

Nov 1985

CLASS STRUGGLE



Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

Vol 9 No.10

25P

HANDSWORTH BRIXTON TOTTENHAM

FIGHTING BACK



In September and October, the streets of Birmingham and London were the scenes of violent clashes between the police and sections of black youth. 'Class Struggle' has already reported in detail on events in Handsworth (Vol.9, No.9). In this issue we again give the facts behind the uprisings. This time in Broadwater Farm and Brixton. The lies of the state and the media are shown in their true colours, by the reality of state racism both before and following the events which did claim media attention.

POLICE MOVE IN

The immediate background to these events were a series of events this summer. The Broadwater Farm Youth Association was alarmed by a serious growth in problems with hard drugs on the estate. Heroin pushers from Stoke Newington had come onto the estate. The Youth Association decided that some level of police involvement in finding a solution was necessary. They opened up contacts with the police: one of those involved was Floyd Jarrett, a leading Youth Association member.

Cynthia Jarrett, a woman with a heart condition, and her daughter, Patricia, were talking together when they heard a noise in another part of the house. The police had let themselves in. They told Mrs Jarrett they had a warrant to search for stolen goods. In the course of their search, she was pushed to the floor. Her daughter tried to help but the police ignored Mrs Jarrett, carrying on with their search. Patricia called an ambulance, but when none came, she had her brother, Michael, ask the police to drive her to hospital or radio for an ambulance, neither of which they were prepared to do. Eventually, an ambulance arrived 45 minutes after the original call. Mrs Jarrett was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital. The police had found no stolen goods in her home.

REVOLT

Word of Floyd Jarrett's arrest and his mother's death spread quickly. On the following afternoon, a peaceful but angry picket of Tottenham police station took place. Later, a meeting was called on Broadwater Farm estate. Bernie Grant, prospective Labour candidate for Tottenham, and Labour leader on the council, as well as

others, called for calm. But the police had pushed too far and Bernie Grant was shouted down. Young people wanted to march to Tottenham police station and burn it down. But by then, the police (from all over London) had cordoned off the estate. They were issued with plastic bullets and CS gas (which were not used in the end) and they included marksmen from the D11 firearms unit.

The police, in riot gear, were kept at bay for a whole evening by a hail of stones and petrol bombs, and by burning cars. But on Tottenham High Street, and on other roads, they lashed out at any groups of young black people. A 'Class Struggle' correspondent saw cars flagged down and searched by police, and young men lined up against walls with their hands over their heads as police searched them, hitting them in the process.

Subsequently, the police re-entered the Broadwater Farm estate. The result was a new reign of terror and the establishment of a defence campaign (see inside). One more street battle was over. But state oppression and resistance to it goes on.

Centre Pages → Community Statements

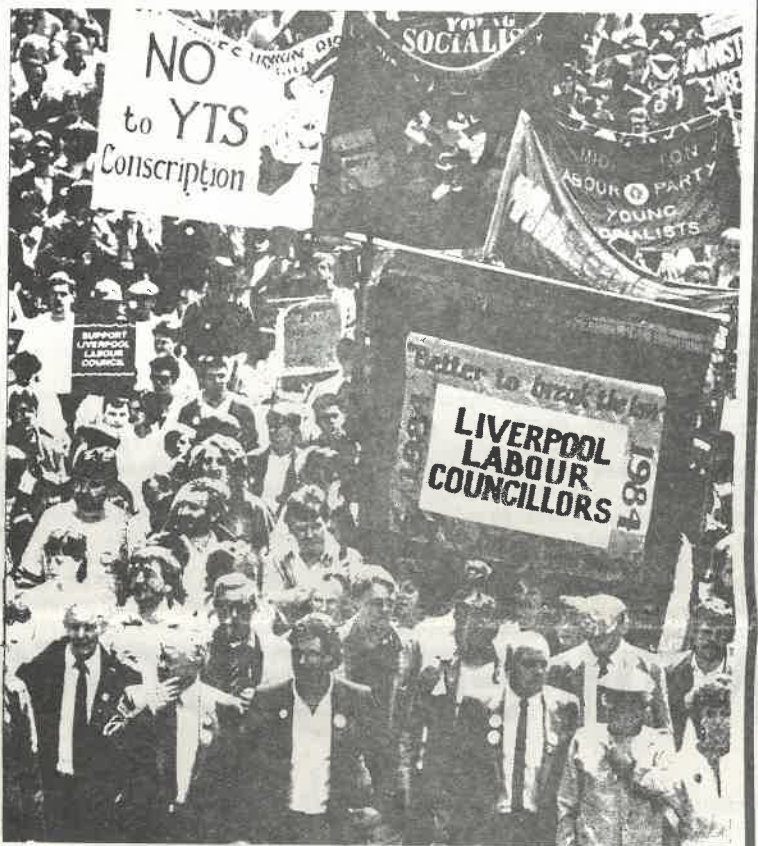
Azania: Breaking Down



Apartheid

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LABOUR LEFT

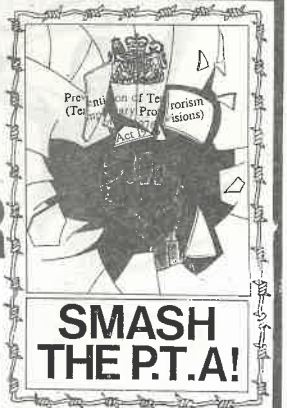


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'Red Army' under Fire

COMMENT

LABOUR AND LEFT

BY JOHN EVANS

Developments in the Labour Party are gradually chipping away at the bright promises that some on the 'left' were eager to make a few years ago. Trotskyist organisations in their many varieties rushed into the Labour Party proclaiming their intention to transform it into a genuine party of socialism. In their wake many, mainly middle class, individuals joined. "Entrism" was the mood of the time.


This wave of radicalism was quickly used to excuse Labour's past. Suddenly local Labour speakers were changing their tune. As they appealed for votes they gave up defending the record of past Labour Governments. Yes, Wilson or Callaghan were reactionaries, they would readily agree. Anyway, they used to add, other reactionaries have left to form the SDP - good riddance. Things have changed now, they used to conclude. Vainly would we denounce previous Labour Governments' record. Look at the pay cuts, the social contract, we fumed. Look at cuts and closures in health care and education, we cried. Look at the way unemployment rose from 1/2 million to a peak of 1 1/2 million, we shouted. "Quite so", they smugly agreed, "but things have changed." But Labour Party introduced and later supported racist immigration controls. It sent the troops to northern Ireland. It started internment. It created the Prevention of Terrorism Act. "Ah yes", they said, "this too will change".

And indeed things did change. Gradually the 'left' stopped criticising Labour's record. Everything became centred around the call for an anti-Thatcher alliance. All the evils of capitalism became Thatcher's sole fault. Other representatives of imperialism were let off the hook. Whilst, for example, the Labour 'left' does indeed often attack 'Tory racism' and 'Tory Immigration Laws', they and their supporters get very irritated whenever anyone raises Labour's record. People who 6 years ago condemned Labour's record on unemployment, now only attack "Thatcher's unemployment record."

Many roundly criticise Kinnock's move to the right, conveniently forgetting that those who refused to enter the Labour Party at their side pointed long ago to Wilson's "move to the right", Healey's "move to the right", and Callaghan's "move to the right". Moving to the right, or put it more bluntly, promising one thing and doing another, is a time-honoured Labour tradition. The other element that the Labour 'left' forget is that they too, have moved to the right! Socialist Challenge, for example, has now liquidated itself. Far from changing the Labour Party from within they have merely carried out an aggressive policy of self-immolation. Who then is changing who? Meanwhile activists who used to be seen campaigning on various issues, are now no longer to be seen. They are burying themselves in Labour Party committees and sub-committees. They have little interest in going out to rally support for their policies. They think it is sufficient to win a vote behind closed doors.

Their undoubted successes have been shown by the Labour Party Conference to mean little in the end, and in this very process they are transforming themselves into typical bureaucrats. They are themselves only the Kinnocks of tomorrow.

★ ★ ★



NUM Vs UDM

The 'Union of Democratic Mineworkers' is now a reality. In mid-October, Nottinghamshire miners voted by over 2 to 1 to split the NUM and set up a rival 'UDM'. They were shortly followed by a South Derbyshire vote which the breakaway faction won by only 26 votes.

Of course, the reactionaries who set out to split the NUM could not do it on their own. Firstly they needed help from McGregor. He wasn't about to abandon those who had stood by him throughout a long and bitter dispute. On the contrary, they were continuing to do his work for him. McGregor's whole strategy has been to carve up the mines into separate districts, and into 'profitable' and 'unprofitable' pits. He wants to base pay more and more on 'productivity', so pay will vary within pits, from pit to pit and from area to area. So McGregor duly comes up with a 4% plus productivity pay deal with the UDM, one week before the ballot. A deal which the Nottinghamshire miners will gain from in the short term. A deal which will also help break the national bargaining power of mineworkers in the long run.

The breakaway leaders were delighted. The bribe was there for all to see - but a bribe nevertheless can bring dividends to some. And it certainly did. McGregor and the Breakaways have also come up with a new concept. The pay rise will only be paid to members of the UDM. It is certainly rare to see a case of management only, paying a rise to union members, but then that presumably says something of the character of the UDM.

Of course, the Breakaways also needed political support. Media support they always had. But they welcome the backing of Tories, SDP and Liberals, and were naturally delighted with the proffered aid of local Labour MP, Don Concannon, who gained his notoriety as Labour Imperialism's spokesman on Ireland.

So what does the future hold? Some say the UDM will quickly collapse. They point to past failures to set up breakaway unions, such as the attempts by Liverpool dockers and Pilkington glass workers. But here there is a difference. This is a pro-management split. It has heavy financial backing from some bourgeois circles and plenty of political support. Spencerism, a similar phenomenon based on the Nottinghamshire coal field, lasted a considerable time. Labour and the TUC refrain from outright attacks. The TUC has even set up a special committee to conciliate. Now we all know TUC abilities at compromising and conciliation. But in this case an opportunist manoeuvre will not be enough. It needs a magician. While the AUEW and EPTU are toying with a TUC split and flirting with the UDM, it seems unlikely that the UDM will be defeated in a quick battle.

The whole problem reflects a lack of class consciousness, not just in the UDM but in the class as a whole. It needs to be tackled at the root - hardly a short term battle.

In the October issue of 'Class Struggle', we carried the first half of an article contributed by a reader who has been active in campaigns against cuts in jobs and services alongside a Labour council. We print below the second half. 'Class Struggle' would welcome comments and criticisms of the article.

The fact is that the strategy of non-compliance and refusing to set a rate has up till now, failed. At the time of writing the outcome of the campaign of the 'Militant' leadership of the Liverpool council is not clear. If they do succeed in gaining some kind of victory from their conflict with the government, would that vindicate the standard easy Trotskyist-criticism of other defeated Labour councils: namely, sellout and betrayal? If only the councillors had been Trotskyists then victory would have been guaranteed? I don't find such an answer to be sufficient. I feel there are some more fundamental questions which rarely seem to be addressed by either the Labour radicals or Trotskyism.

CAN LABOUR SERVE THE PEOPLE?

Part 2

LOCAL STATE

Firstly, there is the nature of the beast. The superficial impression that power is being wielded by Labour, fails to face up to the limitations of local government. It fails to understand the power of town hall bureaucracies. It needs to be realised that high ranking officers are not a neutral body of servants responding to the will of the elected members. They have their own interests and are perhaps the most powerful pressure group in the whole scenario. Local government presents a very powerful view that increasing individual and community reliance upon the state, and its experts and professionals, is a good thing. Labour complements this view by interpreting any form of self-, rather than state-, reliance as synonymous with monetarism and Thatcherism.

COMMITTEE POLITICS

Secondly, the whole bias of the Labour councils' strategies are those of expecting loyal gratitude from the mass of the working class towards their 'elected' representatives. The reality however, is that these politicians have not been chosen by the masses and from the masses, but have been selected for their 'expertise', or list of positions held, or committees sat on, by their fellow committee members. For a rank and file Labour party member, there seems no other avenue for activity other than becoming enmeshed into the committee/meeting cycle. All that such a committee mentality can hope to foster, I fear, is an increasing reliance upon existing structures, procedures, experts and leaders. There seems little room left for new forms of organisation - self-initiated and self-reliant in character. And all too often, genuine movements and struggles of the rank and file are taken over by the 'leaders' and the 'proceduralists'.

In such committee-based forms of organisation it would seem inevitable that cliques and political loyalties based upon personal friendships, become more prevalent. I suspect too, that the pressures are not conducive to analysis being made of concrete conditions or long term strategies being evolved. Every committee becomes a battlefield between conflicting

power factions, and victories in such a context are taken "meeting at a time".

FACING REALITY

Thirdly, there is the question as to what are existing realities. Few seem to be prepared to admit that a cloud of fear and retrenchment hangs over most of us. The working class are not in a revolutionary frame of mind at present and do not relate to the forms of leftism on offer. Local activists are impatient for results and acclaim in their own lifetimes. Patience is not a virtue commonly found on the left. It is uncomfortable to admit that there is not a surge of militancy amongst the union memberships. When a minority of Labour councillors take fright at the implications of defying the government and vote with the opposition for legality and compliance (as has happened in most of the rebel councils), it is all too easy for left wing union activists to blame 'cowardly' councillors for the defeat and not look to the ability of their own union organisations to deliver the goods. In essence, it amounts

to a refusal to accept reality as it exists at present, with all its unpleasant shortcomings. It is a refusal to accept people and organisations for what they are - not what you wish they were. Consequently in refusing to accept current realities, it is impossible to form a strategy which is based in reality: one that is capable of forming constructive alliances and aims for achievable goals.

FUTURE OF WELFARE STATE

Fourthly, and perhaps not very optimistically, such local struggles need to be seen in the context of an erosion of the welfare state, which has been taking place for some time now. It is unlikely that present day society, and the state as a whole as it exists within capitalism, can ever fully reflate the welfare state without a simultaneous upsurge in imperialist exploitation of the Third World to pay for it. Such a revival in the fortunes of imperialism would not herald a very progressive development in the world-wide struggle against imperialism.

'Destructive strategies'



Victory at the next election.

Fight the Cuts. Make Workers Redundant.

In conclusion, I see no point in activity for activism's sake. Just "doing something - anything" while knowing from the beginning that, given the balance of forces, defeat is virtually inevitable, seems certain to result in widescale demoralisation. None of us like living through such a period of reaction and demoralisation but pretending such conditions do not exist and throwing together strategies and demands which pander to our fantasies would seem to be more than pointless - it is destructive. No-one who aspires to a leader-

ship role within the working class has the right to use people in such a manner - raising hopes; dashing them; then expecting to troop them out again at a moment's notice for the next issues. Where is the responsibility of such so-called leaders?

PRACTISING THE MASS LINE

There is, at the end of the day, no substitute for hard work - slow patient building at grass roots level - for any fundamental and qualitative resistance to, or offensive against, government attacks to stand a chance. Masses of people need to believe for their own reasons that a struggle is necessary. Only they can develop the right form of organisation, strength and tools of resistance. I feel the tone of any struggle should not be one of fighting for increased reliance upon the state's experts, professionals and interference, but should rather be seen in the context of general struggle against an erosion of the rights of working class and oppressed people. The particulars of such struggles need to be seen in perspective. If there are limitations on what can be

hoped for, should not they be honestly admitted? Whatever the battle, its context within broader struggles should always be considered. Different groups and organisations obviously have their own perceptions of what is their broader struggle. The Labour Party sees the run up to the next general election as their long term focus. That after all, is to be expected, and should be accepted. It does not mean everyone else should have the same perspective.

BUILDING ALLIANCES

We should accept other organisations, groups or parties for what they are, without arrogantly assuming the right to try to impose a particular party line on all involved. The only constructive line should be one of acceptance of differences in perceptions and objectives hopefully leading to the creation of realistic alliances formed on the basis of mutual respect for the aspirations and views of others. The hope of achieving such alliances, though, is perhaps slim when so many organisations believe they have a monopoly on the truth - and tolerance, patience and acceptance are deemed to be the language of "sellouts" by so many on the left. The method of struggle is so often overlooked. I do not believe that the ends justify the means. Qualitative victories will never be won without the patient building of rank and file organisations from within; listening and learning from others; gradually raising awareness and confidence; helping to formulate new forms of struggle with, not for, those very people under attack. In the short term, I would propose that joint campaigns involving local Labour parties and sympathetic employers should be seen within a broader perspective, and illusions should not be fostered as to what the realisable aims of such campaigns are. In such alliances every effort should be made to avoid the domination of the campaign by sectarian attitudes claiming absolute wisdom. Acceptance of differences, and tolerance of others' broader world views, should form the cornerstone for the building of any qualitative and worthwhile alliances. The above may not be specific or immediate enough, but I hope it will prompt criticism and discussion.

Black People Resist

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

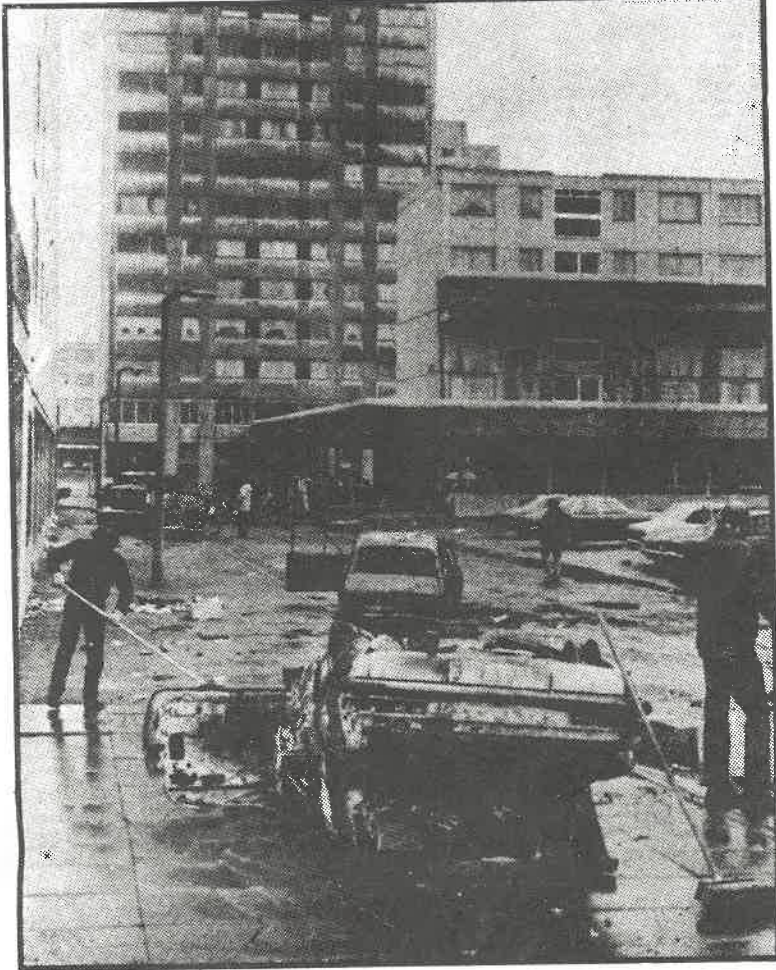
There is a long history of trouble with the police in the Tottenham area. On May 3rd, the police defended a National Front election meeting at High Cross School. They brought out their riot gear and arrested 35 people in defence of the "right" of racists and fascists to promote their poison.

A few months before, in November 1982, there were clashes between police and Afro-Caribbean youth on Broadwater Farm estate itself, when young Roger Scott was arrested for burglary. His friends from the estate went

down to Tottenham police station to await his release. They were confident that he would not be held for long, as they were watching television with him when the burglary which he was accused of, was committed.

Riot police arrived, returning from an attack on squatters in Brixton, and the youths moved aside to let them pass, as they thought they intended to walk into the station. Instead, the police laid about them with their truncheons. Later, they raided the Broadwater Farm estate.

Broadwater Farm: the day after.



Broadwater Farm...Background...Aftermath....

The rising on the Broadwater Farm has been met by the whole range of racist reactions, ranging from the outright racism of the state and much of the media to its more subtle liberal and left forms.

There was predictable outrage in some quarters when Bernie Grant stood by the people on the Farm, blaming the police for what happened and saying: "What they got was a bloody good hiding."

Among those condemning Grant were his Labour party "comrades", Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley, who remained true to the social democratic tradition of standing side by side with the Conservatives on issues of vital concern to British imperialism (Ireland, black struggles, national liberation struggles against Britain and the miners' strike).

STRIKE

In Haringay, the leaderships of the Transport and General Workers Union and National Union of Public Employees called out their members who worked for the council on a strike and demonstration to demand "Grant Out!". The other main union representing council employees, NALGO, refused to join this action. When the Haringay branch leadership issued a press statement critical of Grant, they found themselves called to account by angry members. In the event, of the 13,000 council employees, only around 200 joined the "protest march", and they found a counter-demonstration of 100 people (mainly from the Haringay unions

and from Broadwater Farm), waiting for them outside the council offices. The leaders of the "protest" continued with the logic of Kinnock, Hattersley and all those who want to stop struggles which might upset Labour's chances of winning the next election. They claimed that they were working for a Labour victory, and their efforts were supported by a picket of the demonstration starting point by sympathisers who included members of the



Bernie Grant

After that, things cooled down a bit on the estate. The Broadwater Farm Youth Association got going, providing a service to the local community and young people in particular, on an estate with 60% youth unemployment. With volunteer help, the Youth Association ran a centre for local people and a meal programme. While the meal programme was aimed mainly at providing young people with food, it also provided food for pensioners on the estate. Young people even took food to the flats of pensioners who were not able to get about.

The Association managed to get Urban Aid funding to build a new centre providing more facilities, including an Under-Fives Day Care Centre. It pressed the council into providing a play centre and a neighbourhood housing office. On top of that, the Youth Association established three cooperative businesses - a laundrette, greengrocery and hairdressers. This October, a full-time worker was due to start coordinating other employment initiatives to help provide jobs for local people. Under the impact of this work by people on the Farm, young black people especially, there was a decline in crime in the area - without police involvement.

Such achievements showed that the more a community controls its own affairs, the more readily it can tackle the problems it faces: it gives a small indication of the meaning of the nationality policy advocated by the League under socialism - that of free, national development, where national minority people will be able to exercise community control over their affairs in the areas where they are concentrated.

Conservative party, National Front and local "neighbourhood watch" schemes (i.e. police spies). Only six black people supported the demonstration.

Many people on the left have condemned "rioting and looting". The Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) described those who revolted as "victims of Toryism" and repeated their 1981 call for "Workers Defence Squads". If they hadn't noticed, the revolt was against racism, specifically state racism, and that has not changed whether Labour or Tory parties have been in office. As for "Workers Defence Squads", beloved of many on the Trotskyist left, four years have passed since 1981, and they have not been built by the WRP, or anyone else.

Marxist-Leninists prefer to deal with the real world. Every revolution is prepared for by the people training themselves through unsuccessful or partially successful revolts: many of these revolts and struggles may only mobilise a part, even a small part of the people at any one time, and those who suffer the worst oppression generally rise up before others are "ready". But there is a choice to be made by revolutionaries. It is not between non-existent "Workers Defence Squads" (however desirable they may be) and "rioting", but between people hitting back at oppression with the means at their disposal and the British imperialist state. In Brixton, Handsworth and Broadwater Farm, those who rose against the state had justice on their side, and deserve solidarity, not condemnation from people who haven't the faintest understanding of what they have faced over the years

"Freedom: By Any

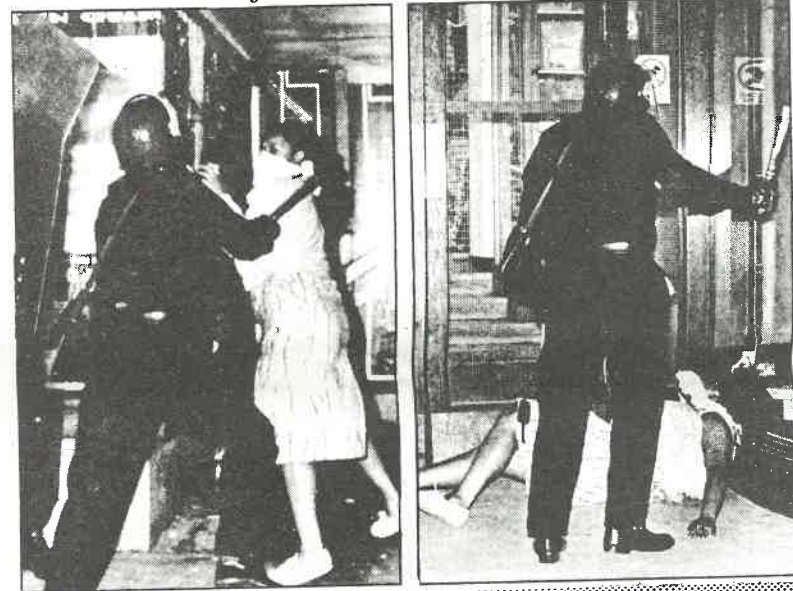
COMMUNITY

BLACK LIBERATION FRONT

The last 4 weeks has seen a massive upsurge of the Black community in militant struggle against the racist British state and the murderous attacks of their police forces. In Handsworth, Brixton, Toxteth, Peckham and Tottenham, Black men and women have taken to the streets to confront our enemies and fight bitter pitched battle against them. This daring and courageous stand by our communities is a clear warning to the rich and their state that their terrorist style attacks on the Black community will not go unpunished. The reign of oppression which the police have imposed on our people for so long, and of which the shooting of Mrs Groce and the death of Mrs Jarrett are only the most recent examples, is now being fiercely resisted. Black people have every right to defend ourselves, blow for blow, against these attacks which have gone on year in and year out with no sign of stopping.

Seeing that our people are militantly on the move the ruling class have opened an offensive to spread confusion, isolate us and terrify us back into submission. They have spread the most evil and vicious lies that the uprising are "a cry for loot" according to capitalist Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, or that they are a cover for "drug-pushing". This is a pack of lies and they know it, but they say these things to deliberately hide the truth, spread confusion and make out that the Black community is a gang of criminals, and that its rightful resistance to state oppression and police attacks is just another criminal act. This is exactly what they say about the Irish freedom fighters who are fighting for their country's freedom, and what they said about the miners when they were fighting to save their jobs. But the only criminal act here, is the criminal racist policy of the British ruling class and their state to impose a reign of terror on the Black community including the shooting of an innocent Black woman and death of another. As to the so-called "drug-pushing" it is well known that the British state and their police are actively involved in pushing the most harmful drugs into our communities.

Thugs on the streets of Brixton.



BROADWATER FARM YOUTH ASSOCIATION

In the aftermath of the Broadwater Farm uprising, the Farm has been subjected to para-military style police occupation. The community is clearly under seige; the denial of human and civil liberties: commonplace.

Each day riot police, SPG, D11 (gun unit) are harassing, threatening and abusing residents. Householders have been systematically raided and house-holders questioned on their nationality, size of household, income earners and involvement in the uprising.

Daily necessities such as food, milk and clothing have been prevented by the state police from getting to residents. Even mail is being screened, DHSS payments have also been stopped.

Juveniles are held for up to 54 hours without access to solicitor or social workers are in some cases the police have been granted unruly certificate orders by the Courts, the only reason being that the police object to bail. (Have the police become the law? There has been numerous reports where young black people have been provoked by the police and later charged with assault on obstruction. This is happening all over Haringay and beyond.

Paralleling these happenings on the Farm, the establishment has been busy reinforcing police oppression. Newman wants to increase police repression by arming them with guns, bullets and gas. Hur has put yet more repressive acts on the statute book; the media the police and the government collaborate to label the community criminals. Just who are the criminals, the oppressed or the oppressor? Clearly from Soweto, Handsworth, Brixton and Tottenham the oppressors are the criminals.

COMMUNITY UNDER SEIGE

Over 300 people attended a meeting called by the Broadwater Farm Youth Association, on Sunday, October 20th. The mainly black audience heard speakers outline events leading to the rising, the intention to protest at Tottenham police station was blocked by police surrounding the Farm and how they held out for eight hours against the police. Speakers from the Youth Association stressed the need to politicise and organise. The defence campaign set up by the meeting aims not only to campaign for defendants arrested in the aftermath of the recent uprising but "to establish the best form of defence for a community under seige."

It was also pointed out that the continued heavy presence of police on the Farm, and the harassment is seen as an attempt to provoke another confrontation in which the police could avenge the defeat of early October.

The principled stand of Bernie Grant in not condemning the community resistance to police was applauded. But he was catcalled when he advertised the Labour Party as the vehicle for change. Many speakers pointed out the racist treatment dished out by Labour governments and advocated not taking part in the electoral game.

Means Necessary"

Malcolm X (New York, 1964)

STATEMENTS

Furthermore, the capitalist liars and their journalists try to create splits among us, and put into practice their favourite policy of "divide and rule". This they do by claiming that the prising of the Black community are a struggle between African and sian people. This is a lie. The uprising of the Black community and other working class people are directed not against one another, but against the government, state and police forces of the rich. If we allow ourselves to be divided we shall play into the hands of our enemies.

Another tactic which the state is using is to call on so-called "community leaders" to condemn our people for defending ourselves. This is unacceptable. Any so-called "community leader" who condemns our people is a traitor and a renegade from the Black cause and should be treated as such. Also, threats are being made that plastic bullets, CS gas and water cannon will be used against us. These threats are meant to frighten us and make us submit to the will of our enemies. Under no circumstances can we give in to them. In this connection the rich have unleashed a propaganda attack against so-called 'agitators'.

This is an open attempt to isolate particular individuals within our community, so as to be able to attack them. We must beat back this underhand effort to pick us off one by one.

Today in the Black community we must strengthen our unity and stand shoulder to shoulder to face the enemy. There can be no breaking ranks. Our motto must be "All for one and one for All". We must get ourselves better organised in the full knowledge that next time around our enemies will be better organised.

We must build our own revolutionary Black organisation, capable of organising and leading us and not put our hopes in any of the parties of the British ruling class, whether Conservative, Liberal, SDP or Labour. All truly revolutionary, progressive and democratic people must take a clear cut stand in defence of the Black community's right to defend ourselves against the racist attacks and terror of the British state and its police forces and condemn the British ruling class for their all round policy of oppressing Black people. The uprisings in Britain over the last month are at one with the heroic struggles of our African sisters and brothers in Azania (South Africa) and both lead to our final goal of Black liberation.

FORWARD EVER BACKWARD NEVER! ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL!

No To Police Terror!

ASIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT (BIRMINGHAM)

The AYM (Birmingham) issued a statement calling for solidarity with the Handsworth Defence Campaign. The statement said that the events in Handsworth were a repeat of the risings in 1981. It pointed out that since 1981 the Tory Party has developed a strategy of controlling the black community through supporting the development of a black middle class. The upsurge of Labour left politics in the last decade has encouraged the same tendency. The statement went on: However, although all of these claim to speak for black people, in reality they have no connection whatsoever with the black community.

The statement went on: The white left too has been unable to comprehend the nature of the rebellion. The establishment parties whose interests are essentially middle-class, have not been slow to condemn the 'violence'. They do not recognise that for 400 years violence has been the means by which the industrially-advanced white countries have exploited the wealth and labour of the black countries (going as far as to carry out systematic genocide against the native Indian and Aborigine people of America and Australia, and continuing the genocide in Africa and Asia today through famine and disease), or that it was only violence which rid our countries of the hated colonial presence. Closer to home, they fail also to recognise the simple fact that violence (against the working class) is the fundamental principle upon which the capitalist system is organised - the miners' strike showed this.

* * *

The Handsworth Defence Campaign has been set up by Afro-Caribbean and Asian members of the community to defend all those who have been arrested in connection with the rebellion. It makes no distinction between so-called 'criminal elements' and those people who have been indiscriminately arrested and charged by the police. They will all receive the same conveyor-belt 'justice' of the British courts, and the sentences are likely to be extremely severe

The statement went on to show the need for the militant community-based campaign to prevent the criminalisation of the community and especially the youth. It also appealed for support from all individuals and organisations by 1) making every effort to get across to people the facts of what happened and 2) for financial assistance to the campaign. Donations can be sent to: Handsworth Defence Campaign, 104 Heathfield Road, Lozells, Birmingham 19.

BLACK PEOPLE'S CAMPAIGN FOR JUSTICE

The October 20th meeting set up a defence campaign with the following aims:

"... The committee will be a campaigning force for justice in an unjust society. Justice has become unequal - one law for the police another for the black and poor people. In short, justice is race and class based. Handsworth, Brixton, Broadwater Farm are manifestations of these truths. The Black People's Campaign for Justice will campaign to make justice JUST. It will pursue this noble goal under the following aims:

1. To defend justice
2. To assist with the co-ordination of the defence campaigns and to establish the best form of defence for a community under seige;
3. To establish a network of supportive service for our community and Broadwater Farm in particular;
4. To develop a justice programme to highlight the issues of police repression;
5. To work and co-operate closely with other communities under seige.

Battle of Brixton

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

On September 28th, a police officer, Inspector Lovelock, shot a black woman, Mrs Cherry Groce in the back. This happened when police raided her house in Brixton, south London, on the excuse of searching for her son, Michael, who had not stayed at that address for three years. After they had broken down the door with sledgehammers and shot Mrs Groce, and while her terrified younger children were looking on, police questioned her at gunpoint about the whereabouts of her son. As a result of the shooting, Mrs Groce is now paralysed.

Police Attacks on Black People.....

The news of the shooting spread rapidly through the local black community and a crowd gathered outside Brixton police station. The shooting is one of a number of instances - stretching through the cases of Richard Campbell, the New Cross Fire, Colin Roach and many more - which highlight the fact which is a daily reality to most black people, namely the cheapness in which their lives are held by the British racist state. There was a feeling of determination that the police should not be allowed to get away with impunity this time.

An attempt was made to storm the police station, the symbol of state oppression in the area, Brixton's equivalent to the Bastille at the time of the French revolution. The police violently counter-attacked and bludgeoned everyone and everything in sight. The extent of police brutality has hardly surfaced in the media. But it is significant that even a right-wing paper like the 'South London Press' had to complain that its reporters were severely beaten.

In the ensuing battles, barricades and petrol bombs were

Handsworth Defence Campaign Public Meeting

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Black youth will not be criminalised. That was the clear message from the Handsworth Defence Committee and its Afro-Caribbean and Asian supporters.

At the public meeting called by the campaign in the aftermath of the Handsworth uprising, 400 people supported that message.

Since the uprising the racist police have tried to systematically criminalise the youth of Handsworth. Nearly 600 people had been arrested; 350 had already been charged. Homes of those arrested had been raided and ransacked. Those caught in the police swoops were being held as far away as Leicester, Gloucester, Coventry and Derby.

IMMEDIATE TASKS

A spokeswoman from the campaign outlined the immediate tasks. The first priority was to defend those arrested. There was a need for solicitors accessible and accountable to the community. They had to combat duty solicitors and clerks of the court colluding with the police. These people were lying even about who has been arrested. The families of defendants had to be supported. There were many reports of defendants being threatened and beaten until they made false confessions.

DEFENCE OF COMMUNITY

An Asian Youth Movement speaker pointed out that the defence of the community was an act of rebellion, an uprising. The situation had to be analysed

used. Many shopkeepers formed the opinion that police deliberately drove the protestors into the shopping streets in order to remove the political target and try to get the movement to dissipate its strength in looting shops. Even so, some other political objectives were attacked, including the nearby Effra Conservative Association, which was besieged and petrol-bombed.

Predictably, the official response to the shooting has been to back up the police action... it was just a regrettable mistake. This only emphasises the cheapness of black lives, in the state's view. The man who shot Mrs Groce is described by a police

spokesman as "the sort of dependable policeman most people would like to have around". "Most people" presumably means white people who toe the line. The impartial police enquiry is entrusted to a man, John Domaille, whose qualifications for impartiality include participation in numerous armed police raids, active involvement in the notorious botch-up of the 'Yorkshire Ripper' case, and more recently organising police attacks on miners' pickets.

People will long remember how when Mrs Groce was lying gravely wounded and quite possibly dying, police questioned her at gunpoint to discover intelligence about her son.

THE MAIN ISSUE

This is precisely the main issue in the Brixton uprising. But the ideology of the system hides it in a number of ways. Most obvious is the attempt from the police and the right wing to criminalise the uprising. On the one hand, the media create a picture of black people as naturally anti-social elements with criminal tendencies. At the same time, it is actually dangerous for the system to go

politically. Liberation would only come when there was an end to racism. Those that tried to isolate the youth should remember that when their elders were youths, they were fighting to liberate their homelands.

Community policing was attacked. It had been used to ensnare individuals into being informers. It should be remembered that the root problem was racism. Police and council inquiries were part of that racist system. They should be boycotted. The community needed its own inquiry.

There was strong criticism of sections of the Asian shopkeepers for siding with the police. But as was pointed out by other speakers, not all the Asians were shopkeepers. Many people pointed out the unity between Afro-Caribbean and Asian youths. The Indian Workers Association appealed to shopkeepers to withdraw their statements to the media and support the community.

SUPPORT

A Methodist minister from Brixton gave his community's solidarity. He explained how in Brixton the community was also organising against police brutality.

Sinn Fein gave its support to the campaign. The speaker said he was not there to tell the people of Handsworth how they should organise their struggle. But he pointed out the lessons of Ireland. Peaceful protest had been met with the repression and violence of the British army, forcing the people of the occupied six counties led by the IRA, to declare war on the British state.

too far in admitting the specifically black nature of the struggle. Thus Lambeth police chief Alex Marnoch rushed to release figures showing that half of the 197 people arrested during the clashes were white, in order to counter suggestions that "what happened was evidence of black hatred of police". Even more pathetic is the attempt to show that the trouble was caused by Trotskyites and anarchists, showing a racist contempt for black people's ability to lead their own movement, and trying to conceal what the movement is really about.

The liberal wing of the establishment too, seeks to conceal the essential nature of the black struggle, ascribing it to general causes such as unemployment and poor housing, or invents a stereotype of disaffected and alienated 'black youth' produced by these factors plus 'racial disadvantage'. This bourgeois sociological view sometimes appears in a left-wing form to create a stereotyped view of a 'revolutionary vanguard'.

Of necessity, younger people play the main role in the actual fighting, and it is equally true that a lot of white youth joined in. However, the militancy of the older generations within the black community has actually been a mainstay of the movement, without which its more spectacular surface phenomena could not have happened.

The struggle of black people for their human rights is also objectively the cause of all working people, because black people cannot liberate themselves without liberating the whole of humanity. The Brixton uprising was thus a catalyst for the expression of pent-up frustration at a whole range of social issues. But its indispensable detonator was the specific national struggle of black people against racist oppression.

Other support came from Birmingham Trades Council and Birmingham National Union of Teachers and various anti-racist committees.

MAIN TARGET OF STATE: AFRICAN PEOPLE

The chairman of the campaign pointed out that the main target was African people and trying to stop links with the struggles in Africa and in the Caribbean. He, and other speakers, drew a link between the struggle in South Africa and in Handsworth. In South Africa too, the police were trying to weaken links between the African and Asian communities.

He pointed out that the police were only interested in protecting the rich white areas of Perry Barr, Handsworth Wood and the Jewellery Quarter ("the stolen gold from Africa"). They did not care about the shopkeepers in Handsworth.

He attacked the white solicitors trying to get defendants to sign false statements. They were part of the racist system, lining their pockets out of black oppression.

He attacked the media for labelling the Afro-Caribbean community as drug-takers. He pointed out that if you looked at the facts, it was the British who were responsible for spreading drugs across the world.

He called for pickets of police stations and courts. Demonstrations would be called. It was clear that the campaign would be a long one.

It was clear from the meeting that the Defence Campaign is well organised and is the leadership of the community's resistance.

On 27th April, 1978, pro-Soviet forces staged a coup in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan. With the help of Moscow-trained officers, equipped with Soviet MIG fighter planes and tanks, their forces soon established control in Kabul but were never able to extend it to the rest of the country. Massive resistance was sparked off by the coup, and the Soviet Union was forced to invade to prop up its puppet regime. As the article on this page makes clear the Soviet forces have been utterly unable to quell the people's war of resistance against their attempts to incorporate Afghanistan into the Soviet empire.

Pro-Soviet forces around the world, including the revisionists of the 'Morning Star' and the New Communist Party in this country, have tried to portray the 1978 coup as a 'revolution', the Soviet invasion of 1979 as "fraternal assistance for a socialist country" and the resistance as "religious fanatics" backed by "reactionary landlords". Nothing of the kind!

Following the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union in the 1950's, the Soviet Union of Lenin and Stalin, once the bastion of world revolution, changed into an imperialist superpower. This change in the Soviet Union's social character was clearly marked by the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The RCL, like other Marxist-Leninists, has since called the capitalist ruling class of the Soviet Union social-imperialist - socialist in words, imperialist in nature and in deeds. Since 1968 the Soviet social imperialists have been engaged in contention with the US superpower for world domination, especially in the Third World.

As part of this battle the Soviet Union despatched thousands of Cuban troops to Angola in 1975 to try to bring Angola into its sphere of influence; instigated Vietnam to invade Kampuchea in 1978 to overthrow the independent socialist state there; and is currently backing the reactionary Ethiopian regime in its attempts to suppress the national struggles of the peoples of Eritrea and Tigray.



The map shows Afghanistan's strategically important location.

Prior to the coup, Afghanistan was part of the Non-Aligned Movement and was an obstacle to Soviet strategic objectives of gaining control of the Middle East and encircling China. The Afghan people's resistance is a huge obstacle to these objectives and should be supported by revolutionary and progressive people everywhere. It is true that the people of Afghanistan see their struggle in religious terms, and some of them are landlords. No matter; they are fighting imperialism.

As Mao pointed out: "No matter what classes, parties or individuals in an oppressed nation join the revolution, and no matter whether they themselves are conscious of the point or understand it, so long as they oppose imperialism, their revolution becomes part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution ..."

Inside Afghanistan

Travelling With The Freedom Fighters.

The following article is based on an interview with Annelise Arcq, the Secretary of the Belgian Afghanistan Committee. This committee was formed to support the resistance to Soviet imperialism in Afghanistan, in particular the democratic resistance organisations.

The President of the National United Front of Afghanistan (NUFA) made a request for help for the people of Afghanistan. The Belgian Afghanistan Committee organised a campaign for urgent aid and, for the first time, got money from the Belgian government, to the tune of 2,000,000 Belgian francs for humanitarian aid. The money was to be distributed in the following areas: Kabul - 800,000 Belgian francs for the families of murdered freedom fighters; Khudaman - 600,000 Belgian francs and 600,000 for Kunar Province. The NUFA asked for observers from the Committee to go to Afghanistan to see the distribution of the aid. It was agreed that they would go to the Kunar Province. The specific area in the province was the Pech Valley.

CONDITIONS IN THE PECH VALLEY

The people of the Pech Valley are very poor and even before the Russian invasion, the economic situation was very difficult. The valley is very steep with little area for cultivation. About 90-95% of the people of the lower valley have gone to Pakistan as refugees and their villages have been destroyed by the Russians. Although the villages are ruins the people of the upper valley continue to cultivate the land in the lower areas to try and maintain food supplies.

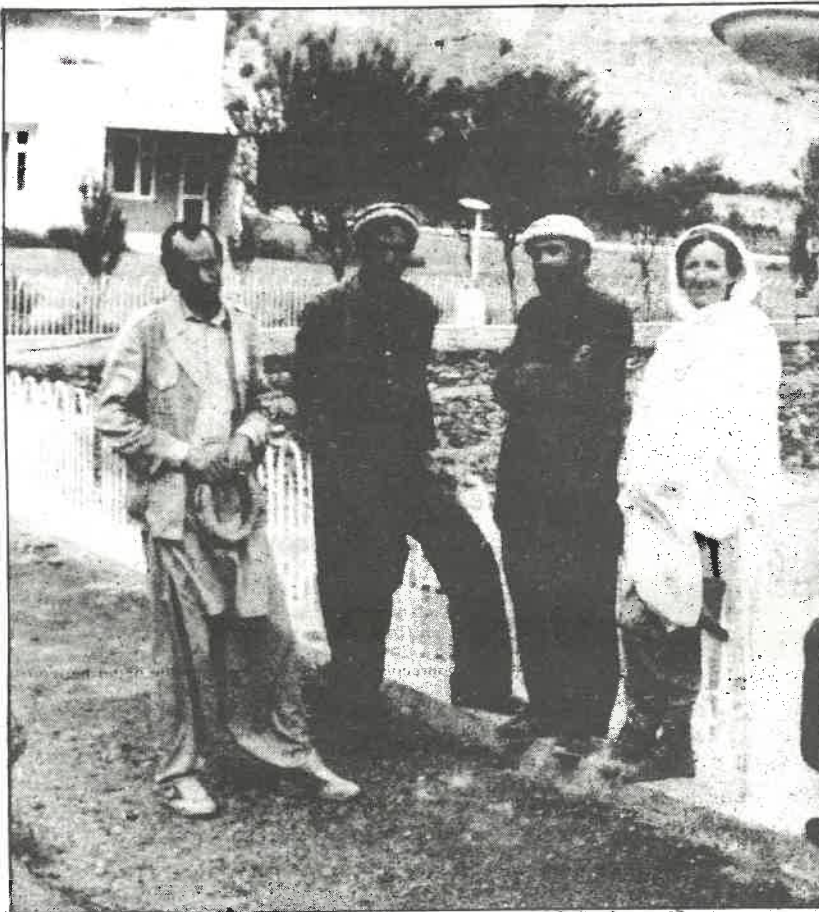
The tribe living in the upper valley is called Safi and the tribal structure is very strong, so about 90-95% of the tribe remain. The leadership of the tribe is well respected and holds the people together. This is difficult, because with the war, conditions have become worse and worse. There is no school, doctor, hospital or medicine in the whole valley. The people have to live on what they can cultivate. Food is very poor with no fruit or vegetables. The result is that they suffer from dietary deficiencies. Many children die as a result of the bad conditions and there is much disease such as tuberculosis. When tea and salt are needed, people have to travel to Pakistan to get them. If someone is wounded in the fighting, the results are often terrible: as soon as there is any sign of infection, the damaged limb must be amputated because there are no drugs.

The Soviets use terror bombing to try and break the will of the people. For a month there will be aerial bombardments every day, and then for some

nothing. Then it will begin again. They bomb the villages not so much to kill people, but to terrorise them. This means that every day the women and children have to leave their homes at sunrise to go and hide in caves, or take refuge under the trees, because their houses may be bombed. This is highly destructive to normal family life and in bad weather, endangers the health of the people.

against an imperialist aggressor. Everywhere they go they hold educational talks with the people to broaden their understanding. The NUFA are not partisans of a political Islam, which they see only as a religious force, not a political one. The members of the NUFA are often religious themselves but the NUFA is clearly a political organisation.

The military situation reveals many of the classic elements of people's war against imperialism. The Russians control only the roads and the big cities whilst the resistance



Annelise Arcq with members of the Afghan resistance.

In the high valley the Mujahideen are independent of any political party and call themselves the Free Mujahideen. The various political parties could not enter because of the strength of the tribe. Because of their struggles the people remain in control of the valley.

POLITICAL AND MILITARY SITUATION

The people of Afghanistan define their struggle in their own terms which are religious ones. Pakistan, the CIA and the Arab countries back the fundamentalist parties. (The most important aid comes from the Arab nations.) The NUFA see their task to explain to the people that the war is a political one and that they are fighting a war for national liberation

controls about 85% of the countryside. The difficulty lies in the weaponry available to the resistance. They have only light weapons and cannot fight airplanes. The Russians cannot enter into and hold the valleys. But so far they can fairly safely conduct aerial bombardments. So they try to weaken the people by military terrorism using more and more aerial bombardment.

The resistance is always asking for heavier weapons but has received few. The NUFA also make it a specific task to conduct basic military education amongst the fighters to strengthen their ability to resist.

The people of Afghanistan expect a long, long war and they are

prepared to fight to the last. Children are already training to carry on the war in the future in order to defeat Soviet social imperialism.

OCCUPIED AFGHANISTAN

The President of NUFA was in Belgium in April 1984 and the journey to Afghanistan was organised. Two members of the Afghanistan Committee went - Annelise Arcq and a parliamentary deputy of the Green Party. They arrived on 1st May in Islamabad. Some goods for the aid programme had to be bought in Pakistan and some had already been sent into Afghanistan. On 3rd May, they crossed the border with a group of Mujahideen comprised of members of NUFA and people from the Pech Valley, including a tribal leader of the Safi tribe. They expected a five day walk to the Pech Valley and then ten days speaking and travelling with the people and distributing the aid.

The first major difficulty occurred when the group was forced to hide in the Kunar River when Russian helicopter gunships flew overhead. The 'Green' parliamentary deputy decided at this point to return to Pakistan whilst the rest of the group carried on. Distribution of the aid goods also met some trouble. One half of the goods had not yet arrived and those which had, were in big heavy bags. They had trouble finding enough people to carry them. However the aid that was distributed on that trip was a substantial help to 306 families.

On 20th May, they decided to return to Pakistan. But as they arrived in the Kunar Valley they saw a big offensive taking place about 12 to 15 kilometres away. From where they were situated, they could see the bombing by both helicopters and airplanes. The bombing was so intense they could see the smoke by day and the huge fires by night. The Russians were also using rockets to fire on the people in the valleys. The group sent four people to find out what the conditions were like ahead. It took them two days to return and when they did, the party was forced to move on immediately because of the danger. It was a very big offensive with a whole section of the Kunar River closed. There was heavy truck and tank movement so it was impossible to cross the valley to go on to Pakistan.

The group decided to return to the high Pech Valley and they had to move quickly as they met many refugees who reported the presence of Soviet troops. After 8 to 10 days they returned to the Pech Valley where they had to stop for one week because Annelise had developed a serious illness and had to rebuild her strength. Because of the offensive they had to find an alternative route - which proved difficult. The one that was finally decided upon was particularly dangerous as they had to pass within 500 metres of a Soviet garrison post. The danger was increased because the Soviet troops shoot at random at night. They eventually made it through after an arduous and painful journey and crossed the border.

Annelise had intended to be gone for three weeks and ended up staying for two months, one month with no contact with her family. Yet, she said unhesitatingly, that she would return. She spoke glowingly of the Afghan people she travelled with who went to incredible lengths to protect her, particularly after she fell ill. The Afghan people themselves were very thankful that someone had come from the outside to learn of conditions there and to see the situation first hand.



Afghan guerrillas in a respite from the war.

Azania

"Make Apartheid Unworkable"

"He said that I must tell the whole world that one day, the black people shall govern. And all the guerrillas who are dying, are dying for freedom. The struggle must go on!"

This was the message that Mrs Mamike Moloise brought to the world from her son, Benjamin. In spite of world-wide protests, Benjamin Moloise was hanged in Pretoria on October 18th for allegedly killing a policeman.

Benjamin Moloise was the 87th person hanged by the South African regime this year. However, the police and army have acted as judge, jury and executioner to hundreds more, in the streets and townships, particularly since the declaration of the State of Emergency in July.

REPRESSION

Hundreds more have been arrested and detained. There are a growing number of reports of torture inside the jails and police stations, including beatings, electric shocks and the use of drugs.

TV viewers around the world witnessed the 'Trojan horse' ambush by police hidden inside a truck who shot at protestors in Athlone, Cape Town on October 15th. At the funerals of three killed in this shooting, Michael Miranda (11), Shaun Magmoed (16) and Jonathan Klassen (18), the African and Asian, Christian and Muslim communities united in their sorrow and anger at the killings.

The reaction of the South African regime has been further repression. New riot gear has been introduced, including armoured cars shooting rubber bullets and water-cannon with purple dye. They have also deported some reporters and further restricted others, as recently from Soweto.

On October 24th, it was announced that the State of Emergency was to be lifted in 6 of the 36 districts where it was imposed. However these were all relatively small areas. On October 25th, the State of Emergency was extended to Cape Town and 7 surrounding areas previously not covered. The extent of the turmoil in the area was shown by a police announcement that motorists should not use the road to the airport without protection!

RESISTANCE

The repression will not dampen down the flames of the revolt of the Azanian masses. It will only fan them even higher. As an organiser for the United Democratic Front (UDF) said when referring to those arrested or murdered: "Every time the state takes away one leader, two more take his place. There are enough people in the community to assume leadership."

In particular, in the course of October, new sections of the people were drawn into the struggle which spread to Cape Town, a "coloured" area in the racist South African terminology, and attacks on white areas increased. After the memorial service for Benjamin Moloise, youth protested violently in the centre of Johannesburg itself, and for some time the police were unable to regain control.

As Oliver Tambo, President of the African National Congress (ANC), said: "The enemy's incessant campaign of repression has further fuelled the anger of our people. They have determined to make apartheid unworkable and the country ungovernable."

"The regime, it is clear, will respond with even greater brutality. But whatever may be done, we shall not retreat."

Rather, it is inevitable that we shall win more allies to our cause. The much vaunted unity of the whites in general, or the Afrikaansers, in particular, is a thing of the past."

DISUNITY OF WHITES

The disunity of the whites within South Africa has been shown clearly over the last period with other people following the lead of the big businessmen who met with the ANC in Zambia. The regime resorted to taking away passports from students at the Afrikaans Stellenbosch University when they planned to hold discussions with the Youth League of the ANC.

Even the Dutch Reformed Church, formerly a solid supporter of apartheid, now has divisions

was forced to impose sanctions in the US in September, Mrs Thatcher is completely isolated in her stand against broad trade sanctions.

Britain was the lone voice at the Commonwealth Conference held at Nassau, in the Bahamas in October, opposed to comprehensive, mandatory sanctions. Mr Thomas Ntoli, the ANC's Treasurer-General, said: "Britain's attitude towards sanctions is a ploy to try to protect its huge investments in South Africa and avert unemployment in Britain. Mrs Thatcher should be made aware that British investments will soon go up in flames."

Winnie Mandela, wife of imprisoned leader, Nelson Mandela, called Mrs Thatcher a racist for claiming to speak

In the centres of the black uprisings, black youth and organisations have consciously identified their struggles against the racist state and its armed forces with that of the Azanian youth in the townships. The struggles are linked by 400 years of history of oppression of African people by the British state.

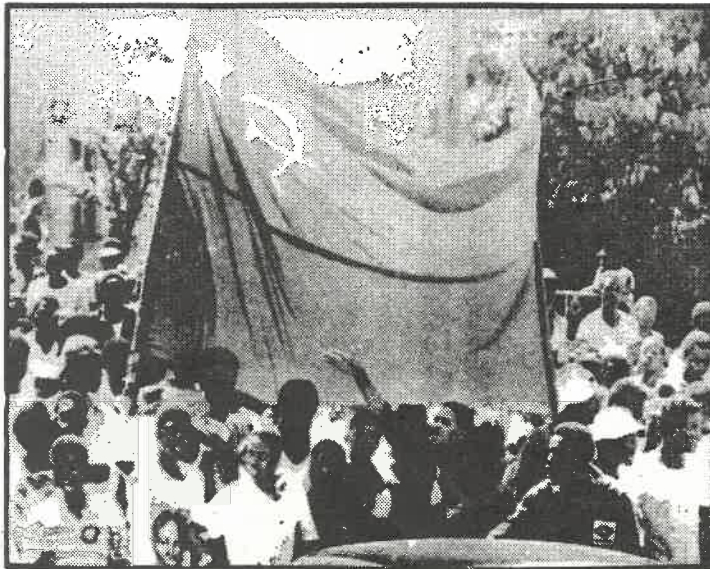
The demand raised by the liberation movements in Azania for sanctions has been taken up at different levels. The Co-op has been forced by pressure from below to ban South African produce in their stores and Sainsbury's may follow suit. Members of transport unions should follow the lead of the unions in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland who have put a stop to all trade with South Africa. The Transport and General Workers Union leader, Ron Todd, however is still following Thatcher and in October "engaged in dialogue" by holding a meeting with a representative of the South African regime.

Both the National Union of Students and the Anti-Apartheid Movement have organised national demonstrations in solidarity with the people's struggle.

All progressive people must do what they can. Our support and solidarity can only be secondary to the heroic and selfless struggles of the people of Azania. Supporting sanctions is one part of this. As Oliver Tambo said in October:

"What we are saying is that the masses of the British people can and must impose sanctions themselves. You have the power to stop all trade with apartheid South Africa."

"We plead with you that you do not worry. The stomachs of those shot down in South Africa today are empty already. The bellies of those who pull the trigger are bulging to the point of obscenity. Stop feeding them. Stop giving them the strength to take even more lives from our people."



The Red Flag is held high during the funeral of a schoolboy killed by police.

within it, with a section advocating "dialogue with black people". On October 13th, the Progressive Federal Party, an opposition party in South Africa, issued a joint statement with the ANC after a meeting with them.

BRITAIN'S STAND

Internationally, too, divisions among the western imperialist powers in their immediate policies towards South Africa, have intensified. Since Reagan

for, and know best, the interests of black people of South Africa. Mrs Thatcher's opposition to sanctions, said Winnie Mandela, "is an insult to the black people and to those who have paid the supreme price in our struggle for our liberation."

SOLIDARITY

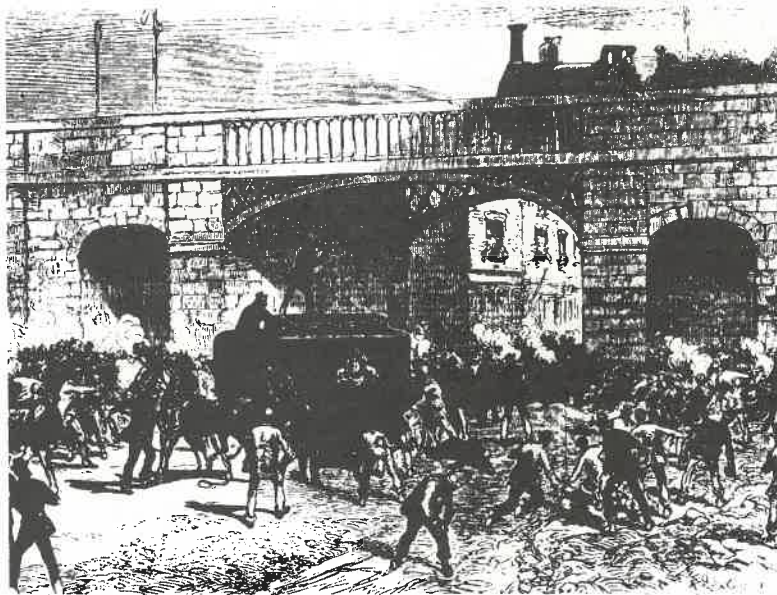
However within this country, solidarity with the revolutionary struggle of the Azanian people is growing.

Manchester Martyrs and the Fenian Uprising

Many a popular ballad in the Fenian Song Book tells the tale of the three Manchester Martyrs, William Allen, Michael Larkin and Michael O'Brien, who were hanged at New Bailey Prison, Salford, for "the smashing of the van". In September, 1867, a police van carrying two Fenian leaders, Colonel Thomas Kelly and Captain Timothy Deasy, was ambushed, the lock shot off and the prisoners freed. The undertaking was a success and the railway bridge where it took place in Manchester is still known as 'The Fenian Arches'. However, the bullet which pierced the lock continued in its trajectory and killed a policeman. It is for his "murder" that the three young Irishmen were hanged. The three men died valiantly and proudly for the republican cause with the cry "God Save Ireland" on their lips.

1867: FENIAN UPRISING

The smashing of the van took place in the aftermath of the 1867 Fenian uprising in Ireland. The original date for the uprising was in February and at that time armed insurrectionaries in Kerry, who did not hear of the postponement, were arrested. A series of diversionary raids on English garrisons had been planned to coincide with the uprising, including an attack on Chester Castle, planned by Colonel Kelly and two French generals (one of whom went on to defend the Paris Commune in 1870/71). The Chester raid was betrayed and the attackers narrowly escaped arrest. The new date for the uprising was in March when rebels took to arms in Dublin, Louth, Tipperary, Cork, Waterford, Limerick and Clare. The uprising failed and there were many arrests. In August of that year the Fenian leaders who were still at liberty met in Manchester and appointed Kelly Chief Organiser of the Irish Republican Brotherhood - as the Fenian organisation was called - in place of the



A contemporary drawing of the attempt by Allen, Larkin and O'Brien to rescue Deasy and Kelly.

captured James Stephens. (Kelly had once taken part in rescuing Stephens when he had previously been captured.) Subsequently Kelly and Deasy were arrested and transported in the famous

Manchester Martyrs are regarded as symbols of the resurgent-republican spirit of the Fenian movement.

van.

Due to public protest in Ireland all the death sentences for the Fenians captured during the uprising were commuted to imprisonment. Thus, the Manchester Martyrs are the only people who, as a result of the uprising, were executed for the republican cause. It is perhaps for this reason that the

REPUBLICAN TRADITION

The Fenians constitute a major part of the Republican tradition. They emerged - like the republican symbol of the phoenix - from the ashes of the Young Irelanders (who had led an unsuccessful uprising in 1848) and they both continued what was best in the tradition and contributed new clarity to it as a heritage to following generations of republicans. In fact the phoenix is particularly associated with the Fenians, for one constituent part of that movement was a literary and political group called the Phoenix Society founded by Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa.

The following positions are characteristic of the Fenians:

- They put the national question to the fore which enabled them to recognise the true role of Daniel O'Connell and his movement for Catholic Emancipation: "Emancipation separate from the cause of independence has turned out to be simply a means of bribing or corrupting wealthy or educated Catholics or seducing them from the National rank".

- They were non-sectarian and included the separation of church and state in their programme. They, in fact, fought a bitter battle against the Catholic establishment. In particular a Dr. Moriarty preached a sermon against them claiming that for their punishment "eternity is not long

enough, nor hell hot enough".

- They were committed to the use of armed force and made a complete break with constitutionalism.

- They linked the national cause to the social question, in particular that of the peasantry and the land. In this respect they were following on from the Young Irelander James Finlan Lalor. The Fenians' stance led Marx to comment: "Fenianism is characterised by a socialist tendency ... and has become a 'lower order' movement".

- They worked for a revival of the Gaelic language and Irish culture.

Thus the Fenians contributed several of the "isms" which Gerry Adams sees as combining to make "the one -ism" of Irish Republicanism". So the Fenians are part of the great and rich republican tradition - a tradition which is precisely so great and rich because it draws on the experiences and struggles of generations and generations of Irish people fighting for their freedom. It is no coincidence that the Republican Movement takes its own heritage and martyrs very seriously.

One of the songs about the Manchester Martyrs places them firmly in this long republican tradition:

'Like Emmet, Shears, Fitzgerald, Tone and hundreds true and bold,

They died to make their native land a nation as of old.'

FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



Unite Against PTA!

Important Trial Draws Near.

On November 9th, a big demonstration and rally has been planned for Birmingham to protest at the detention of Maire O'Shea under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) and her subsequent arrest on charges of conspiracy to cause explosions.

The charges against Dr Maire O'Shea followed the similar arrests of three people in Liverpool last December. Dr O'Shea, being in Dublin at the time, came back to England when she heard that her house had been broken into and searched by the police, who had also been through confidential psychiatric files on patients.

She returned to protest and was astonished to find herself arrested. The Maire O'Shea Support Committee has consistently protested her complete innocence, and has attacked the use of the PTA. The campaign has pointed out that Dr Maire O'Shea's case shows the real character of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and have demanded its repeal.

The December arrests, also included a number of people who

were subsequently released. They exposed their treatment and the fact that they were unable to consult solicitors during their detentions which lasted a week.

The wave of arrests led to an upsurge in opposition to the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Dr Maire O'Shea is the best known of those charged and has received the most support and publicity. A similar campaign, also based in Birmingham, his home town, has been campaigning on behalf of Peter Lynch.

OPPOSITION TO PTA

A third campaign the "Committee for the Repeal of the PTA", based in London, has been established. Its aim has been to co-ordinate the activities of certain national organisations in opposition to the PTA. In particular, the Troops Out Movement has pursued this objective in its own work.

Finally, the England, Scotland and Wales Campaign Against the PTA, (ESWCAPTA), has arisen as a result of the arrests. This

movement has concentrated on developing broad, local groups and targeting the PTA. It has declared its support for all the defendants. Pointing to previous trials of Irish people in Britain, it has exposed past procedures of evidence and frame-ups.

In the new year, the trial of the five (and possibly a sixth) defendants will take place. It is likely to be in Manchester. The Manchester branch of ESWCAPTA has called for unity in action around the trial. It is vital that the campaigns pool their resources to monitor the trial and gain maximum publicity for it.

Such trials normally take place in an atmosphere of hysteria whipped up by the police and media. They leech on the already existing anti-Irish racism in Britain, and are used as an opportunity to whip it up to new heights. All those who support the rights and struggle of the Irish nation will need to seek unity to combat this new attack whilst seeking to act in accordance

with the wishes of the defendants.

The trial will have a broad impact involving members of the Irish in Britain Representation Group, the Troops Out Movement and the Labour Committee on Ireland. As has been seen a number of campaigns have developed as a result. Each campaign has its own particular role and specific demands, there are also some general demands common to all. Whilst each organisation should continue to carry out its own specific role, maximum co-ordination between them is essential around the trial.

The Irish community in Britain stands on trial with Maire O'Shea. We demand the right to engage in political activity in Britain, including the right

to oppose British interference in Ireland. We call on everyone to insist on these democratic and civil rights and demand the repeal of the vile PTA laws.

We urge full support for this Demonstration.

Pat Reynolds, PRO, Irish in Britain Representation Group.

The Prevention of Terrorism Act is a law which destroys all civil liberties and it has been used relentlessly against Irish people to oppress, exclude and silence them. Join the widespread concern shown by the International community and hasten the end of the PTA.

Christine Crawley, MEP, Birmingham East.

Demonstration

Maire O'Shea is Innocent!

Drop the Charges!

Assemble: 11a.m Sparkhill Park

Rally: 2p.m. Digbeth Hall

MANCHESTER MARTYRS COMMEMORATION



On November 24th, the annual Manchester Martyrs commemoration takes place yet again. Always an important event in the calendar of Irish nationalists and their supporters, this year it has an added importance. In an interview with a 'Class Struggle' correspondent, the Chairperson of the Manchester Martyrs Memorial Committee explained why:

"For several years there have been a number of regular commemorations sponsored by the Republican movements. Recently, for one reason or another, some of these have been banned or have not taken place. This means that the Manchester Martyrs Commemoration, the oldest commemoration, is more

important than ever. It represents a tradition of struggle going back hundreds of years, and a particular commemoration well over a century old. This year's demonstration and the platform of the rally seeks to represent that tradition, and it has been sponsored by Sinn Fein.

"Speakers invited from Ireland include Sinn Fein, probably one of the elected representatives, a representative of the Belfast Relatives Committee (of prisoners in British gaols), and the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

"From Britain we have invited the Irish in Britain Representation Group, Women and Ireland, Eileen Murphy, the

author of "Where the Fenians Sleep", the Pakistani Workers Association and a member of the NUM, Dave Douglas.

"Nearly all the speakers have now been confirmed. We hope that a strong platform like this will attract more people and publicity to the commemoration and are looking forward to a successful weekend."

For its part, the RCL calls on all who support the national struggle of the Irish people to mobilise for the march and rally, and to make it the success that such a commemoration should be.

Organisational details of the commemoration have changed since last month.

Sunday, 24th November 1985.

March:

**Assemble 12.30
Longsight Market**

(Corner of Dickenson Road and Stockport Rd.)

RALLY:

**3 p.m. Mandela Building,
(Polytechnic Students Union)
Oxford Rd.**

SUPPORT IRISH REPUBLICAN PRISONERS!

STOP STRIP SEARCHES!

BAN PLASTIC BULLETS!

REPEAL THE PTA!

Support Irish POWs in English Jails Leicester: Prison Picket.....

On Sunday 13th October, Sinn Fein's Prisoner of War campaign called a picket of Leicester prison. Fifty people from Birmingham, Leicester, London, Northampton and Coventry, answered that call. The picket was in solidarity with all Republican political prisoners held in English jails and marked the anniversary of the death of Noel Jenkinson in 1976. Noel, an Irish freedom fighter, was murdered in the jail.

The militant picket was combined with marches round the jail. Slogans of support were chanted over the high prison walls to give support and solidarity to the three Irish freedom fighters currently incarcerated in Leicester prison.

The picket ended with speeches in support of Sinn Fein's POW campaign. A wreath was laid in Noel's memory.