre-capitalist elements and 'statism'.

The question is, firstly, which mode is dominant, and secondly, in which direction is the society moving. In addition, we have a deeper grasp of qualitative factors. It is no longer enough to view socialism as 'capitalism without crises' or to measure it in terms of quantitative factors like a constantly growing GNP.

SOVIET UNION

We said that the Soviet and East European regimes were not socialist in the recent period. But when did they cease being socialist.... or were some or all of them never socialist?

Marxist-Leninists used to say that there was an abrupt change around the time Krushchev took over the Soviet leadership, particularly at the point of the twentieth Soviet Party Congress in 1956. This no longer satisfies anyone.

The old line assumed that the Stalin period (from Stalin's consolidation of power in the late 1920's, through to his death in 1953) was mainly good. But opinions have changed dramatically on this question. At the recent conference, a number of positions emerged.

Where we agree is that the Soviet Union was building socialism after the 1917 revolution, and that things probably started going wrong after Lenin's death in the mid-1920's. But opinions differed at the recent conference as to how to assess this period. These can probably be clarified in relation to two basic positions.

One sees the Soviet Union under enormous external pressure in the period prior to World War II, with the party from the best of motives, making increasing errors in the drive to industrialise rapidly (squeezing the peasants for funds, bureaucracy) with Stalin in a heroic, though ultimately unsuccessful role, in trying to safeguard socialism.

The second sees Stalinism as the main active factor in degeneration, external aggression serving as an excuse in the process of undermining democracy, so that the whole Stalinist system becomes a major target of criticism in developing a positive concept of people-centred socialism for the future.

There was however general agreement on what was wrong with the Soviet model in that period: identifying socialism with central planning, lack of effective democracy and other related questions.

CHINA

In the case of China, we confirmed our view that in the Mao period, China was advancing in a socialist direction, even though there were severe criticisms to be made, notably on the question of Tibet. The year 1978 probably saw a qualitative shift of state policy in a

direction against socialism. It was recognised that the Cultural Revolution had correctly posed the question of combatting capitalist restoration, but it did this in a very abstract and mechanical manner which led to serious errors, and these helped bring about the result it was supposed to eliminate. There was agreement that China is not on the socialist road at present.

Our qualitative stance leads us to judge socialism by different criteria from those Marxist-Leninists have been used to use. The women's issue is fundamental because patriarchy is an essential basis of exploitative social structures, and hitherto existing socialist models have left this largely intact.

We are also thinking in terms of sustainable development where humanity looks to understanding nature's laws and working in harmony with them, rather than treating nature as the enemy. On this point, however, there is much that can be learned positively from the Chinese experience.

DEMOCRACY

Finally, democracy was sometimes seen as a kind of bourgeois hangover - all that mattered was that the party was in control, and the interests of the working class were assured. This is absolutely wrong, and one of the most important features of socialism will have to be a rich vocabulary of democratic mechanisms to keep a check on the Communist Party - something Lenin anticipated, but which was largely forgotten about subsequently.

The creative development of theory in the new period is not something one Marxist-Leninist group carries out in isolation. The League has given a lot of attention to the debate on the definition of socialism among revolutionaries abroad, and in particular, we drew considerable inspiration from a document analysing socialist societies drawn up by the Communist Party of India Marxist-Leninist, an organisation which has a heroic revolutionary past and strong links with the mass movement today.

We are part of an international trend which includes some of the most honest and dedicated revolutionary organisations in many countries, and each learns from the others.

A Step Backwards

If as Marx said, we can judge different societies by the progress of women, it is useful to look at their experience in the Soviet Union and China.

Many Marxists and socialists have seen the central issue as being the exclusion of women from social production, by the division of society into public (industry etc.) and private (the home) spheres. Based on this analysis, the solution to women's oppression was always seen as being to draw women into production. Once they were active workers, they could then take part on an equal basis in the class struggle or building socialism.

Many people have argued that this equality is impossible under capitalism but have thought that women would automatically be liberated under a socialist society. Their liberation as been seen as part of the struggle to overthrow the ruling class by the working class, and their oppression as an aspect of class oppression.

Clearly, the position of women in the Soviet Union and China is a complicated issue. The experience in the two countries is not the same and women have been affected by the great changes that these societies have gone through at every stage.

In China, for example, many people commented in the early New Democratic stage of the revolution, that women were enthusiastic supporters of the Communist Party. Jack Belden, for example, predicted that the Communists would win in China because they were mobilising millions of people in the countryside. The two fundamental issues that they tackled were land reform and the liberation of women. Following Liberation in 1949, women made many gains and some of the worst aspects of women's oppression in the old society were abolished.

In both countries, significant number of women have jobs outside the home. However, it is also clear that for many women this has meant a double burden. Because the issues of domestic labour and division of work between men and women in the family have not been tackled, women still hold the responsibility for both.

REPRODUCTION

Another key aspect of women's lives is their role in reproduction. Recent

information from both China and the Soviet Union indicates that women are far from being liberated in this important area of their lives.

A recent article in 'The Independent' describes the 'task forces' that are being despatched in the countryside to catch women who refuse to go along with the government's policy of one family, one child. This policy has had little success, particularly in rural areas, where families commonly have three or four children.

FORCED ABORTIONS

Now the policy is being implemented strictly, with



forced abortions the results of raids by the 'task force' whose members receive rewards for finding pregnant women. Abortions are often as late as the eight month and some women have committed suicide when they found out that the aborted foetus was a male child. Conditions in an abortion clinic, described in the article, were appalling.

China has, of course, a real problem in terms of the numbers of its population. This kind of policy of enforced control, with its associated violence against women, must raise questions about the nature of the

society and the extent of women's liberation today.

A recent book on women in the Soviet Union, 'Soviet Women: Walking the Tightrope', also makes it clear that in the area of reproduction, women face many difficulties.

THE NATION'S BIRTHRATE

One gynaecologist interviewed in the book, was "enraged by the officials in Moscow's Ministry of Health who until recently refused to disseminate any birth control information, arguing that such measures would slow down the nation's birth rate...." He also stated that the abortion rate in the Soviet Union is the highest in the world, seven to eight abortions for every live birth.

One woman, Olga, has had fourteen abortions which she considers the national average, although she knows women who have had twenty five. She described the horrific experiences of abortion, with doctors who are "rude and rough" in blood-spattered rooms.

Other sections of the book describe the lack of resources and terrible conditions in maternity clinics, wards and in day-care centres for young children. Because of the need for women to take part in outside work, daycare for young children is available. However, in many places the food is terrible, the care of a low standard and many children pick up various diseases and illness. As a result some women prefer to stay at home or leave their child with a grandmother.

GOING BACKWARDS

This picture confirms a more general understanding of the nature of Soviet society for many years now, as being far from a socialist society, judging by many different standards. In China, although women have gained much in the first thirty years since Liberation, over the last ten years, they have been going backwards in some ways.

The more general lesson for us, is that women's oppression is not just part of class oppression, although linked to it in a thousand ways. Not only must we take seriously the issue of women's labour in factories and fields but also the labour of women in producing and raising children.

PEACE TALKS IN....

Middle East

As last month's 'Class Struggle' anticipated, the Palestine National Council (PNC) did not reject Palestinian participation in the US sponsored "peace conference". After all the Arab states around Palestine had agreed to take part in the conference and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), acting in line with the PNC's guidance, had approved a formula for Palestinian participation, Israel finally gave its agreement to participate.

The conference opened in Madrid, at the end of October. It was convened by Presidents Bush and Gorbachev, and after initial statements broke up into bilateral talks. This represented the concessions by Israel, prompted by US pressure to the call for an international peace conference, involving all parties to the conflict, as well as permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. This had been endorsed by the Soviet Union, most of the Third World, including the Arab states and the PLO.

But Israel had always maintained that it would be placed at a disadvantage in such a peace conference, and instead called for bilateral talks with each of its Arab neighbours, without any United Nations involvement. That is essentially what it got since the conference largely consisted of formalities. The real talks were to take place in the bilateral negotiations

between Israel and its Arab neighbours which followed.

DENIED REPRESENTATION

The Palestinian people remain deprived of representation in their own right. They were forced to accept representation solely through a joint delegation with Jordan and even that excluded large elements of the people. First and foremost, there was to be no official PLO representation although all tests of Palestinian public opinion have shown overwhelming support for the PLO.

Secondly, three fifths of the Palestinian people who are living in exile were excluded from representation.

Thirdly, not even the whole of the 1967 occupied lands were represented as Palestinians from Jerusalem were excluded.

All these conditions were

demanding by Israel and pressed by the USA upon the Arab states and the PLO which accordingly felt they had little choice but to agree.

In these circumstances, the list of Palestinians that Israel eventually had to accept for inclusion in a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation was better than might have been expected. It included a number of conservative figures, from traditionally powerful pro-Jordanian families. This included such people as Elias Freij, Mayor of Bethlehem and a member of the Ja'lbari family of Hebron. But it also contained figures identified with three of the major organisations within the PLO: Fatah, the Communist Party and one faction of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

REJECTIONISTS

Some Palestinian forces rejected any participation in the conference. The main ones were the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, another faction of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (both organisations holding a minority position within the PLO), and the extremists religious group, Hamas, which wants an Islamic state within the whole of historic Palestine.

They have protested against Palestinian participation in the talks. But the majority of Palestinians feel they do not have much choice at present. Israel has set out to double the number of settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip over the next couple of years and has waged an economic war on the Palestinians of those areas which has pushed the majority of them below the poverty line over the last year.

The Palestinians have little hope that anything positive will come out of the talks. But there is a feeling in the PLO that things would be even worse if it had not agreed to go along with the American "peace process".

One positive thing which some believe might come out of the talks will be the exposure before the eyes of the world that Israel is not prepared to make the most minimal concessions on land and Palestinian rights, and is the real obstacle to peace in the Middle East.

Kampuchea

A peace treaty between warring Cambodian parties was signed in Paris on October 23rd, paving the way for elections to be held under UN supervision in March 1993.

The formal end to two decades of conflict will see a substantial UN military operation under the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The UN personnel, an estimated 10,000 plus, are to monitor and implement the settlement that calls for 70% of the parties' fighting forces to be demobilised and multi-party elections to be free and fairly conducted.

The interim arrangements of the Peace Accord establish UNTAC authority, with an advisory role for the Supreme National Council (SNC), made up by representatives of the four Cambodian parties: the three-party National Resistance coalition and the Vietnamese-installed Hun Sen. A ceasefire has largely held since May 1st and uneasy Cambodian participation in the SNC, headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk holding a casting vote, offers the possibility of an enduring settlement - the agreement transfers the struggle from the battlefield to the hustings. James Pringle of "The Times" reports that the Democratic Kampuchea Party, which bore the brunt of the fighting against the occupation forces, was standing as "the party of the poor of Cambodia".

RECONSTRUCTION

The Cambodian people could be facing a new era of reconstruction to follow the political settlement. It will not be a smooth process as it involves the mass repatriation of refugees from camps on the Thai border who fled the Vietnamese invasion more than a decade ago.

WIDENING GAP

Because of the free-market policies of Hun Sen, and the corrupt practices of his administration, in dollar terms there are some 100 millionaires in Phnom Penh. There is a widening gap between towns and countryside, in the living standards of the country's eight million people, that fosters past antagonism, with the peasantry losing out once again.

The Party that successfully addresses the problem of developing the nation's resources for the benefit of the Cambodian people is most likely to have a bright future.

Letter from a Prisoner

The first edition of 'Time', in December 1990, gave a summary of the new request/complaints procedures for prisoners, which had commenced on 25th September, 1990. In Autumn 1990, the Prison Reform Trust magazine, carried a full page article, headed: 'Two Cheers for New Grievance Procedure', informing us that:

"Some important new rights for prisoners are established", and "The idea behind the new scheme is to set up a more logical system in which prisoners can have greater confidence".

And, sure enough, the new rules did look quite good, on paper. But prisoners know from past experience that there are many prison rules that look good on paper, but which in practice are either deliberately ignored by uniformed and governing staff, or are 'interpreted' in ways which rob prisoners of any benefit.

REALITY OF NEW RULES

On 31.7.91, I completed and submitted a request/complaint form.

After seven days, I had received neither the full answer nor the explanatory 'interim' reply. I asked for something to be done, and on the ninth day, got a garbled 'interim' reply, which in effect told me nothing, except that it was still pending, which I knew already.

Subsequently, I have made numerous verbal requests for the Governor V concerned to comply with the rules, if belatedly. But he has not even bothered to contact me in any way whatever. So he obviously knows he is breaking the prison rules and does not care a damn.

On 2.9.91, I completed and submitted a request/complaint form, under confidential cover, to the **Governing Governor**, telling him of the above, and asking him to

The rules allow an Area Manager a period of six weeks in which to give a full reply, or a proper 'interim' reply. So it will be interesting to see if Home Office rules are taken seriously at that exalted level of the prison administration.

Certainly, at the most important place, where the prisoner is, inside the prison itself, the governing staff are effectively telling prisoners that they will be denied their statutory rights.

SCANDALOUS SITUATION

I am asking that you should do whatever is in your power to get this scandalous situation put right. Governing staff who do not obey Home Office rules should be immediately corrected, or replaced by staff who will run a prison according to the rules, for which they are paid a substantial salary.

Finally, I know from experience that very often



In July 1990, Prison Service headquarters produced some printed sheets of notes telling prisoners about the new system. Among other things, prisoners were told that if they submitted a written request or complaint, (Form F2059), it would be dealt with by "the governing governor or another senior member of staff", and prisoners would get "a written answer within seven days", or, "If the matters which you have raised are complicated, and will take longer to sort out, you will be told what is happening and when you are likely to get a full reply."

That is the paper procedure. Here is the reality.

instruct his Governor V to give me a full and immediate reply.

I have never had any reply or acknowledgement of any kind from the Governing Governor. So obviously he does not care if one of his governing staff is breaking the rules. And, even more outrageous, he is clearly telling me, by default, that he himself is ignoring the laid down new rules of procedure.

On 20.9.91, I completed and submitted a request/complaint form, under confidential cover, to the **Area Manager**, asking him to instruct the Governing Governor of this prison to comply with rules, and I had an acknowledgement form on 11.10.91.

when a prisoner makes a stand for prisoners' rights, he is labelled a 'trouble-maker' and is punished by being moved around the prison system.

I hope, that if I am threatened with that procedure, at least one of the numerous outside bodies concerned with prison conditions will be able to assist me and make sure I remain in Long Lartin, which is the prison most easily accessible to my family.

I have already experienced a fairly long period of 'ghosting' to a very northerly prison, before being able to get back to Long Lartin.

Pete Jordan.



LOYALIST TERROR CAMPAIGN GETS OFFICIAL SEAL OF APPROVAL

LICENSED TO KILL

Over the last few weeks, another round of apparently random violence and killings has gotten underway in the north of Ireland. Politicians offer no explanations, only condemnations. Behind the headlines though, another story is beginning to be told, one that tells of intrigue, terror and lies.

THE STEVENS INQUIRY

In August 1989, Deputy Chief Constable John Stevens began an investigation into allegations of collusion between the "security forces" and loyalist paramilitaries in the six counties.

The investigation was commissioned after the assassination of Laughlin Maginn by the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF). After the killing, the UFF showed a number of documents to the media which identified Maginn as an active member of the Republican movement.

The Maginn family denied this claim as did the Republican movement. Laughlin Maginn, it seems, was another innocent victim of a loyalist death squad.

The documents came from RUC files and the UFF claimed they had access to plenty more. Their claims were reinforced when the UFF and other loyalist groups began flyposting photocopies of security forces intelligence documents across walls in West Belfast. In the weeks that followed, public disclosures of co-operation between loyalist paramilitaries, the RUC and the army became an almost daily occurrence.

These disclosures proved a deep political embarrassment to the British government, revealing the truth behind the

carefully manufactured image of the security forces' "peace-keeping" role. Rather than doing their best to keep warring factions apart, it became increasingly clear that they were actively involved in terrorizing the nationalist community in the north of Ireland.

The eventual findings of the Stevens Inquiry - that collusion did indeed exist - were therefore hardly surprising. What did come as a surprise was the public admission that collusion between loyalist paramilitaries, the RUC and the British army would be impossible to eradicate. Furthermore, and in the face of clear evidence that RUC stations were the source of the intelligence leaks, the British government decided that no charges would be brought against individual officers for "handing on" information.

THE TERROR CONTINUES

Since the Stevens inquiry published its report, sectarian killings and assassinations have continued in the north of Ireland. In September, Sinn Fein councillor Bernard O'Hagan was gunned down in broad daylight in the town of Magherafelt, one of the most heavily patrolled areas in the Six Counties.

Moneywre Road, where the murder took place, is close to the homes of Democratic Unionist MP, William McCrea, and one of the crown forces' chief contractors, Jim Henry. As a result, there is rarely a time when either uniformed or undercover patrols are not operating in the area. There is also an RUC barracks close by.

"Investigations" into the death of Bernard O'Hagan concentrated on the media rather than the scene of the crime. Several statements were issued by the RUC calling for witnesses to come forward, but no searches or arrests took place. It was later revealed that, immediately after the shooting, no roadblocks or checkpoints were set up. The killer had simply been allowed to disappear into thin air.

This was in stark contrast to the summer months when the town had been sealed off every weekend to allow the annual loyalist parades to go ahead.

LICENSE TO KILL

The every day experience of the nationalist community in the Six Counties over the last twenty years has always suggested that, at the very least, crown forces were prepared to ignore the activities of the loyalist death squads and allow them to carry on their terror campaign. However, evidence that has come to light in the last two years and more recently, shows that the so-called security forces assist, direct and even fund the organisations behind the squads.

A recent Channel 4 documentary spoke to representatives from a number of loyalist organisations. They insist that not only is intelligence passed from members of the RUC who have access to security files, but also that RUC officers provide safe passage for the death squads when they are carrying out an attack.

An informant described how members of an RUC "inner circle" drove ahead of UVF killers to ensure their safe passage through two crown



One elderly woman living in the Lower Falls area of West Belfast became very distressed recently when RUC men laughed as they told her that her son's name was in the hands of a death squad: "Get some bars for your door. Both of you are in line for being shot," they jeered.

forces checkpoints. Commenting on the Stevens Inquiry, another informant on the programme stated that RUC officers were given prior warning of the investigating team's moves so that they could cover their tracks.

REGIME OF TERROR

Random killings and assassinations serve British interests by terrorising the nationalist community. They fit in neatly with the overall British strategy in Ireland of beating down resistance to its

rule by any means necessary. These killings are the other side of the coin to the daily harassments of raids on people's homes and "security checks" in the streets.

The killings also play an important propaganda role by helping justify Britain's role in the Six Counties as one of a peace keeper trying to keep two religious communities from killing one another.

From time to time the mask slips and the true nature of Britain's occupation can be seen

DESSIE ELLIS

FREE AT LAST

In November, Dessie Ellis was found not guilty of conspiring to cause explosions on the British mainland.

Dessie admitted to checking the electronics on explosive devices for the IRA. He had already served a prison sentence in Eire for this. He had knowingly helped the IRA in the context of the heightened support for the Republican Movement during the hunger strikes led by Bobby Sands.

Dessie took this action because he thought it legitimate for the IRA to carry out military operations in the Six Counties. At no time had he supported the

military campaign on mainland Britain. The jury accepted this and found him not guilty.

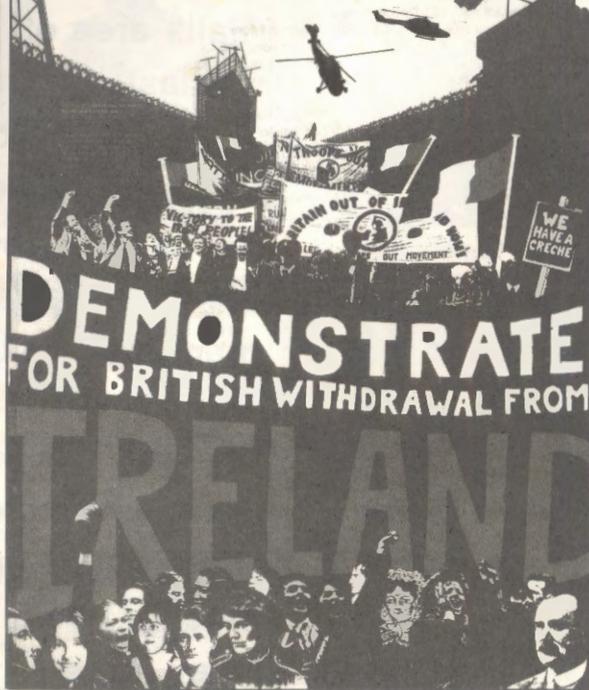
Clearly, once again, the eyes of the world were focused on Britain's role in Ireland by the trial. This was due to Dessie's hunger strike and the mass campaign started by his family. The Eire government's collusion with the British state in extraditing Dessie was also on trial.

Dessie's victory does not mean British justice is fair or that extradition is right. As Dessie himself commented, he has faith in the jury - the British people, but not in British justice.



No More Bloody Sundays !!!

SATURDAY 25TH JAN '92
Assemble Hyde Park, London, 12 noon
(Marble Arch Tube), Rally at
Quex Road, Kilburn.



INTIFADA YEAR FIVE

National Demonstration
called by the
Joint Committee for Palestine

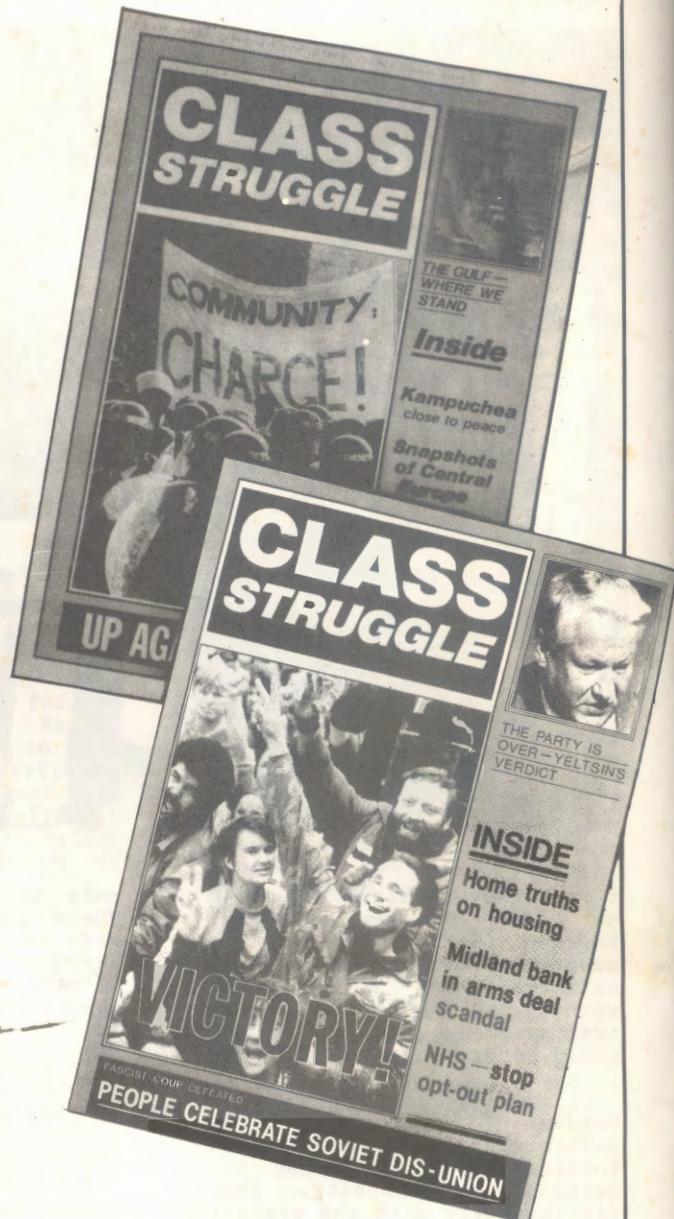
- * Recognise the PLO!
- * End the Occupation!
- * Stop the Settlements!
- * For a Palestinian State!

Invited speakers: Tony Benn MP, Marjorie Thomson (CND - in a personal capacity), Professor Saeb Erakat (An-Najah University, Nablus), Afif Safieh (PLO Representative in London), Jean 'Binta' Breeze, Michael Rosen.

Saturday 7 December 1991
Assemble 12.30pm, Embankment
Rally 3.00pm, Hyde Park

JCP BM 2136 London WC1N 3XX; tel 071-373 8414

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