

# CLASS STRUGGLE



Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

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## DEFEND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS!



The government's recent announcements of a ban on Sinn Fein on radio and TV and the abolition of the right to silence are only the latest in a series of changes that limit and deny our democratic rights.

The government uses the language of freedom of choice and the rights of individuals. But the reality is the opposite: a rapid erosion of freedom and democratic rights for the majority of people.

The Labour Party has, in some cases, administered similar changes when in power. The clearest example is the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), brought in and renewed by Labour governments. Now in opposition, it is more concerned with the image of Britain abroad than with defending our rights.

There has been no sudden coup. No announcement that democratic rights are being suspended "in the national interest". There has, instead, been a series of measures, much of it new legislation, over a period of time, that adds up to increasing state power and fewer rights for the people.

The PTA, of course, has been on the books for some years. But we have had the Police Bill, strengthening the powers of the police and limiting the democratic right of assembly and

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employment legislation that limited the right to strike and picket. We have had other almost unnoticed pieces of legislation which, for example, enable the state to make deductions from our wages (for example to pay for the poll tax) or our benefits without our consent.

The clearest warning we have had was the actions of the state against the miners and their communities. Apart from the outright repression, there were numerous examples of denial of democratic rights: limits on movement around the country, questioning about political beliefs and new bail conditions, among others.

This erosion of our basic rights is taking place in a wider context in which state power has been concentrated at the centre, by

for example, the gradual removal of power and finance from local government. We are also seeing a change from benefits to which we have an absolute right to benefits that are means-tested and dependent on circumstances.

### UNITE THE MANY

In one sense, there is no such thing as individual freedom in a society divided by class and nationality. The economic reality denies many people basic rights such as the right to work or the right to good health. Equality is a myth in Britain today.

National minority people also have long been denied democratic rights taken for granted by others: black people by the immigration laws and Irish people by the PTA.

But while recognising the limits to what can be achieved within this society, we need to fight to defend and extend democratic rights. It is a fight that can bring together many people in a united front in the interests of the great majority against the few.

ERITREA



HEALTH CARE FOR THE PEOPLE

Tory Blueprint



BRAD FORD

4&5

HOW MANY MORE MUST DIE?



BACK PAGE

# CLASS STRUGGLE

## EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL...E!

### THE RIGHT TO SILENCE

The abolition of the "right to silence" in British-occupied Ireland, to be extended later to England and Wales, is a horrifying development.

The right to silence is a right not to be forced to incriminate yourself out of your own mouth. It is one of the few real civil rights in English law, and has spread to foreign jurisdictions based on the English legal system.

There are two main forms of the right to silence. One is the right not to give evidence at one's own trial. This right has already been eroded by the abolition of the "dock statement". Previously an accused could make a statement to the court without having to be cross-examined. Now, the accused cannot put his side of the case without facing the harrowing ordeal of questioning by the police lawyer.

The second form is the right to refuse to answer police questions during the investigation of a crime. If an accused has not answered questions, the jury must be told that he was exercising his absolute right and that nothing at all must be read into his silence. It is this right which is now being removed in the Six Counties by the provision that a failure to answer police questions may be treated as evidence against the accused.

The right to silence is of the utmost practical importance for civil rights. All the evidence shows that it is in fact under-used because most people are not aware of it. Its importance can only be appreciated by envisaging the situation of detention and interrogation in a police station. On the one hand, there are the police officers, trained and experienced and at home on their own ground, knowing that often their only chance of getting a conviction is by making the suspect confess. On the other, the prisoner, deprived of liberty, scared and disorientated by the unfamiliar and hostile environment, is at a grave disadvantage.

Add to this, the long periods for which the prisoner may be detained, perhaps entirely alone, and the questioning for long periods or on numerous occasions. The prisoner must face the methods of interrogation which vary from the bluff - "All, right, sunshine, we know you did, so you might as well tell us about it", through subtle threats and promises (like threats to arrest the suspect's close relations or promises of bail), to the bullying and brutality such as that used to extort confessions from the Birmingham Six.

Access to a lawyer can be of crucial importance in this situation. Such access can be denied, and frequently is, most notoriously under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, when people are held incommunicado for up to seven days. But once the right to silence is abolished, even the presence of a solicitor will be of limited value. For the solicitor will no longer be able to advise the suspect not to answer questions, secure in the knowledge that the police will not be able to use this against him.

Once the prisoner has no longer the protection of the right to silence, the police will be able to obtain more "confessions" and incriminating statements. For once they have the prisoner talking, the police know many techniques to obtain the answers they want - trick questions to trip the prisoner up, distortion of the answers and putting words into his mouth.

The result of this will be many more wrongful convictions based on false confessions as well, of course, as convictions based on the fact that the accused has refused to answer questions.

In the occupied Six Counties, the judicial process is already condemned by lawyers world-wide. Single judge courts, paid perjurers, shoot-to-kill - now these trappings of a police state will be joined by the power to extort confessions.

Any progress made in civil liberties over the last century is now being reversed by an increasingly authoritarian state. Once people can be forced to incriminate themselves, there is no longer even the fiction of being innocent until proved guilty. The door is open to the methods of the Inquisition and the Witchfinder-General.

# LETTERS

Dear Editor,

Parkinson's promise to sell off British Coal highlights how the Labour party and the Tories help to preserve capitalism.

Back in 1946 Labour nationalised the mines. This had little to do with socialism. The industry was in a mess. The mine-owners could not provide the system with an economic energy source. British capitalism needed to restructure after the Second World War. The bosses' state had to intervene. The tax-payers (i.e. the working class) had to foot the bill for compensation paid to the mine-owners.

The miners soon found that bad conditions, lack of democracy and poor wages continued. The miners' strikes of the early 1970's were the result. The 1964-70 Labour government did nothing for the miners (or for the rest of the working class, for that matter).

It was during the last Labour government that, despite NUM opposition, the area pit productivity deals were pushed through. These helped split the miners during the subsequent 1984-85 strike.

Individual mine-owners would have never held out against the 1984-85 strike. Millions of pounds of workers' taxes were used to break it. The Tories were quite willing to use nationalisation and state intervention to strike break. The NUM had to be beaten whilst workers' taxes footed the bill. The industry could now be made profitable. Jobs were lost, short-term planning focusing on immediately profitable pits was the order of the day.

This all has to be seen in the context of capitalism's strategy for energy provision. In 1979, more than 60% came from the state-owned industry. Today, after privatisation of British Gas, BP, etc., 71% comes from the private sector. After privatisation of electricity, only 13% will come from the state.

The long-term modernisation (i.e. profitability) of coal mining seems complete. Since the 1984-85 strike, productivity has risen by 74% and costs are down 30%. The pits are on course to break even by next April for the first time in 11 years, after a £340 million deficit in 1987-88.

It is predicted that British Coal could be making profits of £500 million if relieved of interest payments of £400 million. Unofficially, it is rumoured that the Tories intend to write off these interest payments. Once again, a gift from workers' taxes to future bosses.

It is the usual merry-go-round. Labour nationalises the unprofitable. The bosses' state uses workers' taxes to modernise

and smash the workers. A profitable enterprise is handed back by the Tories to the bosses. Taxes paid by the working class foot the bill at every stage.

A shop steward.



Dear Editor,

In September's 'Class Struggle' article on women, it was argued that if imperialism granted equal pay to women, provided childcare, ended domestic (i.e. women's) labour, etc. then imperialism could not function.

I am not sure this is true.

Equal pay for work of equal value is a progressive demand but it does not necessarily challenge the capitalist basis of economic exploitation, as so clearly exposed by Marx.

Many aspects of women's unpaid labour could be privatised and be a source of profit.

What working class men do in their homes is not an issue which challenges the fundamental nature of capitalist economic exploitation.

Obviously struggles to increase equality between men and women are progressive. But we should not underestimate the ability of the bosses (usually men) to grant reforms, in the face of strong opposition, to adapt to save their despicable (and male-dominated) system.

Obviously, imperialism benefits from the oppression and extra-exploitation of women. Opposition to this is one thing; to argue that to end these things would destroy the basis of imperialism, is another issue.

A mere male, Birmingham.



### EQUAL PAY FOR WORK OF EQUAL VALUE

The letter above raises some important points about the position of women in imperialist society and the work they do. It is worth going into these points in some more detail.

The letter refers to the ability of the imperialist system to make reforms, when it has to, to save itself.

It is clear that, especially in the case of white-collar jobs, reforms have been made, for example for teachers, so that women get equal pay.

In the 19th century, women had to fight for their right to education and take up professions like medicine and science. This was clearly a reform that imperialism was forced to grant

and one that it could accommodate.

In some working class jobs also, particularly in the textile industry, women traditionally got equal pay although this tended to be eroded by the practice of men getting the more highly-paid jobs. But there are also aspects of domestic work that can be made into a profitable enterprise. Examples of this are convenience foods, pre-packaged meals etc. Another current example is private old people's homes, one of the fastest growing businesses in Britain today.

These examples would seem to indicate that it would be possible for imperialism to grant equal pay for work of equal value. Men and women would be equally exploited and money could be drawn from taxes to pay for socialised domestic labour - the reproduction and maintenance of the workforce.

On the other hand, this seems pretty unlikely in the real situation of Britain today.

Imperialism does not only need to produce surplus value. It needs the flexibility to force wages down and cut living standards.

Women have always been used by imperialism in such a way that its profits are boosted. Women's labour has been, to say the least, flexible.

Women's domestic labour has been generally unpaid in the home. At the same time, they have been a low-paid source of labour, often used to break the hold of relatively well-paid men. They have been used as a reserve labour force as well as a cheaper labour force, prepared to work part-time and for low wages.

Whereas in the earlier days of capitalism, it remained a possibility that equal pay and an equal right to work could be won, this now seems unlikely for more than some limited sections of women. The trade union response was to demand the family wage for men and thus deny women the right to work and equal pay.

It is this political reality as much as the needs of imperialism that will prevent women from achieving the right to be equally exploited, even if this were possible in the abstract.

That is not to argue that the struggle for women's equality by itself will challenge the basis of the imperialist system. An alliance of forces is necessary of all those oppressed and exploited.

We welcome further contributions from our readers on this and other aspects of the discussion on women's oppression.

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### CLASS STRUGGLE

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# ORGANISING AGAINST STATE RACISM

CLASS STRUGGLE CORRESPONDENT

We reprint below two leaflets calling for support for two campaigns defending black people from state racism. In the case of the Plaistow Four, it was the police who were the attackers. In the case of Dora Oppong, she faces deportation under racist immigration laws even though she has lived in this country for 15 years:

## DEFEND THE PLAISTOW FOUR

Community groups and individuals across East London have come together to defend four young black men - Ron, Clive, Sam and Raymond - who face serious charges of assault and obstruction following a massive police raid on a christening party in Plaistow, Newham. The case of the Plaistow Four shows that black people, who are often picked up by the police on trumped-up charges when they walk the streets, are not even free from police harassment in the privacy of their homes.

### The Facts of the Case

On 5th June, following a christening, about twenty people including several children under five years old, went to a flat in Plaistow to celebrate. At 4.15 p.m., the police called at the flat, saying that as it was a Sunday afternoon and most people were about to go to bed, the music should be turned down. The music was turned down but the police came back at 11.15 p.m. Although the party was about to finish, the police insisted that it ended immediately. Despite the fact that some of the guests were due to stay overnight, all those present at

the party, including small children and a heavily pregnant woman were made to leave the flat (which was on the thirteenth floor) via the stairs.

By now, over 50 police had surrounded the building, occupying each landing of the flat. They forced their way into the flat. Many of them had covered their identity numbers. Ron tried to explain that as it was his girlfriend's flat, he was staying the night. But he was grabbed by the throat in a stranglehold and told that he was "nicked". When Clive, Sam and Raymond objected, they were also arrested. All four men were dragged to the lift, racially abused, their heads bashed against the walls. They were handcuffed and forced into police vans. Inside the vans, they were forced to lie on the floor and were subjected to more racist abuse and violence. As he was getting out of the van at West Ham Police Station, Ron's head was slammed into the door frame of the van by a police officer, causing his head to bleed heavily.

### NOT THE ONLY CASE

Unfortunately, the case of the Plaistow Four is not unique in Newham. Local groups have documented hundreds of similar cases and have campaigned successfully to defend victims of racist policing. Although the Plaistow Four have a good legal defence, huge public support is needed to ensure that they are acquitted.

For more information, please contact us at PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7 or phone us on 01-555-8151 or 01-552-6284.

### DORA OPPONG MUST STAY

Dora Oppong came to the UK from Ghana in 1973 and, apart from an absence of about 6 months has been here throughout the last 15 years. Her three children - Kojo (age 13), Akosua (age 10) and Nana (age 8) - were born here and are British citizens. They attend local schools in Newham. Now the government intends to deport Dora because it claims that she has remained without permission since 1984 and that there is insufficient cause to allow her to remain with her family on compassionate grounds. The government will not take into account the fact that she has lived here for 15 years, most of her adult life.

If Dora is deported, her children will remain and be taken into care by the local council. Dora has nobody to turn to in Ghana. She is an active member of her church in Newham. She has struggled hard to bring up her children. The government's intention to tear apart Dora's family is an affront to natural justice and an insult to us all.

### NO RIGHT OF APPEAL

Since the new racist Immigration Act was quietly passed and came into force in August 1988, over 250 black people a month are being arrested, detained with no effective right of appeal and simply loaded onto planes out of the country - with no-one knowing about it.

Dora's final appeal on a legal point is due to be heard in mid-November 1988. The decision which is likely to go against her is due some four to six weeks later.

Dora's only chance of being allowed to stay in this country with her family is if the government relents and allows her to remain on compassionate grounds. As the government claims to take into account the public interest in making its decision, massive community support demonstrating the level

of public interest is the only chance Dora has. She and others need your support urgently.

Time is running out ....

For more information, contact PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7. Phone: 01-555-8151 or 01-552-6284.



Anwar Ditta, Josephine Thomas and Pow Shien Leong have all had to fight racist immigration laws for their right to live here with their families. The immigration laws deny to black people basic democratic rights that others taken for granted.

## 'UNOFFICIAL SECRETS' OUR BOOK REVIEW

'Unofficial Secrets', Child Sexual Abuse - The Cleveland Case, by Beatrix Campbell, Virago, £4.50.

Did you feel confused about the Cleveland child-abuse crisis as it was reported by the media?

Did you wonder what was going on when the demagogic Labour MP, Stuart Bell, ranted on about the women professionals responsible for detection of child abuse?

Did you wonder about parents' power as championed by Stuart Bell and the clergyman? and wonder whether this meant mothers, as well as fathers? And what about the children? Who championed them?

Did you wonder about the problems of the state (social services, the police, etc.) splitting up families or the sexual politics within these families?

'Unofficial Secrets' is a useful account of the 'Cleveland Case' which will help to think through some of these questions and face up to the question of sexual abuse of children by men.

The book gives an account of how the different institutions and individuals in Cleveland reacted to the question of child sexual abuse: doctors, Social Services, the police, the politicians - especially Stuart Bell and, of course, the media.

It also recounts briefly the background to the 'discovery' of child abuse, both by voluntary women's organisations such as Rape Crisis centres, Social Services, some doctors and in a few exceptional cases, by the police.

The author, Beatrix Campbell, is not uncritical of any of the women professionals in Cleveland. However, she does essentially attribute the 'Cleveland crisis' to a clash between those who are prepared to face up to the issue of child abuse - which usually means the sexual abuse of children, both boys and girls, by men close to them - and those who refuse to believe that this can happen, particularly within the family.

### ABUSE REVEALED

In the 1960's and 1970's, the

issues of rape and domestic violence against women and children were put on the agenda, mainly because they had been exposed by the women's movement.

In some cases, child sexual abuse began to be seen for the first time directly as a result of these developments. For example, a national specialist unit on rape was set up in a Dublin hospital in 1985. Before the year was out, it was receiving more children than adults - 50 new cases of child sexual abuse every month, a total of 1,500 in two years. Similarly, closer to Cleveland, at the Tyneside Rape Crisis Centre, during the 1980's, 60% of the women who came disclosed abuse in their childhood.

At the same time, doctors and others in Leeds were becoming more aware of the issue. Paediatricians and other professional staff explored the implications in a working group in the area. Out of 337 cases of sexual abuse of children confirmed in 1985-86, around half the children revealed signs of anal penetration. Some of the children were very young, including under-fives. Among

the younger children, abuse was as common in boys as in girls.

However, as the book shows, such findings are not readily believed. Medical evidence is sometimes difficult to find and is still disputed by some. Courts do not accept the testimony of young children, who often conceal the truth at any rate, out of fear and dependency on the family. Hence, the issue in Cleveland became one of whether one believed that such abuse could take place within families.

The police, media and politicians such as Stuart Bell and the clergyman who acted as spokesman for 'parents' often took a stand in support of the family rather than carefully looking at the facts. Even the language used obscured the reality of men's abuse of children, both boys and girls, often within the family.

Even where there was a commitment to protect children there were few provisions to deal with the situation. There was little coordination between different agencies and little communication with the mothers.

This led to problems when they came under attack.

Other points are raised in the book but not dealt with in any detail: the lack of support and co-ordination with the mothers of the children concerned; the lack of involvement of women's groups in general and examples of good practice elsewhere.

The most important question must be to what extent can we rely on the state services such as social services, the medical profession etc. to protect women and children? It is clear that in Cleveland, the dominant forces, were not even prepared to see the issue. But to what extent can we develop a service to protect children, or to prevent abuse, without a basic change in the structure of society?

The model of the women's refuges indicate that there are important reforms that can be won. But are these reforms simply patching up the problem without changing basic relationships of power within society and within the family? This book raises this and other related questions that we all need to think about.

## THE FASCIST MENACE

In Belgium, a feature of recently-held local elections has been an extremely worrying progress for the extreme right. Neo-fascist parties have been entrenched in Flanders for some time and in the recent election achieved 7% or 8% of the vote in some areas.

But a new feature has been the growth of fascist support in the French-speaking part - nearly 4% of the vote in the

city of Liege. These campaigns have been particularly marked by racist attacks on black people and migrant workers.

The Party of Labour of Belgium (PTB), a Marxist-Leninist party, has consistently argued that the answer to the fascist menace is not to keep quiet about it but to fight it actively. The following is an extract from a recent editorial in their paper, 'Solidaire':

"How to explain this sinister development? To begin with, the right-wing parties and the majority of the socialists have aided the fascists in their work. They have encouraged ideas of selfish competition and of plundering the third world and have themselves taken on board more and more racist ideas. They have rejected the right to vote for migrant workers, which would in fact act as a brake against racist electoral demagoguery.

"But the left should also have a good look to see if it has

a clear conscience. From its side, the PTB has for several years been openly denouncing the racist parties and is calling for a struggle to ban their propaganda (the law already exists). On the other side, most of the left parties advocate the tactic of keeping quiet. According to them, any denunciation which is a bit too strong would be publicity for the fascists and would thus be counter-productive. Let us avoid a 'polarisation' between left and extreme right, they say, let us resolve the problem without stirring things

up. In carrying out more of a socially-minded policy in the 'problem' areas, their slogan is: "To fight racism, you must first repair the lifts."

"In France, the result of a similarly passive approach has been to allow Le Pen to climb in a lift! - and shoot up from 0.2% to 14%."

Drawing conclusions from this, the PTB calls upon all progressives to join it in an active campaign against racism.

# BRADFORD... PICKLES BELONG IN JARS

C.S. CORRESPONDENT

Pickles is the leader of the Tory group on Bradford Council. At least he can now be said to be well-known. Whether he is well-loved by the residents of this northern city is, however, a matter of dispute. "Pickles Belong in Jars" read one banner at the City Hall, on Tuesday 25th October. Another claimed: "Pickles Will Sell Your Granny". Bradford Council is split, with the Tories on one side, opposed by equal numbers of Labour and SLP councillors. The Tories can only get a majority (assuming Labour and SLP combine) by the use of the Mayor's (a Tory) casting vote.

by strategies from various Tory think tanks. He is known to have been close to Ray Honeyford, notorious headmaster at Drummond Middle School. (Pickles was in charge of Education at the time of the dispute there.)

The Tories' strategy consists of an attack on local government as bureaucratic, inefficient and expensive. This is in line with their policy of the dismantling of (town hall) socialism. They claim to be aiming at a fundamental change in the interests of the people of Bradford.

for the next decade. The institution of local government requires swift and radical reform. ....

"The services we provide need to be managed more effectively. The harmful monopoly we have established in the supply of many non-essential and ancillary functions must be broken down. The people of the District must be allowed an effective choice in the nature of the services they receive. And the Council must divest its powers to allow new forms of accountability and public participation in the policy arena."

were either appointed or elected to serve, maintaining and improving essential services at a price people can afford." and "The Authority will have a new management style and be capable of relinquishing its monopoly of service provision to allow the people to choose for themselves..."

## WHO BENEFITS?

This kind of talk has a popular appeal, of course. Unless we are a town hall bureaucrat, in charge of a little empire, many of us know that town halls, whether Labour or Tory controlled, are no bastions of socialism. Damp council houses and high rents. Dirty streets with inadequate lighting. Heaps of paper being shuffled around and few services to the people.

But it did not take long to find out that the people who are actually going to benefit from the changes in Bradford, and the "community" referred to in the document, were not exactly your ordinary working class person, black or white, man or woman.

Thousands of people in Bradford realised quickly enough that they were due to lose out by these and other, more long-term changes.

There are two other main areas where the Tories propose drastic changes, which will have a more indirect effect on people's lives.

## CUTBACKS AND CLOSURE

Cutbacks will be made in the voluntary sector. In the future, the council will not fund the voluntary sector directly. It will put money into a "Community Trust" instead. There are a big variety of community organisations in Bradford, including black and women's organisations, many of which provide a useful service.

The other main area that will be cut is the various officers and departments within the council concerned with issues such as equal opportunities, nuclear issues etc. and grants to bodies outside. It is arguable whether these cuts will have a serious effect on people's lives in Bradford. But they reflect the hard-nosed, sink or swim attitude of the present Tory group.

Pickles has boasted that if the Tories can defeat the Labour Party (his idea of socialism) in Bradford, the birthplace of the Independent Labour Party, they can win anywhere.

The question of the role of the Labour Party, both when in a majority on the Council and when in a minority as now, is indeed an important question.

The attack by the Tories on people's jobs and services is no surprise. What is less clear is how the Labour Party has in fact paved the way for this attack, in one of the poorest cities in Britain.

The council meeting itself lasted 12 hours, and between the posturing and rhetoric of both the Tories and Labour, the cuts package was pushed through on the casting vote of the Mayor.

The bankruptcy of the casting vote system was illustrated by the fact that a vote of no-confidence in the Mayor was defeated by the Mayor's vote!

## Who Benefits from the cuts?

9,000 council jobs are to go. The council employer in Bradford, with about 10,000 employees present. Two thirds of its employees are to go.

School meals are to go up by 33% to 16p per meal.

Council rents are to go up by an average of 16% increase.

Creches are to be cut or scrapped and made redundant at all three local councils, a total of nearly 50 jobs.

A home help charge of £1 a week is to be introduced, previously a free service.

Sports centres and other local recreation centres are to be privatised.

The Benefits Shops in Bradford, which were to be closed. They dealt with about 100 people last year.

15 old people's homes, at present valued at £1.5 million, are to be sold to private owners. (The council's report after report, the treatment of old people is more and more neglected. Staff are more underworked than in the local authority.)

Services are to be put out for tender. The timetable laid down by the 1984 Act, and more services will be put out by the Act. (Again, there is evidence of the NHS that private contracts are cheaper, because workers are paid less, and conditions of employment are worse, and the state is unable to give, suffers.)

## Inequality and unemployment in the Bradford area

A document produced by Bradford Council in 1984, gave the statistics of unemployment in Bradford. Since this analysis was made, a year ago, and many of the sources used in the document, trends illustrated in the document are up-to-date figures would paint a picture of a city in decline.

The document said in the introduction that the economic decline has undoubtedly been much worse than others, particularly in the inner city, and black people. The document says that in some of the inner city areas, unemployment is over 15%, in contrast it is 5% in the outer areas.

It is estimated that, with the decline of the manufacturing industry, mainly in Bradford, has lost 63,000 jobs.

Unemployment increased from 5% in 1984 (18% of the workforce).

Unemployment is unevenly spread. In the some inner areas of Bradford, some council estates, unemployment is over 15%, in contrast it is 5% in the outer areas.

One in six of the unemployed in Bradford are black people, in contrast it is 5% in the outer areas.

For all school-leavers, finding a job is difficult. For black school-leavers, the figure is 37.5% of white school-leavers, black school-leavers the figure is 50%.

In Bradford, as a whole, over 10% of the population live on some form of state benefit, whereas in the outer areas the figure is 5%.

In some of the inner-city areas, 17 out of 1,000 children live in poverty, whereas in the outer areas the figure is 5%.

44% of the workforce of Bradford are under 25, about 35,000 children under the age of 5 are provided with 500 nursery places, being available privately.

The statistics for health, housing and education all repeat the same message of poverty. Bradford shares the same problems as other inner-city areas. In addition, Bradford is indicating that far from cutting back on services, the council is planning to expand and develop the city.



Thousands attend the public meeting in opposition to the cuts



Banners and demonstrators outside Bradford City Hall.

Apart from selling grannies, and using dubious methods to win a majority on important votes, Pickles has become famous for his reforming zeal.

## TORY BLUEPRINT

It is the first time that the Tories have won control of a northern city and they are determined to make Bradford a blueprint for Tory policy in the inner-cities.

Pickles is rumoured to have discussed his plans with Mrs T, over numerous cups of tea. He is also said to be inspired

## A MODEL FOR THE 1990'S

Shortly after the Tories won the by-election in September that changed the balance on the Council, a document entitled - Bradford: A Model For the 1990's was leaked. The document which spelled out Tory plans, is full of rhetoric of reform, freedom of choice, etc. It begins:

"Conservative control of Bradford Metropolitan District Council will shape the form of local government in Bradford

The document outlines a drastic cutting down and re-structuring of the council internally, and a shedding of services provided by the council.

## RADICAL AND REFORMING?

Much of the document sounds radical and reforming. For example: "The Council must allow direct control over many activities to devolve to other forms of community organisations." "Members and officers of the Council should look after the interests of the local community which they



# Philippines

## AQUINO SELLS OUT AGAIN

"Treason of the highest order" - that was what the Philippines' independent trade union federation, the KMU (May 1st Movement) called the agreement reached in October between the Philippines' government and the USA over the future of American bases in the country.

Since the US ruled the Philippines, it has maintained its two largest bases in the world outside the USA, there. Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Field Air Base are the lynchpins of the US strategic position in South-East Asia and the eastern Pacific. Subic Bay base was established in 1901, and Clark in 1947, on the site of an older military base. Both played a key role in logistical support for the US war effort in Korea (1950-53) and Indochina (1965-75).

The Philippines became nominally independent in 1946, and eight months later, in March 1947, the US-RP Military Bases Agreement (RP=Republic of the Philippines) was signed. It gave the US direct control over 25,000 acres of Filipino territory and the right to use a further 167,000. (Clark alone is larger than the state of Singapore.) This first bases agreement gave the US the right to rent-free use of a total of 16 bases and other sites for 99 years.

The number of US personnel stationed at the bases has varied over the years, reaching its peak during the Indochina war. There are now 15,400 military personnel permanently placed there, as well as about 9,000 sailors on shore at any one time. The US and those in the Philippines who argue for the retention of the bases say that they bring in a lot of benefits for the Philippines, in addition to the rent which the US now pays. The main one they talk about is the employment of nearly 40,000 Filipino workers

at the bases. What they seem less keen to point out is that the Filipinos are paid only one eighth of what American workers earn for the same on-base work.

### PROSTITUTION

The other major "fringe benefit" is the money that off-duty American servicemen spend in the towns near the bases. How many millions of dollars this is worth for the Philippines balance of payments is hard to calculate. But the price for ordinary people there is high. The servicemen pay for "entertainment" - gambling, alcohol and prostitution.

Approximately 30,000 prostitutes work in Angeles, near Clark base and Olongapo, next to Subic. The great majority are women, but there are some men and boys. Child prostitution is rife: in 1983, there was a scandal over the attempt of the Filipino authorities to conceal the facts about the case of a 40-year old US naval officer who had sex with 12 young girls, aged between 9 and 14. He infected them with syphilis and gonorrhoea.

At Olongapo, prostitution is legal and there are 16,000 women registered with "social hygiene" clinics, where they get bi-monthly check-ups. Because the authorities want to keep money flowing in, they claim that there is at present no AIDS problem. But independent health workers say that AIDS is spreading rapidly, and are angry that the authorities conceal the facts from the public, and, in particular from the women themselves. The prostitutes come from poor families and cannot obtain enough money to live in any other way, which explains how pro-bases groups were able to mobilise some women to demonstrate earlier this year in favour of the bases remaining.



A broad alliance of forces is opposed to US bases on Filipino soil.

### ANTI-BASES COALITION

Progressive and nationalist Filipinos have always opposed the presence of the US bases. They point to the serious impact they have on the areas where they are located. They argue that the bases are potential springboards for direct US intervention against progressive and revolutionary movements in the Philippines. This seems like an increasing threat, because of the growing strength of the National Democratic Front (NDF) and its armed component, the New People's Army (NPA), who fight for social advance for the poor and full independence for the Philippines.

Finally, those opposed to the bases say, the bases enmesh the Philippines in the conflicts between the super-powers. The US is believed to have nuclear weapons at the bases, and critics think that makes it even more likely that the Philippines would become

a target for Soviet forces, if a war between the super-powers should break out.

From time to time, Philippines' governments have made critical noises about the bases too. But that has always been on occasions when the agreement about their use was under discussion with the US.

The air of successive governments has not been to shut down the bases, but to obtain better terms for their use. The 1947 agreement was subjected to several reviews. In 1966, the duration of the agreement was reduced from 99 years to 25 years, counting from 1966. Subsequent reviews resulted in the flag of the Philippines being flown over the bases and the US paying rent to the Marcos regime.

The illegal NDF, in which the Communist Party of the Philippines participates, has consistently planned for the bases to be closed. In the

1980s, legal organisations emerged which also campaigned for their closure, including Nuclear-Free Philippines and the Anti-Bases Coalition (ABC).

In 1983, the ABC declared: "We Filipinos yearn for peace, freedom and independence ... We aspire to be our own masters and no-one's slaves. Yet the presence of US military bases on our land has impaired our sovereignty and independence, and made the threat to our survival as a people starkly real and immediate." The ABC held rallies and distributed leaflets against the bases.

By the time of the presidential election campaign in the Philippines which began at the end of 1985, there was a strong anti-bases movement. In her struggle to beat Marcos, Corazon Aquino made a play for the votes of the anti-bases lobby. At first, she said she wanted the bases shut down. But then, even during the election campaign, she began to retreat from her initial position. The signature of a new bases agreement with the US, in return for more money, shows that, on this issue too, Aquino is treading in the footsteps of Marcos.

The ABC, the underground NDF and all the popular organisations remain determined that the bases must go. Their objections still stand. They recognise that, at present, there is no alternative work for the women and men who work on the bases or in the "entertainment" industry, but believe that any Philippines government that shuts down the bases has to muster the resources to provide alternative employment quickly. Certainly, the NDF believes that a genuinely independent Philippines, whose economic development is shaped by the needs of the people rather than the demands of trans-national corporations, can solve this problem.

# Palestine

BY DAVID EVANS

## PALESTINIAN WOMEN BUILD UNITY

Since Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, women have played an increasing part in Palestinian resistance to the occupation.



In 1968, schoolgirls held demonstrations in West Bank towns, and from then on, protests by women took place regularly.

Before 1978, the only organisations of women were traditional charitable ones, which played a useful role in looking after the welfare of needy families and children. One of the most outgoing of these was the Society of In'ash al-Usra (Family Rehabilitation Society), which provided training in sewing, embroidery, hair-dressing and other skills to young women, ran a home for girls and helped women to market dresses and other embroidered products to bring in an income of their own. The occupation forces closed it down in June, except for the home, claiming that it was indoctrinating girls in anti-semitism - a charge rejected by the Society.

In 1978, the Union of Women's Work Committees was established. It aimed to organise women in refugee camps, in villages and the poorer parts of towns. It intended that not only should their participation in the national struggle be increased, but that they should become better able to assert their wishes as women for their own future.

Literacy classes and instruction in basic health care got going. Women who used to be largely confined to their homes,

got together to work producing goods for sale, simultaneously earning money to use as they saw fit, and finding a chance to talk over their views with other women.

During the next three years, three other federations of women's committees were established. The divisions between them reflected differences between the major PLO groups, as well as the Palestine Communist Party, a Soviet-aligned group. While women often felt that these differences could not be ignored, they also regretted the duplication of effort involved in four women's organisations doing similar work in parallel, sometimes in the same places.

### CO-ORDINATING GROUP

Since the beginning of the Uprising in December 1987, the organising skills women learned through the women's committees have been used in building popular committees across the 1967 occupied territories, and handling all the problems involved in sustaining an intense struggle over 10 months in which over 20,000 were arrested, 360 killed, curfews were imposed frequently and the Israeli army dished out violence with little regard for age or sex.

During this time, the four different women's federations have set up a co-ordinating

group, and their members work together at a local level, too. They have now taken a practical step towards greater unity by jointly agreeing plans for the development of their work and parcelling out projects in co-

operation with each other. Women who have worked over the years to build up the organisation and collective strength of Palestinian women feel that a great step forward is being taken.



Palestinian women stand up to Israeli soldiers in the Gaza Strip.

## Eritrea

# HEALTH CARE FOR THE PEOPLE

### CLASS STRUGGLE CORRESPONDENT

We print below a shortened version of an interview with the co-ordinator of the Eritrea Public Health Programme, Dr. Nerayo Teclé Michael. The full interview is published in Links, the magazine of Third World First.

#### The scars of war:

"The war has had a tremendous effect on people's health, felt directly through war injuries and bullet wounds. But felt indirectly as well. The war not only leaves physical scars, but also mental ones.

"If there has been a heavy air raid, the number of miscarriages may rise. People become insecure when they are driven away from their homes and have to cross borders to escape the war. Food shortages and diseases such as malaria are added problems."



#### Health accessible to all:

"In Eritrea, we have been trying to establish a primary health care scheme. Conditions have been immensely unfavourable - a drought and famine

for 10 years and a war of liberation for 25 years - but to a large extent, we have been successful.

"The first step for a successful primary health care scheme is that it should be accessible, so it should be as near as possible to where people live. For every village of 500-1500 people we have two trained people based in the village: these are the village health worker and the traditional birth attendant. As members of the community, they see and know everyone in the village. They are responsible to the village council which selects them. Our role is limited to providing formal training, supervision and support."

"We have 300 health stations which each cover about ten villages, about 50 health centres, each for a district of 50,000 people, six regional hospitals and one central hospital. At the health centre, we have a staff of 50 and we try to cover most of the specialities so that people don't have to travel a long distance. Experience shows that, if a hospital or clinic is further than 15 kilometres away, people tend not to go."

#### Nomad and women's health:

"Some health centres have a mobile unit which provides health care for nomads - something like 25% of the population. We have clinics along their routes and when they stay somewhere we can provide health care for them. In the past, people used to criticise their way of life. But we think it should be respected. We have to improve the quality of their



A woman of the Afar ethnic group.

lives: what they lack most is good health, especially the pregnant women. If their health is improved, then the children they bear will be healthy...."

#### Health and nutrition:

"We teach people about the problems around them - in sanitation, hygiene and nutrition. Water is crucial - without water it is difficult to maintain standards of hygiene.

"Some people ask how we can teach nutrition when we have so little food anyway. First, if people are taught about nutrition they will be able to produce more of the right kind of foods. If they eat more of these, then they will produce more, because they are more healthy, and so eventually this can radically change people's lives. Secondly, if we teach people about nutrition, it will enable them to use the little food they have in the right way."

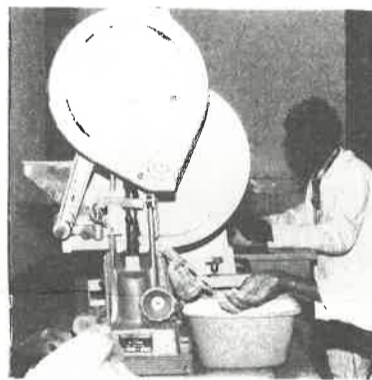
#### Self-sufficient production:

"Drugs occupy nearly 60% of expenditure on health and it takes about eight months to get drugs from outside, from the stage of ordering until they arrive. Prices are high and transport expensive, so it makes sense to produce our own. Our drug production hasn't solely concentrated on modern medicines. We also produce traditional medicines from local sources."

#### Lessons we've learned:

"We think we have some important answers to how to implement an effective primary health care programme.

"There has to be community participation and, of course, if people are allowed to make decisions about their health, then they must, also, decide about their economy, their security, education, women's rights and so on. If they are encouraged to come together, they will start to solve their problems together. Our task has been mainly to act as a catalyst - and that is the most important lesson we have learned."



Drug production

## BOOKNEWS

### BLACKLIST The inside story of political vetting

Hollingsworth & Norton-Taylor

Laid bare here are the details of political vetting - an expose packed with personal histories and the underhand (and often incompetent) methods of MI5 and the Special Branch, the private detectives and shadowy Economic League.

£7.95 & 46p P&P

### NORTHERN IRELAND: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF CONFLICT

Rowthorn & Wayne

The authors provide an analysis of the politics and economy of Northern Ireland, from partition to the present day and outline the options for the future of the Six Counties concluding that the answer is the withdrawal of British troops and the reunification of Ireland.

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### THE LONG STRUGGLE OF ERITREA (ed) Cliffe & Davidson

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### BELOVED

Toni Morrison

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### OF LOVE AND SHADOWS

Isabel Allende

Set in a country of arbitrary arrests, sudden disappearances and summary executions, Isabel Allende's new novel tells of the passionate affair of two people prepared to risk everything for the sake of justice and truth.

£3.95 + 46p P&P

## California

# BOYCOTT THE GRAPES!

In the San Joaquin Valley towns of California, childhood cancer and birth defects are now reaching epidemic proportions. In the United States at large, over a quarter of a million farm workers are affected by pesticide-related illnesses. In order to challenge this state of affairs, the United Farm Workers union has, for the last four years, been leading a campaign to boycott the sale of Californian table grapes.

#### 36 DAY FAST

As part of that campaign, Union President, Cesar Chavez, recently completed a 36-day water only fast. It was a repeat of his 25-day fast over twenty years ago when the union was fighting for recognition. Now, as then, it has further strengthened the union's standing and particularly among the Chicano people.

#### THE GRAPES OF WRATH

American farm workers have experienced many bitter struggles over the years, as anyone who has read John Steinbeck's book, 'The Grapes of Wrath' will appreciate. Since then, the farm workers in California, many of them national minority people, have had to fight for their union to be recognised. The union has been

involved in the Salinas iceberg lettuce strike in 1970, the Coachella grape strike in 1972, the lemon strike in Santa Paula Ventura in 1978 as well as the Gallo wine boycott in the mid-1970's and the events at Egg City in the mid-1980's.

To the Chicano people, these are more than just trade union struggles. They are all about justice and dignity. Before the time that the union became established the campesinos were treated like animals. Many workers were paid less than the bare minimum wage; they enjoyed no benefits - no insurance, no breaks, no holidays and in many cases, they were without even clean drinking water or the use of toilets near to the fields where they worked from sunrise to sunset.

#### LA CAUSA

Now, because they have stood up and stood together, they are bringing about real change. In their current struggle against the growers using pesticide on the grapes, they not only have the full backing of their own communities; they are also winning support from far afield.

Many Chicano students right across America, for example, are now rallying to 'La Causa'. Last month, they put out a proclamation declaring war on the table ranchers and announcing a state-wide campaign aimed

### C.S. CORRESPONDENT



Dolores Huerta, Vice President of the United Farm Workers, joined by labour leaders.

at kicking table grapes off all the campuses where they can win support. Well-known national personalities are also becoming involved: Martin Sheen, Broadway and TV actor, led a 7-mile 'Boycott the Grapes' march through Malibu in September and Jesse Jackson is also giving his full support.

#### VAST PROFITS AND RUTHLESS ENEMIES

Despite all this support, the farm workers and their union know that they face bitter and ruthless enemies, both among the growers and agri-business

interests in California and from the powerful chemical industry lobby in Washington. Here, there are men who will stop at nothing to protect their profits which last year topped 20 billion dollars.

And when farm workers use the slogan 'The land belongs to those who work it', they know that in addition to touching sentiments that are deeply rooted in their own proud history of struggle for justice and self-determination, they are also sending shudders down the spine of every big land-owner across the continent

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# FREEDOM FOR IRELAND

## DESTROYING DEMOCRACY

### CLASS STRUGGLE CORRESPONDENT

The continuing assault on democracy by the Tory government took a big step forward with the censorship of Sinn Fein.

Most commentators and 'opposition' politicians have attacked the plan as both useless and dangerous. However, this latest move only finalises the continuing policy of self-censorship that the British media has practised on itself.

Underlying all media presentations on Ireland is the assumption that the government's line (both Tory and Labour) is essentially correct.

There has never been a section of the British media that is hostile to the British presence in Ireland from partition to today. What is new is that a legal political party with a large number of elected representatives and 40% of the nationalist people's vote, is being denied their free speech. Additionally, all the people of Britain are being denied their freedom to hear.

Will this censorship damage the Republican struggle? In a word, No. The restriction of the use of major media sources inside Britain will in no way change the fight inside Ireland. What it will do is help to continue the ostrich-like 'head in the sand' viewpoint to continue

inside Britain, and thus prolong Ireland's agony.

This latest move of censorship will only hide the truth from the British people. The armed struggle is most certainly not dependent upon the attentions of the BBC and ITV who will no doubt continue to report the results of the armed struggle.

rights of thousands of Irish people has never been attacked in the bourgeois media. In fact, it has virtually disappeared in the self-censorship that the British media has practised on itself since the early 1970's.

### DEATH SQUADS

Although there has been plenty of media space given over to the shoot-to-kill policy after the

such as are operated in El Salvador, Haiti, the Philippines, or a dozen other states.

When there is an exceptional case of a journalist or programme that begins to get near the truth on some matter in relation to Ireland, the government calls a halt to it, "in the national interest".

It is worth a reminder that the policies adopted and used in Ireland are eventually put into practice in Britain as was seen during the miners' strike and now with the removal of the right to silence in the courts. When the death squads are deemed necessary, they too will be used.

### IRISH FREEDOM BRITISH DEMOCRACY

Britain cannot win in Ireland. The increasing destruction of basic democratic rights indicates that Britain is, in fact, losing the war badly, like an animal caught in a trap tearing at its own body in an attempt to escape.

The struggle is being continually broadened by the actions of the government. Support for the Irish cause implicitly carries with it the struggle for democratic rights in Britain. The two issues have always been linked but never so obviously as they have been now. There is still much of the British left that has yet to learn this basic fact.



### PREVENTION OF TERRORISM ACT

The unrelenting assault on democracy can be seen in the operation of the PTA and the British media. The real function of the PTA has long been known to the Irish community. It is most clearly a racist law designed to terrorise the Irish community into political silence and inactivity. Of the thousands of people stopped, harassed and frightened, under the PTA, only a few tens of them have been arrested and charged. The removal of the democratic

Stalker affair and more recently, of the murders in Gibraltar, the coverage has been kept within the "proper bounds". That is, although occasionally critical of some aspects of government actions, the real questions regarding the shoot-to-kill policy has either been ignored or asked once and forgotten.

But British media reporting on Ireland has not been marked by its search for truth or justice. The point about the shoot-to-kill policy is that Britain is operating death squads

## HOW MANY MORE MUST DIE?

### C.S. CORRESPONDENT

"I'll tell you why you use plastic bullets - to repress Irish people." These were the words of Frances Donnelly, standing her ground as a group of squaddies tried to disrupt a rally against plastic bullets in Huddersfield on Saturday, 8th October.

Like many people in the North of Ireland, Frances Donnelly knows from her own bitter experience that plastic bullets are a weapon used to terrorise and suppress the nationalist community there. Despite government claims to the contrary, they are not used as a riot control weapon.

Frances Donnelly's own brother, Michael, was killed by a plastic bullet, on August 10th, 1980, in Belfast. Michael worked as a social worker at Ballymurphy Community Centre in West Belfast. He was twenty one years old. He had just come off duty and was walking home when he was hit in the chest by a plastic bullet.

An eyewitness said he saw a soldier fire directly at Michael from a range of 15-20 yards as he walked along Leeson Street in the Lower Falls. Earlier that evening, troops had been firing plastic bullets at youths on the same spot. At the time of Michael's death - the early hours of Sunday morning - there was no riot going on.

This was confirmed in a civil action brought against the British government. The judge presiding over the case was forced to conclude that the bullet had not been fired to suppress a riot but at a time when it was "uncalled for" and



"unjustified". He ordered the government to pay compensation.

Michael Donnelly is one of 13 people, including six children, killed by plastic bullets in the North of Ireland. Three people have also been killed by the rubber bullets used before plastic bullets were introduced in 1973. Countless

others have been blinded, maimed and injured. Many are unable to obtain treatment for their injuries for fear of being charged with "rioting".

### DEMONSTRATION

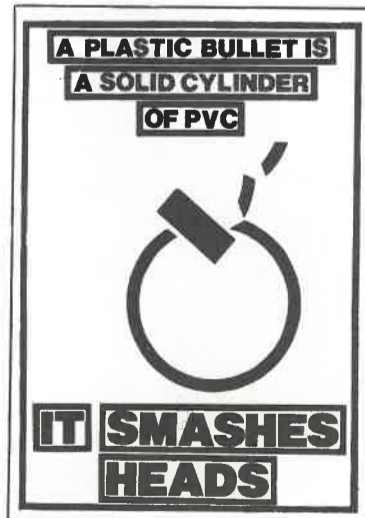
The Huddersfield demonstration and rally took place in an atmosphere of both protest and celebration. The march was protesting against the continuing use of these deadly weapons in the North of Ireland (over 100,000 have been fired to date), and also against the stockpiles that are mounting up in Britain.

At the same time, the marchers were celebrating the decision taken by Huddersfield-based Standard Fireworks to stop producing plastic bullets. The decision was taken after consistent pressure from the West Yorkshire Campaign Against Plastic Bullets (WYCAPB). This led to a visit to the factory, last April, by Eileen Kelly. Her twelve year old sister, Carol Ann, was murdered by soldiers using plastic bullets. It was during this visit that the assurance that Standard would cease production was given.

The importance of this victory at Standard Fireworks was stressed by Billy Etherington of the National Union of Mineworkers. Speaking very much from his own experience,

he said: "It is no mean achievement to get any commercial undertaking to do the decent thing."

WYCAPB plans to continue campaigning around the stockpiles of these weapons held by West Yorkshire police. Nationally,



however, the focus is expected to shift to Astra Fireworks in the South, who are now believed to be producing plastic bullets. There must be no peace for those who continue to make money out of murder.



## EVENTS

RCL PUBLIC MEETING  
Saturday, 11th December  
20 Years of the Communist Party  
of the Philippines.

1 pm, Conway Hall,  
Red Lion Square  
London

## THE PHILIPPINES STRUGGLE

### SPEAKING TOUR

Bernadette McAliskey

In early November, the Troops Out Movement will be organising a speaking tour by Bernadette McAliskey around England and Wales. Below are details of the dates and venues. All of the meetings start at 7.30 pm.

Monday, November 7

Cardiff, Central House,  
Mary Street.

Tuesday, November 8

Birmingham,  
Carrs Lane, Church Centre

Wednesday, November 9

Sheffield,  
Memorial Hall,  
(back of City Hall)

Thursday, November 10

Liverpool

Friday, November 11

London  
Conway Hall, Red Lion  
Square, Holborn.

MANCHESTER MARTYRS  
COMMEMORATION

Sunday, November 20th.

Manchester



# IN JARS

## C.S. CORRESPONDENT

were either appointed or elected to serve, maintaining and improving essential services at a price people can afford." and "The Authority will have a new management style and be capable of relinquishing its monopoly of service provision to allow the people to choose for themselves..."

### WHO BENEFITS?

This kind of talk has a popular appeal, of course. Unless we are a town hall bureaucrat, in charge of a little empire, many of us know that town halls, whether Labour or Tory controlled, are no bastions of socialism. Damp council houses and high rents. Dirty streets with inadequate lighting. Heaps of paper being shuffled around and few services to the people.

But it did not take long to find out that the people who are actually going to benefit from the changes in Bradford, and the "community" referred to in the document, were not exactly your ordinary working class person, black or white, man or woman.

Thousands of people in Bradford realised quickly enough that they were due to lose out by these and other, more long-term changes.

There are two other main areas where the Tories propose drastic changes, which will have a more indirect effect on people's lives.

### CUTBACKS AND CLOSURE

Cutbacks will be made in the voluntary sector. In the future, the council will not fund the voluntary sector directly. It will put money into a "Community Trust" instead. There are a big variety of community organisations in Bradford, including black and women's organisations, many of which provide a useful service.

The other main area that will be cut is the various officers and departments within the council concerned with issues such as equal opportunities, nuclear issues etc. and grants to bodies outside. It is arguable whether these cuts will have a serious effect on people's lives in Bradford. But they reflect the hard-nosed, sink or swim attitude of the present Tory group.

Pickles has boasted that if the Tories can defeat the Labour Party (his idea of socialism) in Bradford, the birthplace of the Independent Labour Party, they can win anywhere.

The question of the role of the Labour Party, both when in a majority on the Council and when in a minority as now, is indeed an important question.

The attack by the Tories on people's jobs and services is no surprise. What is less clear is how the Labour Party has in fact paved the way for this attack, in one of the poorest cities in Britain.

The council meeting itself lasted 12 hours, and between the posturing and rhetoric of both the Tories and Labour, the cuts package was pushed through on the casting vote of the Mayor.

The bankruptcy of the casting vote system was illustrated by the fact that a vote of no-confidence in the Mayor was feated by the Mayor's vote!

## Who Benefits from these Cuts?

9,000 council jobs are to go. The council is the biggest employer in Bradford, with about 27,000 employees at present. Two thirds of its workers are women.

School meals are to go up by 33% to 80p

Council rents are to go up by an average of £3 a week, a 16% increase.

Creches are to be cut or scrapped and part-time teachers made redundant at all three local colleges, with the loss of nearly 50 jobs.

A home help charge of £1 a week is to be brought in - previously a free service.

Sports centres and other local recreation facilities are to be privatised.

The Benefits Shops in Bradford, Shipley and Keighley are to be closed. They dealt with over 60,000 enquiries about social security last year.

15 old people's homes, at present run by the council, are to be sold to private owners. (There is plenty of evidence, in report after report, that neglect and ill-treatment of old people is more likely in privately-owned homes. Staff are more under-paid and more over-worked than in the local authority homes.)

Services are to be put out for tendering in advance of the timetable laid down by the recent Local Government Act, and more services will be put out than is required by the Act. (Again, there is evidence from the experience of the NHS that private contractors can do the job cheaper, because workers are paid less and their conditions of employment are worse, and the service they are able to give, suffers.)

## Inequality and Poverty in the Bradford District

A document produced by Bradford Council 'District Trends 1984', gave the statistics of inequality and poverty in Bradford. Since this analysis was written some time ago, and many of the sources used are older still, the trends illustrated in the document will have sharpened. Up-to-date figures would paint an even starker picture.

The document said in the introduction: "The District's economic decline has undoubtedly affected some groups much worse than others, particularly the young, the unskilled and black people. The inequalities which are always present in society have been deepened by the progress of change, to the point where they can now be measured, virtually area by area. We believe that this growing gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' is probably the major issue facing the Council over the next few years."

It is estimated that, with the decline of the traditional manufacturing industry, mainly textiles, since 1961, Bradford has lost 63,000 jobs.

Unemployment increased from 5,000 in 1974 to 37,000 in 1984 (18% of the workforce).

Unemployment is unevenly spread between different areas. In the some inner areas of Bradford and Keighley, and on some council estates, unemployment is over 25%. In some of these areas, it is over 50%. In more prosperous areas, in contrast it is 5%.

One in six of the unemployed is black, even though black people make up only one tenth of the population.

For all school-leavers, finding a job is difficult. But for black school-leavers, the situation is worse. 37.5% of white school-leavers found a job, while for black school-leavers the figure was 7%.

In Bradford, as a whole, over one third of families depend on some form of state benefit because their income is below official poverty levels.

In some of the inner-city areas, where many black people live, 17 out of 1,000 children die before the age of one, whereas in the outer areas the figure is 10 out of 1,000.

44% of the workforce of Bradford is women. There are about 35,000 children under the age of five. The council provides 500 nursery places, with an additional 1500 being available privately.

The statistics for health, housing, employment and others all repeat the same message: growing inequality and poverty. Bradford shares this with many of Britain's cities. In addition, Bradford has a growing population, indicating that far from cutbacks, the council should be planning to expand and develop its services.



Pickles votes for the cuts

The Labour group intends to take the issue of policies decided on the casting vote to the High Court, and NALGO

has indicated its determination to fight the cuts by non-cooperation. The strike ballot could mean escalated strike action beginning in late November.

Whatever the outcome of these actions, it is clear that the fight against the cuts can only succeed with strong public support.

At present, no broad-based campaign has emerged which would be able to articulate the feelings of the people hit hardest by the cuts. It will not be enough to simply rely on the actions of NALGO and the Labour Party. What happens outside City Hall is as vital as what happens inside.

## PROTEST MEETING

Bradford saw one of its largest public meetings and lobby of the local council on 25th October. They took place before a council meeting which, on the casting vote of the Lord Mayor, would push through a privatisation and cuts package totalling nearly £6 million.

In September, following a by-election, the Conservative group became the leading group on the council with 45 seats, Labour dropping to 43 seats and the SLD with 2 seats. Thus, the casting vote of the Mayor, who from May 1988 until May 1989, is the Conservative Councillor Smith-Midgley, would decide council policy.

The cuts package introduced by the Tory group is seen as a blueprint for Tory policy on local government. (see box for details.)

In response to this package, the Bradford branch of NALGO organised a half-day strike on the same day as the meeting and the lobby. On the day before the strike, a Special General Meeting, attended by 2,000 NALGO members (one third of the membership in Bradford), unanimously agreed to ballot for strike action if the cuts were imposed. In a leaflet given out at the rally, NALGO stated that:

**Today's half-day strike, rally and lobby is only the beginning of the action NALGO will take if the council agrees to the Pickles package -**

### Non Co-operation:

All NALGO members are to be instructed not to co-operate with the cuts. Increased or new fees and charges will not be collected, services will not be shut down by NALGO members. No NALGO member will work on issuing any redundancies or redeployments.

### Lobbying:

NALGO will be continuing to work with other organisations in Bradford intensifying the pressure on individual councillors not to support the cuts..

### Strike:

NALGO will be balloting members for strike action so that, if necessary, the industrial action of non-co-operation can be escalated.

The rally and lobby were very well attended. St Georges Hall was packed to the rafters, and the lobby attracted well over 4,000 protestors. Many community groups were present, such as AGE (Action Group for the Elderly), set up after the proposed sale of old people's homes was announced, and the Lower Grange Tenants' Associations, who have been fighting the council for many months since renovation of their homes was stopped.

The general atmosphere was one of anger at the cuts and a determination to fight them if passed. This reflected the popular feeling that has developed in Bradford since September.

The local papers have been full of letters opposing the cuts, and in recent weeks the clergy have voiced their opposition to the measures. NALGO held a ballot in Bradford about the sale of the old people's homes: 14,918 were against the sale, 382 for the sale.

In the light of the broad-based opposition, it was disappointing that the platform of the rally only represented NALGO and the labour movement. Given the scope of the cuts, a broader platform would have more accurately reflected popular feelings. However, it was clear that the proposed cuts had acted as a catalyst - many people were engaged in strike action and lobbying for the first time.



Children supporting Lower Grange Tenants Association