

CLASS STRUGGLE



Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

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INSIDE: What future for socialist democracy in China?

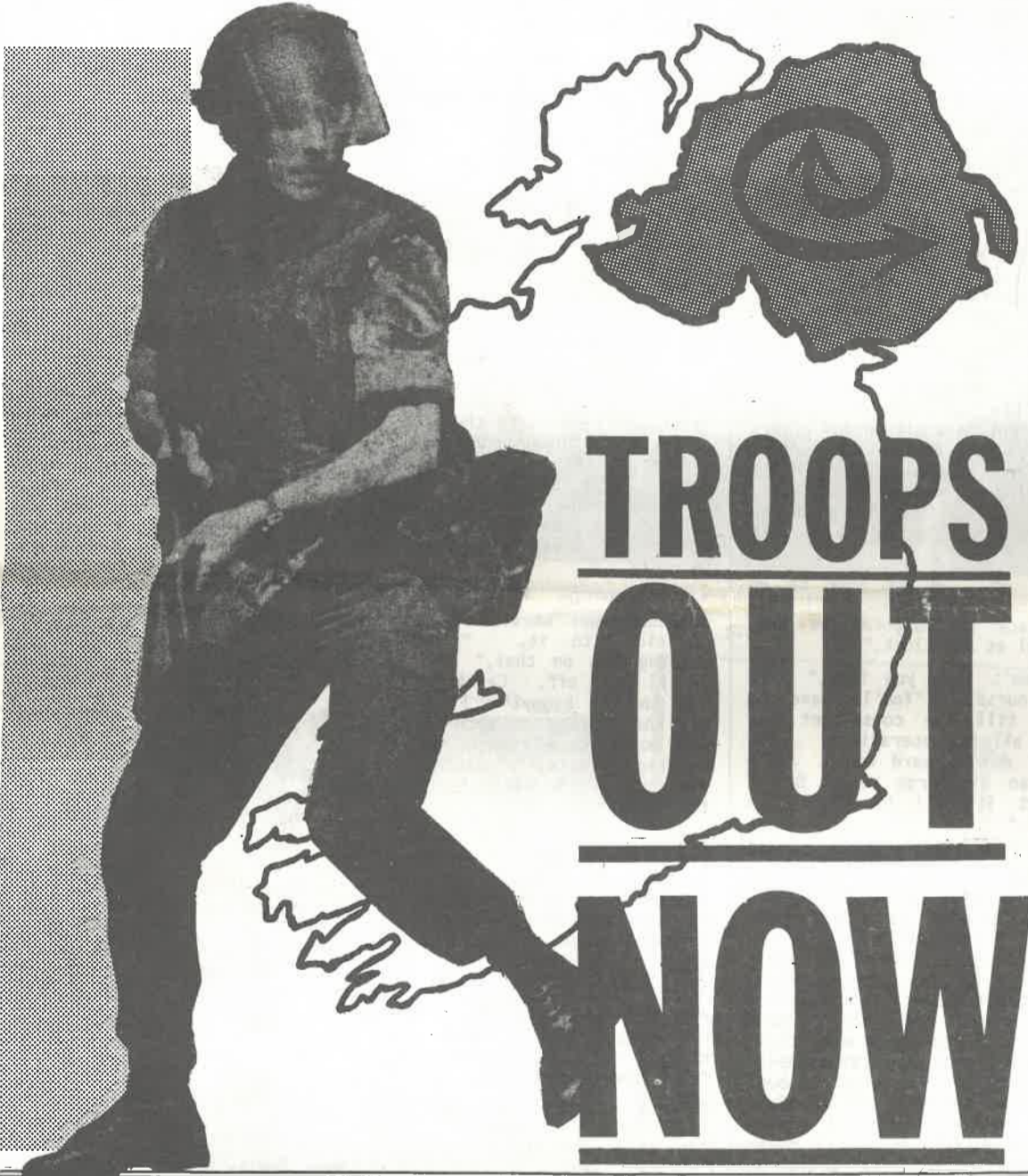
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支持中國民主

special supplement



END BRITISH RULE IN IRELAND



It is 20 years since the British troops were sent into the six counties of Ireland, supposedly to 'keep the peace'. It was inevitable that they would fail to do so. There can be no British solution in Ireland, because British intervention itself is the problem.

For 800 years the Irish have been resisting British attempts to take over and control their country. They will not stop resisting until they win: until the Troops have gone and Britain leaves the Irish people to make their own decisions regarding their future. The British have no right to be in Ireland.

It is not those who are fighting for their national rights who are responsible for the war in Ireland. The responsibility lies with the British imperialist system and those who uphold it. It is the British invaders who are the 'terrorists', not the Irish nationalists.

TIME TO GO

The characteristics of British rule in Ireland have been continued repression, torture, murder, internment without trial, no-jury courts, paid perjurers, strip-searches: all directed against the nationalist people who dare to resist British rule.

Britain is waging a war against the people of the north of Ireland. In reality the so-called 'terrorist campaign' is a guerilla war fought by the

nationalist population and their chosen leadership against an army of occupation.

Successive governments, both Labour and Tory, have rejected the only effective solution in Ireland and stepped up the repression. The Labour Party's record on Ireland is appalling: It was Labour who sent in the troops 20 years ago. It was a Labour government which introduced internment. The Labour

Party's policy even in opposition has consistently been support of repression and condemnation of any act of resistance by nationalist people.

British troops have been in Ireland 20 years too long. It is time for people in this country who support the just struggle of the Irish Nationalist people to stand up and make their views known.

The only path to peace and justice in the north of Ireland is the removal of the British presence there and the recognition of the right of the Irish people to self-determination.

SUPPORT THE DEMONSTRATION ON AUGUST 12th

TROOPS OUT NOW'

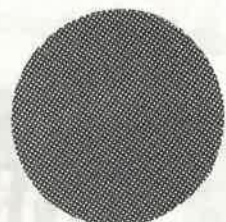
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE'



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women in struggle page 8



Demonstrate for withdrawal >>>> London >>>>> AUGUST 12th

CLASS STRUGGLE

EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL.

It seems that the policies of the present government have never been so unpopular as in the summer months of 1989. Not only did the government face defeat in the European elections but polls are showing the government ten points behind Labour. More importantly, this summer will see a variety of different industrial action.

The National Union of Railwaymen has already started a series of one-day strikes every Wednesday in pursuit of its current wage claim and in opposition to new bargaining arrangements proposed by British Rail.

Action by railway workers is being co-ordinated with other industrial action by workers on the London Underground, bus workers in London and in many other parts of the country.

As we go to press the Transport and General Workers Union is preparing a second ballot on strike action in opposition to the planned abolition of the Dock Labour Scheme.

The National Association of Local Government Officers has voted, for the first time in its history, to take national strike action, beginning with a one-day strike and escalating from there if their demands are not met.

There have also been strikes by civil servants working in the passport offices and workers at the BBC have still not settled their pay claim. Further action by BBC workers is expected.

BOOMING ECONOMY?

At one level, most of this industrial action concerns pay. We have been told so often that the British economy is prospering that people want more money in their own pockets. Rising inflation is only adding to this. In the case of workers at the BBC, they have been incensed by large increases given to management in the name of "market forces" while they are being refused similar increases.

At another level, most of the industrial action at present is concerned with much wider issues than simply pay. We would clearly support a basic pay claim on the basis of the interests of the working class and many middle strata workers. However, the issues are more complex than this.

TRANSPORT SYSTEM

It is no accident that many of the current disputes are taking place in the transport system. Transport is vital for the economy and more than one of the current disputes are concerned with the government's long-term plans.

The government favours increased use of road transport and the breaking up of the national railway system. This fits in with the containerisation of the docks and future plans for links with Europe.

The National Union of Railwaymen is opposing British Rail's plans to de-centralise pay bargaining and negotiating. This move on the part of British Rail is clearly intended to pave the way for privatisation of the rail network.

In this sense, we do not only need to support the rail workers in their interests but clearly in our own interests as well. The majority of people need a well-run, national, well-subsidised railway network in this country. Increased traffic on the roads is a chaotic, dangerous and destructive way of transport planning.

We have already seen the impact of de-regulation of buses. It has meant increased traffic on the roads: worse driving conditions for those with private cars and worse public transport facilities for those without cars.

The NALGO strike is also concerned with the question of national pay bargaining. The issues of change in their contracts and the breaking down of national gradings are of more importance to NALGO workers than their annual pay claim.

The breaking down of national pay scales and along with this, the strength of unions in both the private and public sector, has been an important aim of the government which is now coming to the top of its agenda.

At the same time, the government is attempting to turn the public against the rail workers. The rail strikes have been 100% solid and have completely disrupted rail networks. The government is trying to turn the blame for this onto the workers and also using this, to build support for their plan to make strikes in the public sector illegal.

THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

There is already no right in this country to strike in solidarity with other workers. This has been termed secondary action and forbidden by law.

The right to strike in your own interests has also been so circumscribed and wrapped up in so much complex legislation that the International Labour Organisation has declared that the British government has effectively denied workers the right to strike.

WORKING CLASS SOLIDARITY

The present government has faced opposition from many sectors of society before. It is only too good at splitting the opposition and diverting it.

If we are to build an effective opposition to the present government, we have to start from building real solidarity on the basis of the interests of working class and other working people. We can only rely on our own strength.

Mandy's Diary

June 2nd: The baby has a wart on his face. I know it's not serious but I really want it removed. Everybody says: "What's that he's got on his face?" The GP referred us to the hospital and we saw the consultant. He's going to book us a bed on a children's ward for a day and try to freeze it off. He hopes that by doing this he can avoid giving the baby a general anaesthetic. "It's just a five minute job," he said. I hoped he would freeze it then and there. But no, we've got to go back and be admitted to hospital.

What a performance! We had to be there for 8.30 a.m., which meant I had to organise someone else to take my daughter to school and I had to miss the little play she was taking part in that morning. About four different people came round with forms to fill in, asking us the same questions. Two nurses came along to make up the bed. I told them he wouldn't need a bed. He's only going to have a wart frozen. "He might be a bit groggy afterwards," said one of the nurses. Then I started panicking. Might be going to have an anaesthetic after all? What is going to happen that could make him groggy?

"When will we be able to go home?" I asked them. "I have to pick my daughter up from school at 3 o'clock." "I can't tell you that," said the nurse. "You'll have to wait till the consultant has done all his operations. Then he'll do the ward round. Only he can discharge you. But I expect it will be some time today."

Now I started panicking in earnest. "You mean he might have to stay in over night?" I had to get to a phone and make arrangements for my daughter. I hadn't any small change. By this time, I needed not only a phone, but the toilet and a cup of tea. Parents were expected to be there with their children but no refreshments were provided for them. Nobody had said anything to me about what I might need. I hadn't come prepared because I never anticipated that it would be more than a five minute job.

The ward clerk put me right. She directed me to the phone and the toilet on the ward. I phoned the childminder. She would have to cancel an appointment in order to collect my daughter. But she would do it. As for the cup of tea, I would have to go off the ward

for that. I wasn't going to leave him. He might not be there when I got back.

Then a doctor came round to examine the baby. "Undress him and put him on the bed," he said. The baby didn't want to be on the bed. He wanted to run round the ward. "He's a difficult child," said the doctor. "No, he isn't," I said. "He just doesn't know what's happening." (That makes two of us, I thought.)

When he had gone, the baby ran about while I sat down and watched television. Another parent and I were the only people watching it. It was a quiz show and we were both guessing the answers. The ward clerk came up, and without a word to either of us, switched channels and walked away again.

Then the sister came along. "Do you want a gown for the baby?" she said. No, I didn't. But we had to have one. "When did he last have anything to eat or drink?" she asked. "Nine o'clock this morning, I gave him a bottle here on the ward." The sister turned round to a junior nurse and reprimanded her. "I'm sorry," I said. "I didn't know that he wasn't allowed to have a drink." Neither of them said anything in reply.

At 11 o'clock an adult-sized stretcher was wheeled in, with no sides to it. "I'm not putting him on that," I said. "He'll fall off. Can't I take him in the buggy?" From the way they looked at each other, you would have thought I was talking Chinese, or asking for the moon. "You can carry him," they said.

When we got to the theatre, everyone had a cap and gown and overshoes on. The baby started to cry, especially when he saw me disappear into a changing room to get dressed up.

To cut a long story short, it was a five minute job. "When can we go home?" I asked. The consultant looked surprised. "Why, now, of course."

"Please will you tell the ward staff that," I said. "It's like Colditz in there."

June 3rd: Somebody down the road has got a new sticker for his car. It says: Bird Conservation Area. Look out for the tits. I wonder how his wife feels when she drives it.

June 11th: I went to a party last night at a friend's house. That doesn't happen very often

these days. My friend has recently married an American citizen. They had been living together for a while and would have been quite happy to carry on doing so. But Nancy was being harrassed by the Home Office. It won't be long, they thought, before the deportation threat starts. So they thought it best to get married. But the harrassment didn't end there. They had to prove it was a 'legitimate' marriage. They had to submit their love letters. They couldn't have the quiet wedding they wanted. It had to be a 'traditional white' wedding. And they had to submit their wedding photos. Even after they were married, the police kept calling round, any time of day asking to see her passport, making racist comments like: "It's nice to see a passport with proper writing on it," looking at the walls to see if they've got any political posters up. "Aliens" are not allowed to be involved in any kind of political activity. Nancy is always referred to as an "alien". It makes her feel like ET, she said.

If you marry an "alien", you and the person you marry have to be self-supporting. Neither of you can claim state benefits of any kind. My friend is self-employed and there are times when there's no money coming in. Nancy has been told to get a job, and if she doesn't earn at least £3,000 a year, she still risks being deported. So she started looking for a job, and she got an interview for a job in London. It was a job she wanted, and they offered it to her. Jim's business is in Birmingham and he doesn't want to move to London.

"What are you going to do?", I asked them. "It looks as if we might have to live apart during the week," they said. "And commute at weekends. This wasn't what we got married for. We want to be together like other couples. But we're lucky, we're white. Some black families are separated for years. Our Indian neighbour, for example, has been waiting three years for her husband to get permission to join her."

"One family we know have been fighting for 12 years to get their sons to England. The sons came over on holiday. When the Home Office said they had to go back, the 15-year old committed suicide on the railway line, just lay down in front of a train."

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The growing environmental crisis by Joe Steel

The recent International Environment Day and the electoral gains of the 'Greens' in the European elections, highlighted the growing concern of people about the threats to the environment.

The "environmental movement" is made up of a large number of organisations and individuals all with differing demands and priorities. But they have in common that they expose and demand an end to damage to the environment.

What problems do they raise?

How serious are these problems?

Who is to blame?

What is the communist record on the issue?

A system based on the maximum profit for the few was not concerned with either the short-term or long-term effects on either the workforce or environment.

This, of course, begs the question: was it industrialisation as an inevitable stage in society's development that made pollution inevitable; or was it the particular way that industry was developed by capitalism that was at fault?

This is a question which requires more examination. It seems inevitable that society would develop to use fossil fuels (coal, oil, etc.) as its major energy source. Also, the knowledge about the possible

greenhouse effects would not be known about at the time. However, there are plenty of examples of the factory owners living well away from the stench and fumes suffered by their workers and their families.

Whatever the situation in the past, it is clear that today the imperialists and their system are the main ones responsible for global environmental problems.

Obviously, there is much in the way of pollution which comes from Third World countries. However, these countries are often dominated and controlled by various imperialist powers. The peoples of those countries

cannot be held responsible. They have no control over their own countries.

What about the different socialist countries? For all their other achievements, any visitor will tell you stories about factory chimneys belching out black smoke and industrial conditions as bad as nineteenth century industrial centres in Britain. This is obviously true and a significant contribution to pollution on a world scale. However, if you are talking about blame, this still lies with the imperialists and their system.

Any state that really breaks with the imperialist system faces enormous problems. All

THE WAY FORWARD

To some extent, the imperialist system is responding to environmental issues. International conferences and commitments on the ozone layer have taken place. Lead-free petrol is becoming more available. But imperialism will only make the changes that it can make profitable. It is all well and good to be able to develop ozone-friendly spray cans and fridges. But this is being done in the context of maintaining a technological monopoly over the Third World.

On the other hand, there is an argument that it is inherent in the imperialist economic

WHO IS DESTROYING THE WORLD?

One article cannot begin to answer all these questions. We can at least put some ideas forward on some of them and raise some of the issues we think are important.

IS THERE AN ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS?

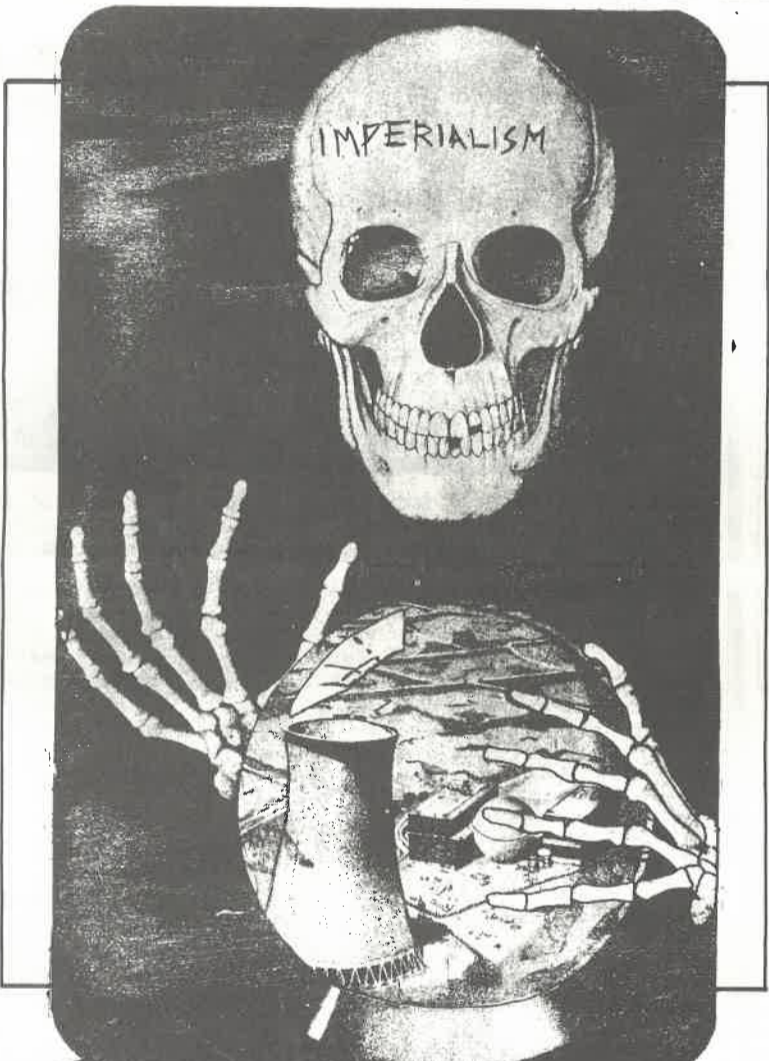
It is clear that holes in the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, destruction of the rain forests, the effect of acid rain etc., will alter the climate of the world. Indeed, there is evidence that it has already started. Opinions differ as to how big a change will occur. But it is clear that it will bring major catastrophes to large parts of the world. Countries across the globe, whatever their class structure, will be affected.

Besides the effects on the climate, there is also a major problem with more general pollution which is widespread throughout most, if not all, countries in the world.

It must be recognised that it is the campaigns of the environmentalists that have exposed these threats to the world's people.

WHO IS TO BLAME?

Global pollution and environmental damage of the sort experienced today can be clearly traced back to the industrialisation which developed under capitalism. It was the expansion of capitalism, and its development into imperialism, which made the problem global.



the socialist states so far, from Russia in the 1920's, to China, Albania in the 1950's, were established in economically backward countries. The basic needs of the people were enormous. They did not have the luxury of building up a balanced, environmentally sound economy, using all the best pollution-controlling technology available. What independent development can be built has to use whatever equipment and technology that are available.

Of course, there have been mistakes made and what pollution controls could have been used have not always been enforced. Also maximum production and meeting five-year plans have not always been simply to meet the people's needs. There has been an element of competing with capitalism as a goal in itself. Success of the system has been judged in too narrow a way, seeing production as a thing in itself, without worrying too much about the quality of products or long-term consequences of that production.

There is also a danger that an element of Marxist theory can be used in a one-sided way to ignore the environmental issues. Marx talked about a man-made world. Marxism holds the view, quite correctly, that people can learn and use the laws of nature to the advantage of people. This can lead to ignoring the wider consequences of socialist planning.

system that the mad scramble for profits inherently results in pollution and environmental damage and that any changes will be only minor.

The possibility of planning to take into account consequences on the environment can be made part of the struggle to build a socialist society. There is nothing inherent in a socialist society that makes environmental damage inevitable. The only limitations are what is actually known about possible pollutants at the time and the limits imposed by the hostile imperialist system.

Obviously, communists have much to learn from the issues and campaigns highlighted by the environmentalists.

At the same time, we should not see the campaigns on environmental issues as a substitute for the class struggle or the national liberation struggle. We should see them as an intrinsic part of these struggles.

The working class has no real power to begin to tackle the environmental damage without first seizing state power. Equally the oppressed peoples of the Third World cannot play their role in cleaning up the planet until they have been successful in their national liberation struggles.

WOMEN IN PRISON

Most of the prisoners in England's jails experience extremely barbarous and inhuman treatment. But a recent report reveals that it is women prisoners in Durham who suffer the worst. H-Wing at Durham is a maximum security wing for women only.

The report, prepared for Women in Prison and three other groups, says: "Women in the prison are being treated less favourably than they would if they were male long-term or Category A prisoners." (Category A prisoners are those regarded as the greatest security risk and consequently treated most harshly.)

The report highlights, among other degrading and unhygienic conditions:

1. Lack of sanitation - there are no lavatories in the cells, which means that the women must "slop out" and the lavatories which do exist afford no privacy.
2. Absence of natural light or sunshine: the cells have tiny windows which are too high to see out of and provide so little light that the cells depend on permanent fluorescent lighting.
3. Separation from families:

many of the prisoners are from the South of England and the distance from their homes results in enforced separation.

Many women have even had to give up their children for adoption!

Durham has seen a number of suicides, attempted suicides and self-mutilation by women prisoners. Stress-related hysterectomies are also common. And nearly one third of the women suffer from psychiatric illnesses and should be in hospital not in prison at all.

(Durham's H-Wing was previously closed down after a report and investigation had found it, unsuitable for men prisoners.)

WORMWOOD SCRUBS

The plight of mentally-ill prisoners was also exposed in a report on London's Wormwood Scrubs prison. It points to a "growing influx of mentally-ill patients who are refused DSS places"; "the chronic shortage of secure units" (secure units are mental hospitals to which prisoners can be sent); resulting in the presence in the Scrubs of patients who "according to the Mental Health Act, should not be in prison at all".

The Chairman of the Prison Visitors' Board, which prepared the report, said: "Until you change the government's view that says 'Let's stick mentally-ill people away anywhere you can, out of sight', the situation will not change. Conditions in the Scrubs are bad enough for perfectly fit people."

The report describes the prison as "a nineteenth century alternative to transportation, attempting to become a twenty-first century penal establishment." It comments: "It is astonishing that inmates do not find greater cause for disturbance.... The conditions under which the archaic and unhygienic procedure of slopping-out is carried out are a potential flashpoint in any wing."

MORE SUICIDES

Two more suicides have been reported in English jails recently. Arron Danks, aged 28, who was serving five days for non-payment of fines, and was on remand for a theft charge, hanged himself in Manchester's Strangeways prison. Anthony Stanley, aged 28, who was serving five years, hanged himself in Stafford prison.



I'll wear no convicts uniform
Nor meekly serve my time
That Britain might make Ireland's fight
Eight hundred years of crime
(Bobby Sands)

For two decades, Britain has fought a cruel and cynical war against the nationalist people of the North of Ireland. This war began in 1969, when British troops returned to Ireland. Ostensibly there to "keep the peace" between the Protestant and Catholic communities, their real role soon became clear: to crush the Civil Rights Movement and prop up the disintegrating sectarian state Britain had established when it partitioned Ireland in 1922. So began twenty years of bitter conflict.

But the war in the North of Ireland which continues unabated to this day, is only the most recent episode in Britain's 800-year long efforts to subjugate the Irish people. At every stage, the Irish have risen against the foreign oppressor and asserted Ireland's right to nationhood.

FEUDALISM

The mediaeval invasion of Ireland in 1169-1172 never managed to extend beyond a small area around Dublin known as 'The Pale'. Nevertheless, the reasons for the invasion lay in the attempts of the Anglo-Norman kings to extend feudal property relations - i.e. serfdom - to the peoples of Ireland who had previously enjoyed a communal system of land ownership and a sophisticated form of democratic government.

THE REFORMATION

It was not until the end of the 16th century that the English monarchs were able to secure a significant hold over Ireland. Along with Italy, Spain and France, Ireland had remained firmly Catholic in the face of the Reformation. Perceived as a threat to the strategic interests of Protestant England, Elizabeth 1st set about subordinating Ireland to English rule. Ironically, given what was to occur later, it was Ulster that proved the most resistant of the Irish provinces. Its chieftains, O'Neill and O'Donnell held out against Elizabeth and her armies until the early years of the 17th century.

PLANTATION

Their defiance of the English crown cost the people of Ulster dearly. As a matter of deliberate policy land was taken from dissident Irish Catholics and given over to "undertakers". These were landlords who "undertook" to bring in Scottish and English farmers to settle the rich lands of Ulster. Encamped in fortified villages, these settlers enjoyed a privileged system of tenancy while the native Irish were pushed into a subsistence level of existence on the marginal lands of the great estates. As a result of this process, England's first colony was established in Ireland and the basis for the Protestant ascendancy was laid in the north of the country.

CROMWELL

Civil war in England, beginning in 1642, threw the government of Ireland into confusion and risings against English rule took place in a number of towns throughout the 1640's. With the defeat and execution of Charles 1st, however, and Cromwell's installation as Protector General, Ireland again became the focus of English attentions. With 15,000 men behind him, Cromwell visited genocide on the people of Ireland. Over one third of the country's population died by sword, famine and plague. A further 100,000 were deported as slaves to the West Indies and 40,000 more emigrated.

THE PENAL LAWS

Those who survived the genocide and remained in Ireland became an underclass in their own country, forced to live under what was essentially an early form of apartheid. A system of penal laws was introduced debarring the Catholic Irish from any form of political or

economic power. The system of land ownership, particularly, was re-written so that by the middle of the 18th century, Catholics owned only 7% of the land. As a result, they were forced to labour in the fields of landlord or tenant farmers. There, the wages were so low that it has subsequently been estimated that the Irish peasant had to work 250 days of a year to meet "basic" payments of rent (paid to absentee landlords), tithes (paid to the Anglican clergy) and taxes (paid to maintain the British military presence).



WOLFE TONE AND THE UNITED IRISHMEN

In the late 18th century, however, England's difficulties again proved to be Ireland's opportunity. The American War of Independence forced the English to make a number of concessions to the interests of the developing landlord, business and professional classes in Ireland. In order to guarantee loyalty and guard against invasion by France - now allied to America - favourable terms of trade and an Irish parliament were granted. Power remained rested, however, in the hands of the Protestant few. The vast majority were left without the franchise and in poverty. As a result, more radical political movements emerged.

Foremost among these were the "United Irishmen". Led by a Protestant barrister, Wolfe Tone, the Society of United Irishmen drew heavily on the inspiration of the French Revolution and Thomas Payne's 'Declaration of the Rights of Man'. However, what were essentially bourgeois demands in the context of the French Revolution - universal male suffrage, for example - represented, in the context of Ireland, a fundamental challenge to imperialist domination. At the same time, they recognised that ultimately only the force of arms could guarantee Ireland's freedom. As a result, and in collaboration with

agricultural boom during the early years of the century had collapsed with the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815. As a result, a considerable amount of land was returned to pasture. When the potato plant - by mid-century the staple of the peasant diet - was struck by blight in 1845, the result was a famine that gripped Ireland for the next six years. During this period, the population was almost halved by starvation and emigration. All the while, foodstuffs such as cattle, pigs and sheep raised on pasture land, continued to be exported to Britain.

THE FENIANS

TIME

movements in England, Scotland and Europe, in 1795 the United Irishmen launched what was to be the first serious military offensive against British rule in Ireland.

ACT OF UNION

When the rising failed, the penalty was severe. All the leaders of the United Irishmen were hanged, suspects were flogged and their houses burned. Moreover, to preserve their shaken hold on Ireland, the British passed the Act of Union in 1801. From now on, Ireland was no longer to be simply conquered but was to be assimilated into the body of the British state. Consequently when the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed in 1829, giving the vote to sections of the Catholic population for the first time since Cromwell, political power remained elsewhere.

THE FAMINE

Economic power also lay elsewhere as the famine years of 1846-1851 were to prove. An

Throughout the period of Union then, Ireland's grievances continued unabated. At the heart of them was the question of land ownership which fuelled continued unrest. The dispossessed peasants along with Irish workers in Britain and America proved the popular base for the Fenian movement of the 1860's. Seeking to take advantage of growing industrial unrest in Britain, the Fenians set their hopes on a rising early in 1867 and issued a direct appeal for support to English workers:

"....As for you workmen of England, it is not only your hearts we wish but your arms. Remember the starvation and degradation brought to your firesides by the oppression of labour. Remember the past, look well into the future and avenge yourselves by giving liberty to your children in the coming struggle for human freedom. Herewith we proclaim the Irish Republic, THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT."

HOME RULE

Although again the rising itself failed, the tenant farmers and peasantry in Ireland remained undefeated. By 1880, they had succeeded in making whole areas of Ireland ungovernable. The British were forced to make a number of concessions to their interests, especially when a general election in 1885 returned a minority Liberal government. To stay in power, Gladstone, then Prime Minister, was forced to do a deal with the 86 Irish nationalist MPs led by Charles Stewart Parnell. For the first time in almost one hundred years, Home Rule was seriously back on the agenda. Commitment to the Union, however, transcended

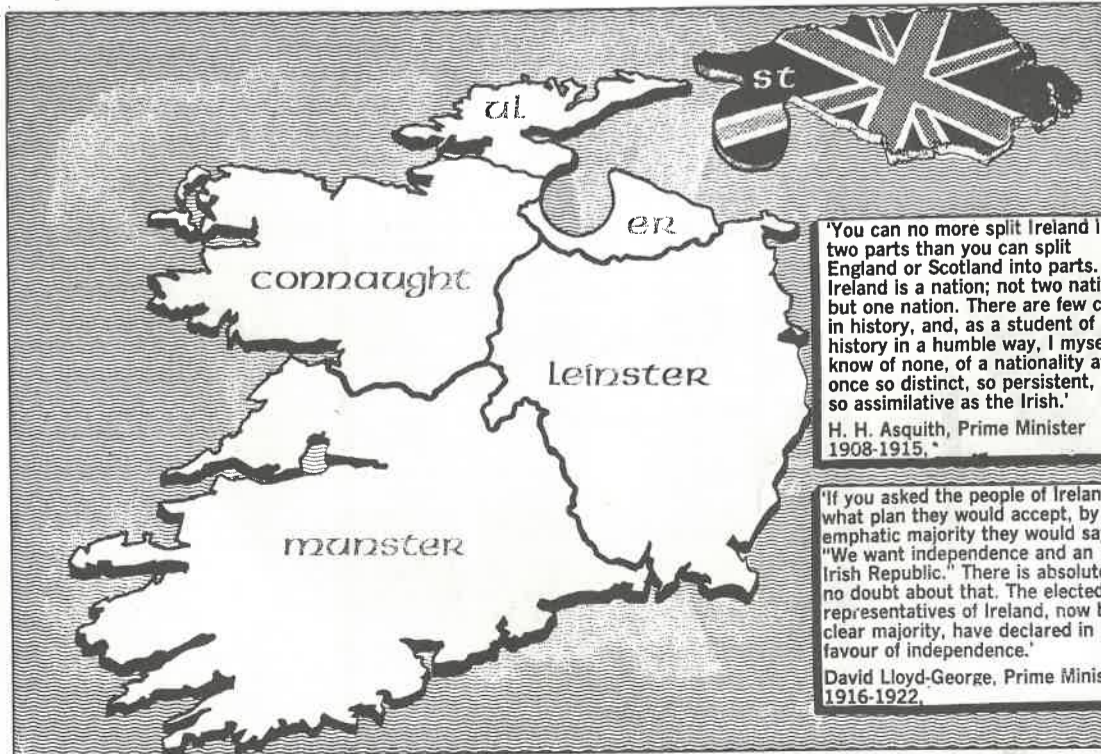
immediate inter-party differences. When the Bill went to the vote in 1886, 93 Liberals defected to vote with the Tories to defeat Home Rule and in the process bring down the Gladstone administration.

EASTER RISING

The struggle for Home Rule was an attempt to win freedom for Ireland by constitutional means. In the years leading up to the First World War, the issue continued to haunt the British establishment. However, in the aftermath of the Dublin docks strike of 1913, important links had been made between socialists and labour leaders such as James Connolly and Jim Larkin, and nationalists such as Peadar Kirby. Under their leadership, and with the Easter Rising of 1916, the Irish people showed themselves ready to resort to more direct means to throw off the British oppressor. Although the Easter Rising too was defeated, it was clear that Britain was losing its grip on Ireland.

PARTITION

In the general election of 1918 the Irish people delivered a decisive verdict in favour of independence. They elected 73 Sinn Fein MPs, out of a total of 105 parliamentary seats in Ireland. In January 1919, the Sinn Fein MPs constituted themselves as an independent parliament - the Dail Eireann - and began to set up their own apparatus of law and government independent of Britain. The result was a full-scale war of independence against the British armed forces. True to form the British government decided on its own solution to the crisis that ensued: Ireland was to be partitioned. In 1921, under Lloyd George's threat of "immediate and terrible war within three days", six of the Irish leaders signed an agreement which gave dominion status to the 26 counties of the Irish Free State. The remaining six counties in the north east formed the new state of Northern Ireland with its own government but which remained part of the United Kingdom.



"You can no more split Ireland into two parts than you can split England or Scotland into parts. Ireland is a nation; not two nations, but one nation. There are few cases in history, and, as a student of history in a humble way, I myself know of none, of a nationality at once so distinct, so persistent, and so assimilative as the Irish."

H. H. Asquith, Prime Minister 1908-1915.

"If you asked the people of Ireland what plan they would accept, by an emphatic majority they would say, 'We want independence and an Irish Republic.' There is absolutely no doubt about that. The elected representatives of Ireland, now by a clear majority, have declared in favour of independence."

David Lloyd-George, Prime Minister 1916-1922.

The great appear great to us
only because we are on our knees:
Let us rise
(James Connolly)



THE STRUGGLE AGAINST PARTITION

THE SECTARIAN STATE

The area encompassed by the Northern Ireland state was consciously carved out to ensure an inbuilt Protestant majority. In the years since it was founded, electoral boundaries have been continually redrawn in order to maintain this situation. Systematic discrimination in the allocation of housing has also served this purpose. Likewise discrimination in employment encouraged high rates of emigration from within the Catholic community. At the same time, it has ensured the support of the

to advance themselves combined with the wider frustrations of the Catholic working class in the ghettos of West Belfast and Derry. Drawing inspiration from the Black Civil Rights Movement in the southern states of America, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) brought the situation in the North to a head. In the face of widespread popular protest the Northern Ireland state proved unable to deliver even the most basic reforms. Instead peaceful demonstrations were met with violence and brutality from both Loyalist gangs and the police who encouraged and led them on. Forced to defend themselves against successive

THE ROLE OF THE ARMY

The return of British troops to Ireland brought with it a number of reforms intended to defuse the situation. Any illusions that the nationalist population might have had about the role of the military rapidly disappeared in the period that followed. During the Battle of the Bogside and in the attempted pogrom against Catholics living in West Belfast shortly afterwards, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) had been reborn. Initially it served as a local defence force against Loyalist attacks.

It was against the IRA that the army gradually came to con-

The following account of events in August 1969 is taken from Gerry Adams' book, 'The Politics of Irish Freedom', published by Brandon Press:

By August the balloon was up. There were days of heavy rioting in Ardoyne and in Unity Flats. Patrick Corry, a Catholic, was beaten to death in an RUC barracks. The first Catholic families were being intimidated out of the Crumlin Road area by loyalist gangs. In Derry a Bogside Defence Association had been established by republicans in preparation for expected loyalist and RUC attacks during the annual loyalist parade on 12 August.

On 8 August Prime Minister Chichester Clarke, his Home Affairs Minister and James Callaghan met in London to discuss the situation. British troops were put on stand-by in Derry and Belfast in support of the Unionist regime. The highly provocative loyalist march was going ahead and the 'croppies' were expected to lie down once again. But they didn't. Instead the battle of the Bogside began.

RUC armoured cars attacked the Bogside barricades and for the first time CS gas was used. Defenders hurled stones, bricks, broken paving slabs and petrol bombs and the tricolour flew from a tower block alongside the flag of James Connolly's Irish Citizen Army, the Starry Plough. The siege continued day and night, but even with a force of 700 at their command, with armoured cars, batons and CS gas the RUC could not subdue the Bogside....."

At 5 pm on 14 August British troops entered Derry and took up positions. The RUC and 'B' Specials were pulled back and the troops remained outside the Bogside. In Belfast, barricades had been erected on the Falls Road. Loyalist mobs, in many instances led by 'B' Specials, attacked and burned Catholic houses. The RUC, with Shorland armoured cars and Browning heavy machine guns, fired into Divis Flats; in Ardoyne they opened up with sub-machine guns. Seven people were killed in loyalist and RUC attacks, including John Gallagher, who was shot dead in Armagh by the 'B' Specials. The IRA had virtually no guns with which to resist the attacks, but a small number of weapons was mustered and played a role in driving the loyalists and Specials out of the Falls Road.

Arms were rushed up from the 26 counties and barricades were strengthened to meet the continuing loyalist attacks. British troops took up positions on the Falls Road; they did not intervene to take down barricades but neither did they intervene when loyalists burned down the whole of Catholic Bombay Street and a young Fianna boy, Gerard McCauley, was killed trying to defend the street. As the RUC and loyalists attacked Ardoyne, another Catholic street, Brookfield Street, was burned down. In all, 1,820 families left their homes in Belfast, 1,505 of them Catholics, during July, August and September.....

The situation had developed rapidly. The demands of the civil rights movement had been demands for rights which were taken for granted in western Europe and they were demands for rights which existed in the rest of the so-called United Kingdom. In retrospect, they were, in themselves, unremarkable, simple and moderate demands. Yet they had evoked a ferocious response from the state and its supporters and the consequence of that response had left the authority and stability of the state in tatters. When I had first become involved in political action I had asked myself what was so rebellious about demanding a decent home; what was so subversive about seeking equal voting rights. I had received my answer, as had we all.

The civil rights movement had been looking for democratisation of the state, but the state had made abundantly clear the fact that it would not and could not implement democratic reforms. The movement had placed its demands on the state; it had not demanded the abolition of the state and the intervention of the British army, the constitutional question had come to the fore and the whole existence of the six-county state stood in question.

The republican strategy of organising politically to achieve democracy within the state, which had involved a turning away from the physical force tradition and a dumping of arms, had run headlong into the reality of the irreformably sectarian state. That the republican movement now turned to armed resistance had nothing to do with any ingrained militarism but had everything to do with the stark realities of the situation.



Protestant working class for the status quo. Meanwhile sweeping powers of arrest and detention were given to the police to crush any form of co-ordinated opposition to this situation.

CIVIL RIGHTS

The state of Northern Ireland was therefore grounded in the permanent subjugation of the "minority" Catholic population who were forced to live as a displaced people in their own country. For fifty years, the British government remained indifferent to (and encouraged) this situation. During the 1960s, however, the inability of the Catholic middle class

sectarian attacks, the nationalist communities found that passive resistance was no longer enough.

BATTLE OF THE BOGSIDE

In August 1969, crack units of the Royal Ulster Constabulary mounted a co-ordinated attack on the Catholic area of Derry known as the Bogside. For two days, the community held out against the invaders. Eventually the police were forced out of the Bogside, exhausted, demoralised and defeated. The Northern Ireland government had lost control of the situation and they called on the British government to contain the situation.

concentrate its attention. Curfews and house searches brought them into sharper and sharper conflict with the Catholic population. By 1971, this had escalated into a fierce guerrilla war in the cities as the army attempted to eliminate the IRA. Internment without trial was introduced in August 1971 and 342 were seized in an attempt to crush this resistance. Early in the following year, the Paratroop Regiment opened fire on a crowd of 20,000 peaceful and unarmed demonstrators in Derry. Fourteen were killed and ten wounded in what was to become known as Bloody Sunday. The true role of the army was no longer in dispute.

TWENTY WASTED YEARS

The period since August 1969 has seen a series of attempts to reconcile the Catholic population to the existing set up while meeting their organised militancy with bloody repression. Like all initiatives on the part of the British government, however, they have all made the fundamental mistake of seeking to resolve the "conflict" within the context of the Northern Ireland statelet. They have failed - and later refused - to recognise that the civil rights movement had opened up the whole question of the constitutional situation of the North. The struggle for civil rights had given way to the struggle for national rights - i.e. the dismantling of the sectarian state and the re-unification of Ireland. Britain's only response to this just demand has been further military repression.

No-one can afford another twenty years of British refusal to allow the Irish people to determine their own future. Britain must recognise that it has no progressive role to play in Ireland. Neither in the long history of its involvement with Ireland has it ever played such a role. Ireland belongs to the Irish people.

TROOPS OUT NOW!
SELF DETERMINATION
FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE!



What the Labour Government said :

The official Home Office Statement on the deployment of troops on 14th August:

"The Government of Northern Ireland has informed the United Kingdom Government that as a result of the severe and prolonged rioting in Londonderry it has no alternative but to ask for the assistance of the troops, at present stationed in Northern Ireland to prevent a breakdown of law and order.... The GOC Northern Ireland has been instructed to take all the necessary steps, acting impartially between citizen and citizen to restore law and order

"Troops will be withdrawn as soon as this is accomplished. This is a limited operation and during it the troops will remain in direct and exclusive control of the GOC who will continue to be responsible to the United Kingdom Government."

7-Point Declaration by the British Government issued on 19th August:

1. The UK Government reaffirms that nothing which has happened in recent weeks in Northern Ireland derogates from the clear pledge made by successive UK Governments that Northern Ireland should not cease to be part of the United Kingdom without the consent of the people of Northern Ireland, or from the provision in Section 1 of the Ireland Act 1949 that in no event will Northern Ireland, or any part thereof cease to be part of the United Kingdom without the consent of the Parliament of Northern Ireland. The border is not an issue...."

"4. The Northern Ireland Government have been informed that troops have been provided on a temporary basis in accordance with the United Kingdom's ultimate responsibility...."

AZANIA



DENOUNCE THE RACIST LIES OF PIK BOTHA

The following press statement was issued by the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania on 29th May, 1989.

The BBC report of the 28th May, 1989, reported Pik Botha, the racist South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, to have told Mr James Baker, the American Secretary of State, that his National Party will fight the coming September 6th, all-white elections "on the basis of dismantling apartheid". Pik Botha had told the Americans that "white domination must come to an end regardless of whether black opponents are willing to join talks." Racist Pik Botha made this statement in Rome and this is a very cunning statement.

Pik Botha is notorious for being a master-mind in uttering and spreading lies when his racist country is in a political quagmire. When he was an Ambassador at the United Nations during the 1974 B.J.Vorster regime, he asked the international community to give his government six or twelve months and that apartheid would go. He said: "The kind of apartheid that is condemned in this chamber is not supported by my government." Because of his eloquence on that fateful day, Pik Botha was made a racist Minister of Foreign Affairs. South Africa then got a breathing space.

In 1988, thousands of South African defence forces were trapped at Cuito Cuanevalle in the biggest battle that Southern Africa had ever seen. The racist South African Minister of Defence, Magnus Malan, had to ask Pik Botha to apply his monkey tricks to extricate the racist forces from a military morass. Hence the Brazzaville Protocol of 1st April 1988. That day, Pik Botha said: "We want to be accepted by our African brothers...."

POLITICAL MONKEY TRICKS

Uninformed African brothers and sisters gave Pik Botha a deafening applause. PAC poses these questions: "Since when did Pik Botha become an African? Why was his Africanism realised thousands of kilometres away from Azania? Why did he not declare and pronounce his Africanism in the streets and valleys of Azania, among his local so-called African

brothers?" PAC hopes that events inside occupied Azania will answer these questions before long for everyone to see.

In the midst of all these Pik Botha's political monkey tricks, PAC wishes to warn all and sundry, in Africa and abroad, not to be misled by Pik Botha's antics. These antics are designed to divert the maximum support the liberation forces enjoy from the international community and from the progressive world.

It is a known fact that the South African racist regime is in a tight corner both economically and militarily, hence their R 8.7 billion defence budget this year. Furthermore, there is little doubt now amongst genuine revolutionaries that the objective conditions for the escalation of the revolution are present in the South African situation.

By objective conditions, we mean that the vast majority of the Azanian people have been completely alienated from the Herrenvolk state. They owe it absolutely no loyalty; they consider its police and army as forces of occupation and oppression; its industries, commerce and farming as machines of their enslavement; its white-made laws as devoid of morality and the philosophy of Apartheid Settler-Colonialism as absolutely repugnant. And because of the internal political turmoil, the conditions of the white people have deteriorated; the cost of living has skyrocketed; while real income has declined. It is because of these internal conditions that Pik Botha has to lie without any iota of conscience to the likes of James Baker and the European society.

The PAC of Azania appeals to all the Azanian people and Afrika in particular, and the international community in general, not to be misled by Pik Botha's deceptive pronouncements of ending white domination and dismantling Apartheid after the September 1989 all-white elections.

The struggle must continue until the principle of one person, one vote is realised. Without majority rule, freedom and justice cannot be realised.

Walter Toboti,
PAC Acting Director of Publicity and Information.

Poland



Socialism or Social Democracy

Given the opportunity, the Polish people delivered a humiliating defeat to the ruling Polish United Workers Party (PUWP) in last month's parliamentary election.

On the basis of a 62% turnout, the June elections provided Solidarnosc with a popular endorsement that showed the mass discontent with the alleged socialism of the PUWP.

At the voting booths, Polish voters crossed out 33 of the 35 PUWP candidates on an uncontested list. Those on the establishment's national list required at least 50% endorsement to gain a seat. Among those crossed out were the Polish Prime Minister, Rakowski, and other senior government officials. The government had hurriedly to assemble new candidates to contest the vacant seats in a second round of elections.

The elections did contain an element of choice. This was, however, strictly limited as overall controlling power lies with the Sejm (lower house) where a majority of 65% of the seats are guaranteed to the PUWP's national list. The upper house of the Polish Parliament consists of the Solidarnosc-controlled Senate, elected by popular mandate. It only has powers of a limited veto.

In the aftermath of the elections, the offer of a PUWP-led coalition with Solidarnosc was initially rejected by the trade union which insisted that it fought the elections as the opposition to the PUWP.

Government officials said that there had been a low turnout and that the vote was against the government rather than in favour of the Solidarnosc programme. What they did not say was the dependency on the Soviet Union has been traditionally associated with the PUWP. A vote for Solidarnosc was a vote for Polish independence.

What is likely to follow is a period of consolidation and some form of political accommodation. Polish leader, General Jaruzelski, observed that: "The presence of Gorbachev makes our situation easier because it underlines the correctness of our path of reform." The general also has the cautious goodwill of some Solidarnosc leaders to draw on. One of the movement's election slogans was: Don't emigrate. Vote Solidarnosc.

FROM REPRESSION TO DIALOGUE

Today's official recognition given to the once outlawed trade union is the result of the failures and tensions within Polish society. By the 1970's, the PUWP was seen to have failed. Two workers' revolts (in 1970 and 1976) had culminated in the emergence of NSZZ-Solidarnosc: the independent self-governing trade union, Solidarity, with a membership of up to ten million. The economic crisis and political stalemate forced the PUWP into negotiations with Solidarnosc that resulted in the Gdansk Compromise of August 1981.

In the eyes of some, that political accommodation marked the bankruptcy of the ruling party, which was unable to come to terms with Polish reality.

The party had failed. So the Polish military, headed by General Jaruzelski, stepped into the vacuum, pre-empting any Soviet initiative in that direction. The general was then seen as a Soviet puppet.

Solidarnosc was outlawed. But the following years did not resolve the situation that brought about the military intervention in December 1981. Since the Gdansk Compromise, the PUWP and government had not been able to govern as before. In a very real sense, a whole society had risen against the injustices of Polish reality.

As martial law failed to suppress Solidarnosc, dialogue became inevitable. The question was on what terms? The economic situation continued to deteriorate, and the state's political authority disintegrate even after the lifting of martial rule. The attempted return to normalisation revealed the same basic problems that had given rise to the mass popular protest and creation of Solidarnosc.

The pace has been forced this year after the Polish leader embarked upon direct negotiations with Solidarnosc's leadership during the Round Table talks from February to April and the subsequent legalisation of the independent union.

These days, the Solidarnosc leader, Lech Walesa, is photographed smiling with General Jaruzelski, who is now credited with being a Polish patriot despite his role in 1981.

This change of approach has been forced upon the PUWP as it needs union co-operation in the major tasks that face it.

GIVING SUPPORT TO UNPOPULAR POLICIES

General Jaruzelski described what faces them as "the taking of economically necessary, but socially unpopular decisions - what Mrs Thatcher did with the miners, and in other cases."

The man who ordered the tanks onto the streets of Warsaw in December 1981, needs at least the tacit support of Solidarnosc in "the bold historical experiment" as he describes it, in which political pluralism is the reward for shared responsibility in economic reconstruction.

"You cannot solve a problem without all social and political forces," he said, after the elections. "The only possibility is dialogue and compromise."

The Polish leader faces divisions within the PUWP. It is rumoured that the more reform-minded members (including some in the leadership) plan to abandon the PUWP and form a new leftist (social-democratic) organisation without any facade of Marxist-Leninist norms.

REVISIONISM IN CONTROL

Past manifestations of opportunism and revisionism have led to the political degeneration of the PUWP and of the Polish state. The unhealthy parody of socialism in Polish post-war developments allowed the

conditions to exist in the country for open anti-communist propaganda and for it to penetrate and flourish amidst the development of an ineffective, bureaucratic rule by the PUWP.

The consolidation of revisionist rule in Poland saw the PUWP become more removed from real developments in Polish society. It was no longer rooted in the Polish working class, which led to important ramifications for the nature of the Solidarnosc opposition.

Although the composition of Solidarnosc is overwhelmingly of working people, it is not under the leadership of an independent working class perspective. In the absence of a revolutionary working class organisation, the Polish working class has fallen back on building its own trade unions. Left to its own devices, in an environment where socialism was discredited, the working class acted powerfully in strikes and demonstrations but lacked revolutionary consciousness or a Marxist-Leninist world outlook.

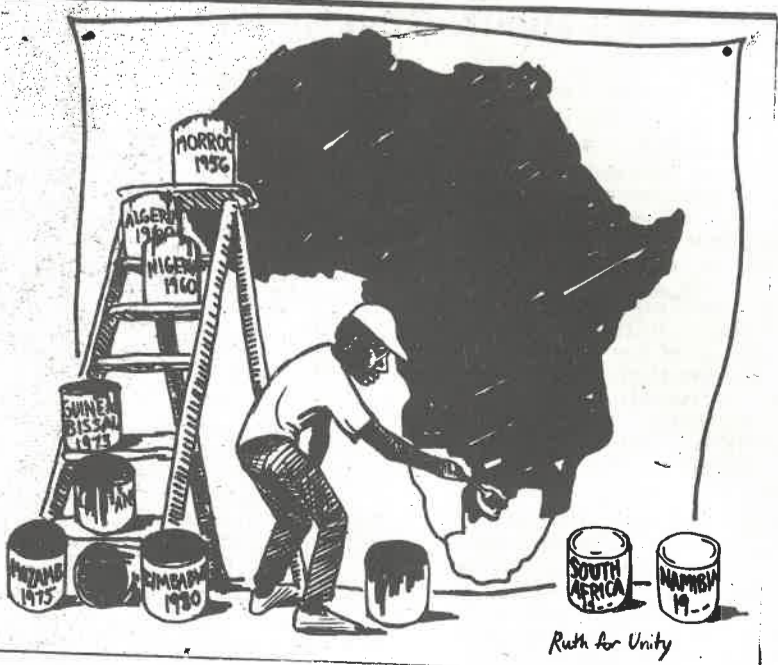
It is social democracy that is playing the leading role, ideologically. Its objective is bourgeois political forms which would break the political monopoly of the revisionist PUWP. This in turn would open up avenues for genuine Marxist-Leninist forces to undertake the task of re-building a political party of the working class.

MANY ROADS TO CAPITALISM

With national strife in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, economic collapse in Poland and Rumania, and the moves to western political forms in Hungary, the Western media have made a great play about the supposed crisis in communism from Poland to Beijing. They are not too keen to highlight the fact that the crisis in so-called socialist countries is the result of re-introducing capitalist values and practices. One newspaper editorial did, however, sarcastically suggest that "there are many roads to capitalism".

Capitalism is quick to proclaim that Marxism is incapable of providing a positive alternative to solve the problems of the modern world. The media point to the likes of General Jaruzelski queuing up for an International Monetary Fund financial package to bail out the Polish economy. Significantly, Mrs Thatcher promised the Polish leader £25 million for management training in market economics during his visit to Britain. But, unlike Thatcher, the General, in good social-democratic fashion, believes that class collaboration policies are needed to resolve the Polish crisis. But in Poland, as in Britain, it is the working class that is expected to bear the cost of these policies.

It remains open to question how far Solidarnosc will be able to set its own political agenda and withstand the woeing of the PUWP. Whatever choice is made, could it be any worse than what the Polish working class has already endured?



BRITAIN'S RACIST IMMIGRATION POLICIES

The government continues to seek new ways of tightening its racist policy of immigration control. The national minority people in Britain are already suffering from the effects of the 1988 Immigration Act. The removal of the right of appeal against a decision to deport is increasing and speeding up the number of deportations.

The requirement that men settled here before 1973 can no longer bring in their wives and children unless they support them without social security and accommodate them without council housing is making family reunions even more difficult.

Keeping out families has been a major plank of recent immigration policy. It is now virtually impossible for people of working age to come to the U.K. (this is called primary immigration). But the racist state seeks to curtail the entry of dependants of people already settled here (secondary immigration). They have had two methods for this. Firstly delay - people applying particularly in Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, must wait for years before they are even interviewed. Secondly, refusal to accept that people are related as claimed - on the basis of absurd and complex interview procedures, immigration officers decide that a person's children are not his or hers.

HOME OFFICE PROVED WRONG

This latter trick has now been threatened by the invention of "genetic fingerprinting"; the so-called DNA test, by which it is possible to show that children are related to parents to a degree of probability of up to several million to one. The use of this test has made a mockery of immigration officers' practice. A pilot study in 1986 showed that of a sample of wives and children who had already been refused entry, 86% were related as claimed. Out of 850 cases where tests were carried out for appeals, nearly 90% were found to be related as claimed.

If the government were genuine about allowing national minorities their legal rights to family reunion, DNA tests could be organised for the entire backlog of families awaiting entry within a few weeks and at a small cost to the state. But that would defeat the whole object of keeping as many black people out for as long as possible.

The Home Office has decided that the applicants must pay for the tests themselves, at a cost of £130 per person, where both parents and each child must be tested. The system of queuing for interview will not be changed.

DELAYS

Worst of all, will be the plight of those who are over 18. Immigration rules do not allow entry to children of people settled here once they are over 18. Many children have applied and been refused in the past because the racist immigration officers did not believe them. Since then, they have become 18. By DNA testing, they can prove that they should never have been refused. Other children may be refused in the future and forced to re-join the queue before the DNA tests can be considered. Since the queue may last three years, many will turn 18 while waiting.

Home Office policy has not yet been stated on this. But it seems likely that they will

say these over-18 applicants will be turned down, unless they can show exceptional circumstances!

POLITICAL ASYLUM

This comes at a time when Britain's attitudes to those claiming political asylum are being exposed before world opinion. The government's reaction to the embarrassing prospect of three and a quarter million British citizens from Hong Kong not having any right to come to Britain has been to repeat that applications from those with over £150,000 or senior civil servants and policemen will be considered. It should be recalled that the 1981 British Nationality Act (based on a Labour Green Paper) was passed mainly in order to keep Hong Kong Chinese out.

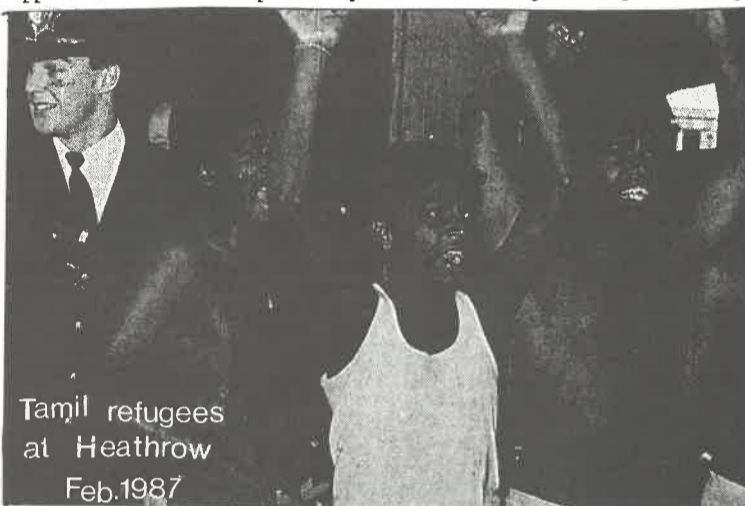
Home Office Minister, Timothy Renton, has reacted to the Kurds seeking asylum from extreme national persecution by Turkey with the classic assertion that they are not political refugees "by any stretch of the definition" and are here to get jobs, social security, housing, etc.

This is hardly surprising given the racist attitudes of the British state which has been demonstrated most recently by the attitude to the Tamil refugees. Of the Tamils whom Douglas Hurd unceremoniously sent back to Sri Lanka as not genuine refugees, five appealed and convinced an adjudicator that Hurd was wrong, not least because they had been tortured after their return. The adjudicator ordered their return to the UK "with the minimum delay". Far from accepting even such a clear cut case gracefully, Hurd appealed the decision and when the appeal was rejected, applied to the High Court to review the decision.

It is not surprising that Britain has the worst record in Europe for complying with international law on refugees.

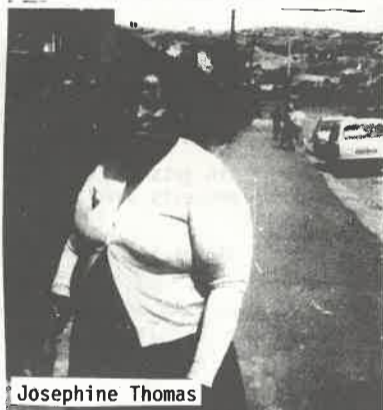


(1981) Anwar Ditta reunited with her children after six years of struggle with the Home Office. It is still true today, that mass support is the most important factor in winning the right to stay.



Tamil refugees at Heathrow Feb. 1987

WORST RECORD IN EUROPE



Josephine Thomas



Jaswinder Kaur



Rose and Brian



Amir Kabul Khan and family

Police Attack Black People W'hampton Tottenham

Wolverhampton police are drawing a cordon of racist terror around the Heath Town estate. Local residents believe that the police are attempting to justify their over-reaction when they raided the local public house allegedly for hard drugs on 21st May.

The chairman of the Heath Town tenants' association, Mr Ralph Edwards, said: "I am not defending drug pushers. I believe that the laws must be upheld. But don't tell me there is any justification in sending the police in riot gear to arrest 20 people."

After the pub raid, 250 police moved in when youths stoned the pub, looted a newsagent's shop and set fire to the rent office. Since then, the police have systematically harassed the black people on the estate, arresting more than 200 of whom 50 have been charged with various offences. There are many reports of police raiding flats on the estate in the early hours of the morning after kicking down the doors.

A spokesperson for the Heath Town defence campaign, Amma, said: "People are being arrested on trumped up charges and many are too scared to complain because they fear more harassment."

She gave examples of people who had taken part in the campaign having their homes raided and ransacked on the basis of spurious information. Of the initial police action, she said: "We saw the riot vans waiting to go into the estate before there was any trouble. We believe the police raids since then have been an attempt to justify the heavy-handed policing on the night of the supposed riot. The police wanted an excuse to up their presence on the estate and criminalise black people."

The local vicar, Rev. Alister Palmer, commented: "I think there has been intimidation and straightforward racist policing, which has been off the cuff rather than organised."

The local community would not agree with his qualification.

Bernie Grant, Tottenham's black Labour MP, presented cases of police attacks on black people in his constituency to a press conference on 12th May.

One family had their house raided by 8 officers following a dispute between a youth and a taxi-driver. The police assaulted the family members and hit a young woman so severely on the back that she sustained kidney damage and was admitted to hospital.

Another woman, Denise Bailey, was asleep in her flat with her five-year old son, when her door was smashed in by plain clothes officers with dogs. They refused to identify themselves. They would not allow Mrs Bailey to dress and she had to sit at the edge of her bed for an hour and a half while the officers conducted a search. Only at the end of it did they produce a search warrant.

Mrs Bailey, who was not arrested or charged, said: "I felt as if I'd been raped. My son is still having nightmares and we have not slept at the flat since."

LETTER

Dear Editor,

The fascist 'Main Event' reported on in your last issue did not go as smoothly as the 'Blood and Honour' group would have wished. The concerts did go ahead but at an alternative venue, after their first venue, Camden Town Hall, had cancelled the booking after being informed of the nature of the gathering. This meant a lost deposit.

Any fascist who made it to the assembly point at Speakers Corner was met by determined opposition, a couple of hundred strong, and the fascists were persuaded to leave. Substantial damage was done to the windows of a coach carrying fascists as it tried to speed away from Hyde Park. The police, not too happy with the methods of persuasion used, called up reinforcements. But their colleagues were being entertained by a large protest against 'Satanic Verses'. When the riot vans did appear there were some arrests of anti-fascists. Other anti-fascists dispersed and any fascist they ran into on the Underground or on the streets, got the message: fascists not welcome here.

I was amused to see that the two fascist candidates at the Vauxhall by-election got only 210 votes between them. I hear they didn't get their message across that well. Or was it that they did? When Harrington, one of North London Poly's most unwanted ex-students, attempted to canvas around the Elephant and Castle area of south London, he had to abandon the attempt because of opposition from local youths.

In the North East, fascist groups have picked up some support in the formerly solid Labour area of Durham. In areas of industrial devastation, like the one-time steel town of Consett, they have lured disaffected youth sickened by a Labour Party that does not fight for working people.

The local Tyneside and District Anti-Fascist Association produced a pamphlet 'Facing the Threat: fascism and the labour movement' to highlight the dangers that the ideas of racism and fascism hold. Let's hope that those who jeer at anti-fascist activity, because only a few dozen turned up for a pitiful fascist demonstration when Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams spoke to the Socialist Conference in Sheffield, will take heed of the warning.

London Anti-Fascist

FREEDOM FOR IRELAND

TWENTY YEARS OF STRUGGLE

WOMEN'S VITAL ROLE

THE MAIN EVENTS

Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey was active in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. At this year's International Women's Day rally, held outside Maghaberry Prison, she gave the following account of how the movement had developed and of women's part in it, as reported in 'An Phoblacht/Republican News', of March 9th, 1989:

"When we started in the civil rights movement we really didn't know, very effectively, where we were going, because many, in fact all of us, felt it wouldn't last very long and very innocently we believed we would get civil rights and

Bond, a Derry woman, and a group of ordinary women in Derry who did not see themselves as feminists, did not see themselves as fighting any great battles but fighting a very practical day to day battle. They needed houses for their children and their grandchildren. These women leaders of the early civil rights period were not people like Bernadette Devlin but people whose names were known then and are not known now..."

As soon as the civil rights movement elected a leadership, however, only a few token women were elected onto the committee. But as Bernadette pointed out,

nothing uplifting about either being a prisoner or doing the broad political work or taking up the military struggle - none of these women do it for kicks, or excitement or to be personally uplifted. It's because we live in a society where human beings cannot survive unless, whatever way we can, we battle to make a better life. And by God we have paid for it and we have come to the prisons and continue to bury our dead.

"We have built up over 20 years such tears and such sorrow, such suffering that if anybody had told us that's what lay down the road for us I honestly think in our innocence and

- 1968 - Civil Rights marches attacked in Derry
- 1969 - Split between 'Stickies' (Official IRA) and Provisional IRA
 - 'B' Specials disbanded
- 1970 - Ulster Defence Regiment formed to replace 'B' Specials
- 1971 - Internment without trial introduced
 - Widespread civil disobedience campaign
- 1972 - Bloody Sunday. 14 people murdered by Parachute Regiment
 - Stormont dissolved
- 1973 - Sunningdale - Council of Ireland formed with government ministers from Britain and Southern Ireland
- 1974 - Loyalist Ulster Workers Council strike against power sharing
- 1975 - Ceasefire by Provisional IRA. Breaks down in same year
 - Internment ended
- 1976 - Merlyn Rees, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, declares the phasing out of political status for POWs
 - Britain found guilty of torture of prisoners by European Court of Human Rights

- 1977 - Ulsterisation begun by British government
- 1978 - Fair Employment Agency admits Catholics suffer more unemployment than Protestants
- 1979 - Airey Neave killed
 - 18 Paratroopers killed at Warrenpoint and Moutbatten in Sligo
- 1980 - Haughey and Thatcher release communique announcing closer cooperation
 - First Hunger Strike starts but called off after British government pretends to concede demands
- 1981 - Hunger Strike begins led by Bobby Sands
 - Bobby Sands wins Fermanagh and South Tyrone by-election
 - Ten Hunger Strikers die
 - Hunger Strike called off
- 1982 - Sinn Fein gets 30% of nationalist vote in elections
 - Major protests over 'shoot-to-kill' policy being operated by RUC
- 1983 - First of the 'supergrass' trials
 - Great Escape - 38 prisoners escape from Maze Prison
- 1984 - Brighton bombing of Thatcher's hotel
 - European Parliament calls for ending of use of plastic bullets
- 1985 - Anglo-Irish Agreement. Massive Unionist protests
- 1986 - Stalker removed from enquiry on 'shoot-to-kill' deaths
- 1987 - Loughall martyrs: 9 IRA men ambushed by SAS
 - Enniskillen tragedy occurs
- 1988 - Gibraltar: three unarmed IRA members murdered by SAS
- 1989 - Twenty years on. No British solution is possible!



some degree of justice and then we'd go back where we came from and get on with our lives.

"The uneven development of the struggle is very clearly seen in the demands we made: 'one man, one vote', and we did so up until we got it and there was not, as many feminist sisters would now tell you, not a voice in Ireland raised in objection to the slogan 'one man, one vote'."

The prime movers in the formation of the civil rights movement before it became a marching phenomenon, she continued, were women.

"There was four years of solid work done in the main part by women and it was forgotten by us and everybody else as soon as we started marching. The women organised around the issue of housing. They were Brigid

"20 years ago, we women hadn't time to fight our own repression as women. I was oppressed because of my class and because of my community. I didn't need another layer of oppression - no thanks. But after internment was introduced we grew politically as women because oppression made us. The bulk of people interned were men and the bulk of work done on the outside was done by women."

When the men were released from prison, she said they found it difficult to deal with "such an obstreperous bunch of women. It made life difficult because the development of the struggle was uneven but we struggled on together and it developed like that over the years."

Talking about the struggle around the prisons and the armed struggle, she said: "There is

naivety we'd have gone home but the single biggest testament that we have to that struggle, when we look at young women like Mairead Farrell, is that she had everything individually that would have allowed her to walk away from this struggle and walk away from her country.

"She was a bright, intelligent, articulate, beautiful young woman and she could have walked away - and she didn't. That never was easy and that is not something that we do because we don't have the sense to do anything better. We do it and she did it because in her heart she couldn't walk away: in her mind she couldn't walk away from something she was part of, from an injustice that made this country what it is."

THE HIGH COST OF LIBERATION

THE HUNGER STRIKES

It was as if the world was holding its breath and each time the cry of that anguished nation was heard around the earth. The Irish government tried to hide its cowardly face. Thatcher called them criminals whilst British soldiers mutilated their bodies. In Britain, the 'left' squabbled amongst itself, so opportunist as to attempt to dictate to the dying how their struggle should be conducted.

Behind each coffin the Irish nation marched in their tens of thousands. Was it in vain?

THE FIRST ROUND

Seven men joined the first hunger strike in 1980. Their goal was to retain political status for the Irish POWs incarcerated in British jails. All seven started together and by December, one was transferred to hospital very near death. The British government promised 'concessions' to the prisoners

and the hunger strike was called off.

But the British government proved as treacherous as ever and the 'concessions' were lies. Additionally, the prisoners were brutally treated after the hunger strike. These two events combined to guarantee a new hunger strike.

THE SECOND HUNGER STRIKE

The POWs were furious at British duplicity and it was agreed that ten men - Bobby Sands, Francis Hughes, Raymond McCreech, Patsy O'Hara, Joe McDonnell, Martin Hurson, Kevin Lynch, Kieran Doherty, Tom McElwee and Micky Devine - would stagger their action for maximum effect against the British regime.

During the course of the struggle, Bobby Sands was elected MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, standing as an anti-H-Block candidate.

Additionally, several of the hunger strikers won seats in the Dail in the Free State. The issue was clear and repeated by Bobby Sands to the electorate of Fermanagh and South Tyrone:

"There is but a single issue at stake: the right of human dignity for Irish men and women Our protest and this hunger strike is to secure from the British government an end to its policy of labelling us criminals."

To this end, five demands were formulated by the prisoners. They were:

1. No prison clothes
2. No prison work
3. Freedom of association
4. The right to organise their own education and recreation; one weekly visit; the right to send out and receive one weekly letter.
5. Full remission

One by one, the hunger strikers

died with immense suffering for themselves and their families. Their pain was felt around the world. The evil of the British government was exposed for all to see. This evil was in some ways magnified when they granted virtually all the demands after the end of the hunger strike.

WAS IT TO NO AVAIL?

It is possible that the hunger strike will prove to have been a watershed in Irish history in the same way that the executions of the martyrs of 1916 did in that phase of the struggle. But only history can judge.

What is certain is that Sinn Fein have built on the political support mobilised during and after the hunger strikes, using their new policy of 'the bullet and the ballot'. The Republican Movement has a firm base in mass political support in the nationalist community, in what

many have called "this the last phase in the Irish national liberation struggle".

The hunger strike showed once again the immense courage and determination of the prisoners who were prepared to give to the fight for freedom, their last weapon, their bodies and their lives. Finally, it showed that the spirit of freedom can never be stopped.

