

CLASS STRUGGLE



Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

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30P



PLO DECLARES INDEPENDENCE!

Troops were drafted into towns and villages in unprecedented strength, with orders to enforce curfews strictly. Journalists were only allowed in under military escort. Soldiers pulled down flags which the people had put up and forced men, chosen at random, to scrub slogans off walls. But all these measures did not stop the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza Strip celebrating the Palestinian Declaration of Independence.

It was widely known weeks before the Palestine National Council (PNC) met in November that it would declare an independent Palestinian state. Until a few months ago, it simply was not on the Palestinian political agenda. But events put it there. As the Uprising neared the end of its eighth month, Jordan's King Hussein declared clearly that he was giving up his claims to the West Bank. This represented a great success for the Palestinians. Since Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950, its government had always staked a claim to possession of that area, and also to be representative of its people. Although Hussein was made to concede some ground

on these points in the 1970s, he never before fully committed his regime to giving up its claims.

This was very embarrassing for Israel's Labour Party leader, Shimon Peres, who had made talks with Jordan over the future of the Palestinians and their land central to his proposals for a Middle East peace settlement - and a cornerstone of his election programme. Jordan's move also irritated the British and US governments who supported Peres' stand and wanted his party to win the elections in Israel in November. (They breached diplomatic norms to show their attitude to the elections: Reagan went so far as to invite Peres, in his capacity as Israeli Foreign Minister, to visit the USA without consulting Israeli Premier Shamir!)

CALL OF THE UPRISING

The Jordanian move created an obvious legal vacuum on the West Bank, where one million Palestinians live. Jordan no longer claimed it. But no state recognised it as belonging to Israel either, including the USA. The time was ripe for an assertion of the PLO's rep-

resentative authority in the region.

This, in fact, was what people inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip called for. When the PLO announced that it was calling a special session of the PNC (its highest body, which decides on PLO policies and elects the organisation's leadership), the United National Leadership of the Uprising asked that it should adopt clear political positions to build on the achievements of the Intifada. Proposals for a declaration of independence were widely discussed among Palestinians, inside and outside their country.

After much discussion, a declaration of independence was issued by the PNC on November 15th. It was supported by all the independent political forces among the Palestinians, and when it was read out by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, the meeting hall erupted in celebrations. Although the Israeli authorities attempted to prevent any celebrations inside Palestine, people marked the occasion with parades where

INTERVIEWS

MSF.....NHS



CUTS

NALGO.....BR



A D F O R D

...CENTRE PAGES

One Year of the Palestinian Uprising
DEMONSTRATE!



London
Saturday

Assemble 2pm
Embankment

10 December
Rally in Hyde Park

Tubes: Embankment or Charing X

CONTINUES P.7....

CLASS STRUGGLE

EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL...E!

LETTERS

In November, the government announced 16 new pieces of legislation to be brought in over the next period.

Few of the new laws are unexpected. They are part of the continuing programme to get Britain (for Britain, read big business) back on its feet.

They include the privatisation of water and electricity which will make vast profits for a few while most people pay higher charges. There will be new employment laws and social security legislation to force the unemployed into low-paid work. Takeovers and mergers will be made easier. MI5 will be given a more respectable cover for its spying activities. And much more besides.

The most significant element in the Queen's Speech was the high priority given to new measures against the Republican Movement in the North of Ireland.

The government is to introduce a new, permanent Prevention of Terrorism Act. This will include cutting remission for Republican prisoners. Other measures include the ban on broadcasting on TV and radio; powers to examine bank accounts and seize funds and the requirement that election candidates "renounce the use of violence".

These new laws are only one side of the state's attempt to defeat the Republican Movement. The shoot-to-kill tactics and dirty tricks of the armed forces continue while the government still refuses to admit that it is fighting a war in Ireland.

The new measures and the importance attached to them are important for two reasons:

Firstly, they are an admission that three years after its signing, the Hillsborough Agreement has not achieved its main aim, the smashing of the Republican Movement and the winning of the support of the nationalist people to "constitutionalist" parties. The Agreement was a major change in British strategy which has blatantly failed. If it had not, the new measures would not be necessary.

Secondly, some of the new measures are not mainly aimed at the Republican Movement and its supporters in the Six Counties. These people have long and bitter experience of the repressive tactics of the British state and have shown their determination to face whatever new measures are used against them.

The ban on broadcasting is aimed more at people in Britain, who may be questioning the continued occupation of Ireland and the increasingly brutal tactics of the British state.

There has long been a majority in favour of withdrawal, as shown in many opinion polls.

But over the last year, there have been signs of a wider questioning of British policy.

Campaigns for the release of the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four are winning wide support. The determination of the British state to keep innocent people in prison, is leading to doubts about British justice in Ireland and for Irish people living in Britain.

The government is afraid of the cracks that have appeared in the normal consensus on Ireland. This is why they have brought in the measures that will ban pop songs and football chants, as well as interviews with the elected representatives of the nationalist people.

It is our task over the coming year to widen these cracks and do our part to build support for a broad movement based on the demands of Troops Out of Ireland and Self Determination for the Irish People.

1989 marks the twentieth anniversary of the British army's occupation of Ireland, in this phase of the struggle for Irish freedom. It is twenty years too long. It is time for the troops to go. It is time for us to redouble our efforts to work for the troops to go and leave the Irish people to take control of their own destiny.

Dear Editor,

I agreed with the article in October's 'Class Struggle' 'Are the Unions Relevant?' My experience as a shop steward for over 10 years and one-time branch chairman has led me to the same conclusions.

The higher you go up the union, the more of your activity is away from the members; you are a lone voice in a sea of opportunism. Don't rock the boat. And, work for a Labour election victory is the dominant view. Paper work is written in an unreal bureaucratic language that the members (and many reps) cannot understand. You can become a full-time committee attender. When you stand back and look at what all the hours have achieved, you are very hard-pressed to find an answer.

If we are to turn the unions into truly democratic fighting organisations for the working class, we have to put our efforts in from the bottom up; starting amongst the members, many of whom are only members on paper. Only at the work-place can real progress be made.

We have to take on the unions as they are. They are the only major institution within the system which can potentially be used to serve workers' interests.

Short-cut approaches such as setting up alternative 'Red Trade Unions' or cross-union 'Rank and File movements' sidestep the real issues and should



be opposed. The struggle for joint action, multi-union anti-cuts or international solidarity campaigns must be won from within the existing unions.

Of course, there are occasions when it is correct to use the union structure to get motions passed to support progressive campaigns. But this should be done to gain support for mass campaigns that really exist. The mistake should not be made of using this largely paper support as a substitute for a real campaign and end up playing committee games or being sucked into Labour Party electioneering.

Although much work in the unions means trying to involve members actively in fighting for narrow economic gains; after all, that is where they will learn the strength of collective action, we should

not lose sight of trying to raise wider political issues.

Historically, trade unions in Britain have always had the weakness of sticking to economic issues (often very elitist and narrow sectional interests); politics have always been left to the Labour Party. This division is arbitrary and wrong and has always led to Labour governments selling out the working class.

We need to rebuild the unions and fight their racist and male chauvinist attitudes. Such an approach is an essential part of developing a revolutionary movement in Britain. It is not however a substitute for the task of building a new communist party capable of leading the whole revolutionary movement.

An MSF steward, Birmingham.

Theoretical Journal out soon

We are pleased to announce that after a long absence, 'October', the theoretical journal of the RCL, will be re-appearing this month. Articles written for 'October' will deal with issues in more depth and at greater length than can be done in the columns of 'Class Struggle'. They will draw on experiences and events from the past and from what is going on in other countries and continents today, as well as taking up the important questions that directly face the revolutionary movement in Britain. Space will be made available for readers to criticise or expand on what they see in 'October', and we will also include material that has been produced by other revolutionary organisations around the world.

In this issue, the main article deals with a key event in Ireland's revolutionary history, the 1913 Dublin Lockout. It shows that many lessons are still to be learned from that fight by Irish workers over 75 years ago and ex-

pands on the inter-relationship between class and national struggle in countries where national oppression exists. This 40-page article is followed by two short articles that deal with India and Kampuchea, two countries in which the national element is still present. In both cases, we have re-printed documents which provide local analysis of the current situation.

The fourth article is a political criticism of the general orientation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement. It is a criticism that could equally be applied to many other so-called Marxist tendencies and particularly to their inability to recognise actual revolutionary processes at work just because they do not conform to their own dogmatic or pre-conceived ideas of what revolution is really about.

Finally, we include a review of Tetsuzo Futwa's book 'Stalin and Great Power Chauvinism'. This is a tentative look at one

aspect of the Soviet experience and is highly relevant given the present flow of commentaries on the Soviet Union in the period of glasnost and perestroika.

As can be seen from the choice of subject matter, the national element is the focus of Issue No.4 of 'October'. Because of its importance, Marxists have the task of fully understanding the varied forms it takes and the way it influences and impinges upon the many varied types of societies in the world today.

We hope that regular readers of 'Class Struggle' will find 'October' informative and help them understand better the world in which we live. Priced at £1.75, it is available from your regular 'Class Struggle' seller or from New Era Books. But please add a further 50p if you want it sent through the post.

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WE SHALL NOT FORGET ~ Victims of Fascism

U.S. correspondent

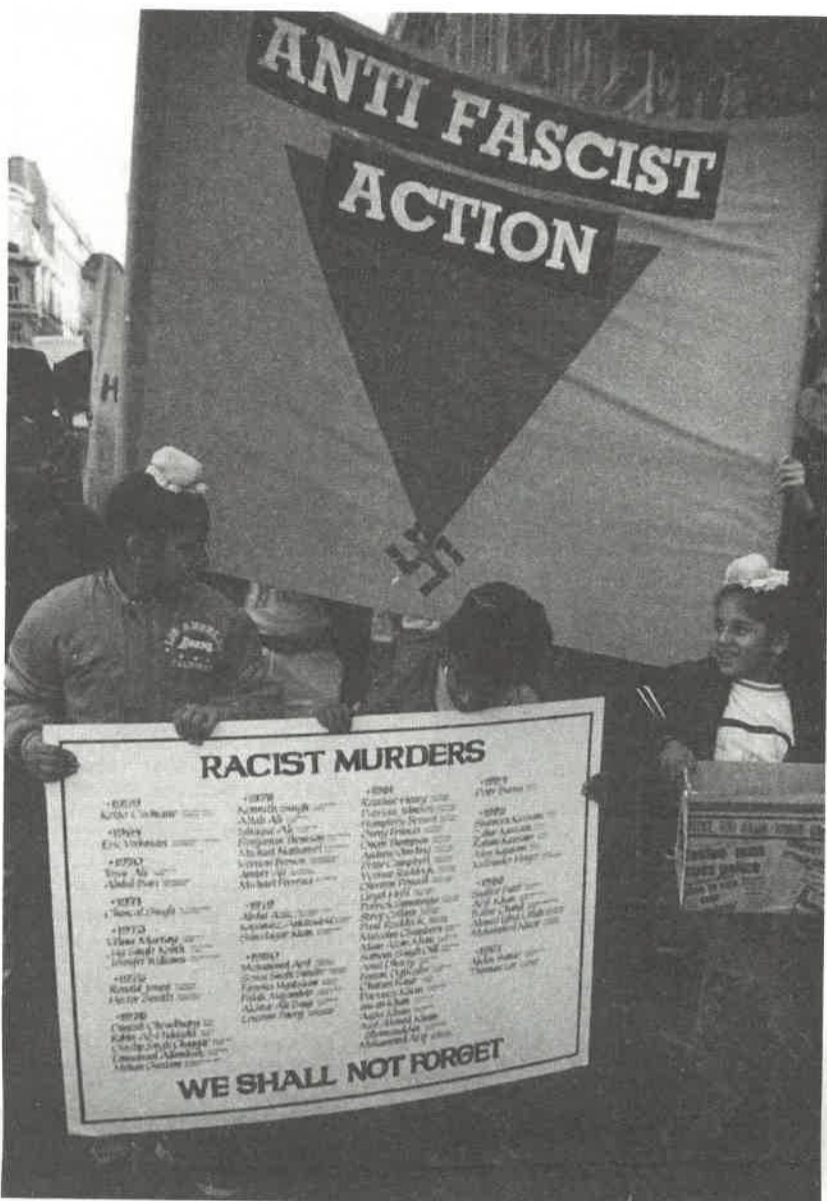
For the fourth year running, Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) organised in protest against fascist marches on Remembrance Sunday.

The British National Party's (BNP) plan to celebrate the fourteenth century massacre of Jews in York was stopped when anti-fascists blocked the city's railway station to prevent the BNP arriving.

This action stopped the fascists from marching in defiance of a ban imposed by York City Council.

In London, AFA organised a four-hundred strong commemoration march to the Cenotaph in honour of those victims of fascism and racism, past and present. The march, after laying wreaths, held a short rally on the Embankment.

Rallying on Remembrance Sunday also provides anti-fascists with an opportunity to link up with on-going campaigns against racism and fascism. Amongst the speakers were those from the Plaistow Four and Broadwater Farm Campaigns. Peter Tatchel, the hounded Labour candidate at Bermondsey a few years back, spoke on the forgotten victims and the persecution of homosexuals in post-war Britain, that is seen again in the passing of Clause 28 this year. Gerry Gable of the anti-fascist monthly, 'Searchlight', spoke of the present fascist threat and the forthcoming European initiatives of anti-fascist groups, to meet that challenge. Harpal Brah, of the Indian Workers Association, gave a wide-ranging and warmly greeted speech on



international aspects of anti-racist struggles.

After the commemoration, some AFA marches reinforced the non-stop picket of the South African embassy in Trafalgar Square.

An attack on the picket has become a fascist ritual on Remembrance Day. Trouble was expected in revenge for the events of the previous Friday evening. Then, a large fascist attack was attempted at Conway Hall in London. It seems attacks on Irish events were agreed at September's National Front AGM. On Friday, an initial attack on the fringes of the picket was repulsed by anti-fascists. This attack by a small group of fascists provided the signal for the police to steam into the picket. They arrested around 20 anti-fascists. There were further arrests throughout the day after running clashes between fascist and anti-fascist throughout central London. The fascist-planned intimidation was thwarted by a strong physical response to their presence.

ANTI-FASCIST ACTION

NEW CAMPAIGNS

Anti-Fascist Action outlined the following campaigns as their ongoing work for the next year:

Major campaign to clear out the Nazis from Carnaby Street:

Carnaby Street is now a centre and meeting place for the fascist music scene. Nazi rock regalia

is openly on sale in the shops. A major campaign is needed to drive them out.

Fight back against racist violence:

AFA in London works closely with a variety of grassroots organisations campaigning against racial violence and police harassment. In Greenwich, we work with GACARA (Greenwich Action Committee Against Racist Attacks) in Hackney with HCDA (Hackney Community Defence Association) in Southall with SMP (Southall Monitoring Project) and in Newham with NMP (Newham Monitoring Project).

Kick the Fascists off the terraces:

AFA's northern branch has, over the last year, launched a successful campaign to 'kick fascism off-side'. In April, London AFA will be joining up with them to launch a nation-wide week of action against fascists on our terraces. We have already made contact with various independent football supporters groups.

Remember Blair Peach: 23rd April 1989:

This is the 10th anniversary of the death of Blair Peach. AFA will be working with activists in Southall to plan a major event.

For more information, contact AFA, PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7.

'UNHELPFUL CRITICISM' IN WOLVERHAMPTON

U.S. correspondent

The two police officers who killed black youth, Clinton McCurbin, have escaped responsibility with the assistance of a partisan summing up by the Wolverhampton coroner. The jury returned a verdict of misadventure on 1st November, 1988.

The Director of Public Prosecutions and the Police Complaints Authority are taking no action against the officers. Clinton's mother, Mrs Esther McCurbin, expressed the feelings of the black community when she said that she held the West Midlands police responsible for the death of her son.

The inquest was called to investigate Clinton's death by

asphyxiation in the Next store in Wolverhampton shopping centre on 20th February, 1987. His death gave rise to widespread protest action by the black community. Wolverhampton's black youth are constantly under pressure from the police. It will be recalled that after Clinton's death, the police released a statement that he had been under the influence of drugs. They were later obliged to admit that this was a lie.

At the inquest, PC Hobday, whose hold on Clinton resulted in his death, denied the use of a neckhold. He said: "I held him under the chin and by the head." He added: "As far as I could tell, he could breathe O.K."

It emerged from the evidence

of a senior officer that neither PC Hobday nor the other officer involved, PC Thomas, had been trained in the restraint of violent prisoners. They had however been advised against neckholds in their basic training.

DAMAGING EVIDENCE

A civilian witness described PC Hobday's behaviour differently. Mr Sukhvinder Singh Pawar said: "While he was on the ground, the police officer holding him pulled him up and said 'Are you all right?' But the policeman was practically strangling him and he could not answer."

There was also evidence of a very damaging statement by PC Hobday. Mr Gary Belcher, who had helped the officers subdue Clinton, told the inquest that

another by-stander had asked PC Hobday not to hold Clinton's neck. PC Hobday replied: "Hold his neck? I will break his bloody neck." In his evidence, PC Hobday did not deny having said this.

The coroner, Mr Keith Swayne, saw the need to deflect the clear implication of this damaging testimony. He told the jury: "You will probably feel that if PC Hobday had had any intention of breaking anyone's neck, he would not have made a public announcement to that effect. You may feel that the remark was the reaction of PC Hobday to an unhelpful criticism of his struggle with McCurbin."

Building on this stalwart defence of the police, Mr Swayne continued: "In my view, it would

be unsafe and wrong even to find the arresting officers misconducted themselves in a difficult situation in any sense whatsoever."

The final irony came in his closing remark: "I consider a verdict of misadventure would be appropriate, but the decision must be yours and yours alone."

After the verdict, Mrs McCurbin said: "Clinton did not have to die in the way that he did. Once he was on the floor with PC Hobday's arm around his neck, he was struggling for air but the arm around his neck was simply not released until he stopped breathing and died. There can be no justification for the manner in which PC Michael Hobday used the neckhold on my son."

West Midlands Chief Constable, Geoffrey Dear, said: "I cannot and will not give a categorical assurance that this will not happen again."

REVOLUTIONARY OR RACIST POLITICS?

The disunity of the Left in Britain is often incomprehensible to many people. The proliferation of Marxist-Leninist groups in the past was a source of either amusement or exasperation. But the differences between groups are not simply because of bloody-mindedness. It is important to draw lines of demarcation between revolutionary politics and those which hold up the advance of the working class and its allies.

In the past, the RCL has argued for the need for a strong, unified revolutionary movement, but equally stressed the importance of principled unity. Ten years ago, at a Consultative Meeting on Marxist-Leninist unity, the League was criticised for its party-building line. In that same year, 1978, the

League launched a campaign to expose the rotten politics of the Communist Party of Britain (ML) (CPBML), then led by Reg Birch. Subsequent events have vindicated the RCL's position at that time.

Survivors of the CPBML clique still hang together, bolstering each other in their self-deluding grandeur. Thankfully their impact is minuscule: people so rarely come across them that they cannot be mistaken as representatives of Marxist-Leninists.

SHAMEFUL CONGRESS

They still produce their pamphlets, to be piled high at Bellman Books. The latest consists of the papers from their organisation's Eight Congress. 'Congress 88' will prove to be a source of everlasting shame.

Any scrutiny of the "appropriate conclusions" which that organisation claims to have arrived at, exposes the total bankruptcy of any claim to be of, and for, the working class.

After twenty years of existence, the CPBML has crossed an important line. Not content with only working for a Kinnock-led Labour government, the CPBML now betrays the interests of the working class by its promotion of vicious racist policies.

The CPBML does not acknowledge the multi-national character of the working class and displays a racist contempt for all non-English. The Congress 88 document states:

"Those who proclaim that Islam or Voodooism should have parity with the established Church (tamed by workers over the centuries) encourage the return to barbarism. The call for each foreign minority language and culture to have equal status

with English in the schools and public life is a call for the break-up of Britain."

These little Englanders, acting in the self-proclaimed spirit of "internationalism-begins-at-home", put forward the demand for a "stop to immigration until the chaos has been reduced to order", joining the rabid right in its chauvinist and warped understanding of the imperialist crisis.

Furthermore, in a call reeking of paternalism, these renegades from Marxism, declare:

"To immigrant workers, we say: 'Integrate, learn the language and manners of the indigenous people and abandon those of the land you have abandoned.. Join a trade union'. To the indigenous workers we say: 'We are mongrels all; now welcome this addition to our mongrel stock. We are one class, one blood.'"

Such poisonous rubbish would have crippled the Marxist-

Leninist movement if unity at any price had been pursued in the 1970s. But then, as now, lines of demarcation were drawn. The narrow chauvinism of the politics of the CPBML was fore-shadowed by its two-class line that saw only workers and bosses: it recognised no other contradictions or antagonisms to resolve.

The League correctly criticised such an approach. We have not been without fault in our party-building attempts. But we firmly ditched such a 'craft mentality' represented by the CPBML's leading clique. The League sought to use Marxism-Leninism to understand, and advance the tasks and demands for revolutionary advance. That is a task to which we still apply ourselves today. It is light years away from the racist politics of an organisation that fraudulently calls itself 'Marxist-Leninist'. Today, we reiterate our call to condemn and shun the CPBML!

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

IN BRAIN

IN THE NHS....

Billions of pounds for the NHS and striking nurses have dominated the media. What is really happening? We asked a shop steward in a Birmingham hospital for his views:

CS: Has the NHS got the money it needs?

SS: Although there really is some new money, it's a lot less than the figures quoted by the government. It won't reverse the massive cuts that have already taken place. Most of it could be used up in patching up what's left of the existing service.

Finance departments of hospitals have had a close look at the Chancellor's figures. Their breakdown of the figures make interesting reading.

Hospital and community services are apparently to get £1098 million. When you take out money for AIDS and nurse-training and allow for 5% inflation, you only end up with £352 million. Inflation is rising above 5% and inflation for hospital equipment is higher than general inflation so the actual amount, which isn't even coming for another four months (i.e. next April), is likely to be even less when it finally comes.

Part of the new money is to be made up out of "efficiency savings". The very phrase used to do things that look very much like cuts in services to you and me.

Some of it is to be made by "income generating schemes". Hospitals are to be encouraged to sell advertising space, do private car repairs, take in laundry, etc. Further undermining the principle that the money to run the NHS should come out of taxes.

The second stage of the money is not due until April 1990. There is no proof that that promise will be kept. Who believes politician's promises?

Finally, the point must be made that it's reasonable to believe that there would have been no new money if it hadn't been for all the campaigning that has gone on this year. The Tories have felt sufficiently threatened to have been seen to be doing something about the NHS crisis.

CS: Was the nurses re-grading done fairly?

SS: No, definitely not.

It's very clear that local employers were instructed to do the re-grading on the cheap. Local health authorities under severe financial pressure have readily gone along with that approach.

Some nurses were told before the job evaluations what grade they would get. Others were told to go away and re-write their questionnaires because their answers gave too high a grade. Specialist qualifications were ignored. Complaints about intimidation were widespread. Local shop stewards have had to become full-time union workers just to deal with the problems.

Now that the grades have been given out, nurses are even angrier. Many have found that they have been downgraded. Nurses doing identical work are being paid quite differently. Many are finding that their promised pay rises are nowhere near what they were led to expect.

The industrial action reported in the media is only the tip of the iceberg.

CS: What sort of leadership are the unions giving?

SS: One thing has to be made clear. There are two sorts of organisation involved.

only doing what you have been graded to do) is the most effective action.

But the unions are weakened by the split with the RCN.

Of course, COHSE and NUPE have their weaknesses like any trade union. They support the Labour Party and are not democratic nor does their leadership

Secondly, people must remember that hospitals are not just doctors and nurses.

Workers in laboratories, those that maintain equipment, take X-rays, do heart-monitoring, do therapy, work in pharmacies etc. are also essential for patient care. They also have a bad deal, suffer low pay. They like the nurses are still getting out of the NHS. The low pay of all NHS workers has subsidised the NHS for years.

In the NHS, getting reasonable pay is not just a narrow trade union issue. It's doing more than the minimum that makes a difference to patients. If you pay second-rate pay, you get second-rate staff. Patients suffer.

Thirdly, we should remember that the Thatcher review of the NHS is still going on. It's clear that the plan is still to put the NHS on a narrow "Cost effective" basis. This will hit both staff and patients.

There still is a crisis. Patients are suffering. We still need a mass campaign to demand the restoration of a free NHS that meets people's needs.

At the moment, the NHS defence campaigns seem to have lost

We print below an interview with a Bradford NALGO member, as a follow-up to last month's articles on the cuts in Bradford.

'Class Struggle': There was a lot of anger at the NALGO rally and lobby of Bradford Council, on 25th October, and determination to fight the cuts package. What has happened in the union since then?

NALGO Member: The day after the half-day action on 25th October, the Council Chief Executive requested talks with the union. After a few meetings the NALGO Executive finally suspended both the non-cooperation ballot, and then the strike ballot, while negotiations took place with the Council.

During these negotiations, the management team said it would stick to agreements that no NALGO member would lose their jobs outright. But, after this announcement, Pickles (Council leader: Ed.) said he wasn't happy with this plan and wanted to get the Tory group to discuss this further. NALGO felt they couldn't negotiate on these terms, and it was agreed that non-cooperation with the cuts was re-introduced. NALGO also agreed to ballot on strike action in mid-November.

The Council's management team then produced a document reaffirming agreements which had existed since 1984 on no compulsory redundancies, and agreements on severance pay. On this basis, the union Executive agreed to suspend the strike ballot and keep enforcing non-cooperation until a Special General Meeting was held. This meeting was held on 18th November. The meeting was fairly acrimonious, and basically it was agreed to forget the strike action and non-cooperation because of the agreements about jobs and conditions.

CS: What do you think NALGO members feel about what has happened?

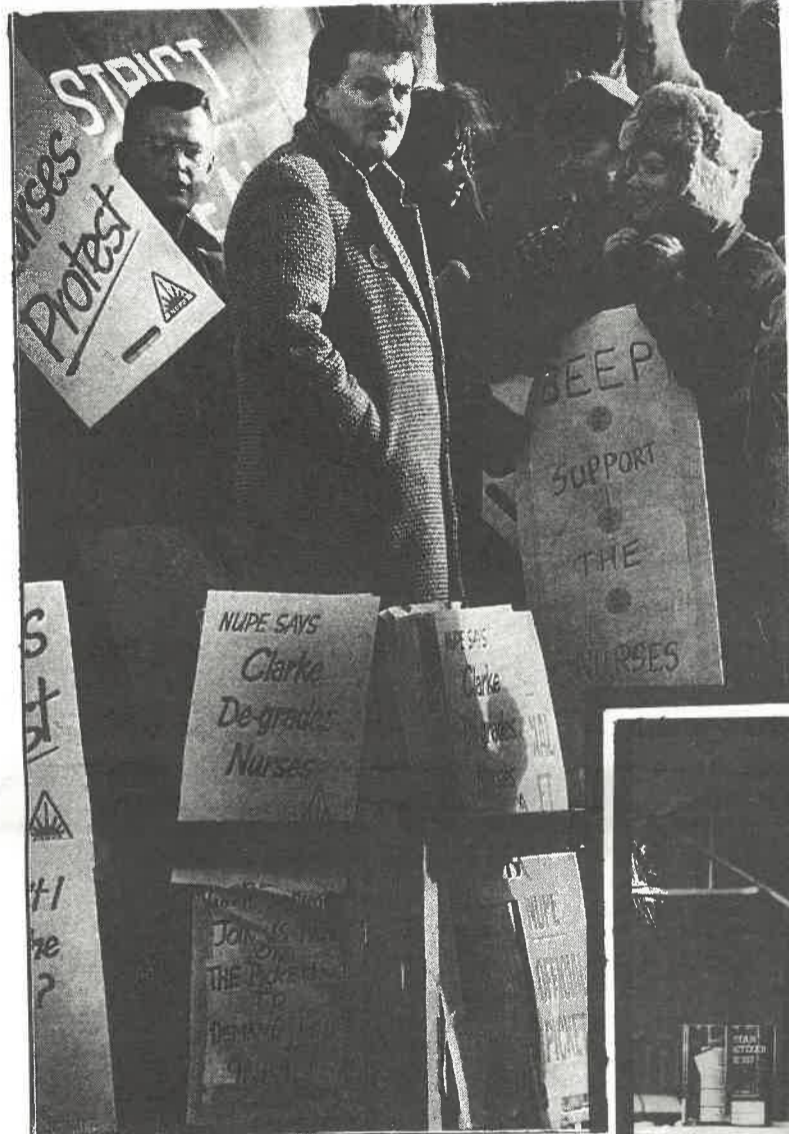
NALGO Member: I'm a steward in my section. I've been to four workplace meetings. At the first meeting, we had to tell the members that we were trying to win the strike ballot. At the next meeting, that the strike ballot was suspended - at the next, it was back on. And the last meeting, we had to say the strike was off.

Initially, after the 25th October, I think people would have been willing to take action. But because we called it off, and put it back on so many times, people became confused and the wind was taken out of the sails of the campaign.

The second time we were asking members to take strike action, I think we would have lost the strike ballot.... we had lost the impetus and there was no broad base of support in the union for a strike.

CS: We've talked about a broad base of support in the union. What about support for the action and for a campaign against the cuts amongst the people of Bradford?

NALGO Member: There were a variety of groups who took part in the rally and lobby on 25th October. There were people from all the different religions and churches of Bradford, from



On the one hand, there is the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) which is a professional organisation; not a trade union. It has nearly half the 500,000 nurses in membership. It is elitist and only recruits qualified staff.

On the other hand, there are COHSE and NUPE with a combined membership nearly as high as the RCN. They are proper trade unions. Many of their members are unqualified and low paid.

The government is always playing one side off against the other. There is a recruitment war between the two sides. The trade unions are gaining members from the RCN because they are prepared to take action. The RCN is considering starting to accept unqualified auxiliary nurses into membership.

There are, of course, examples at local level of RCN stewards working together with NUPE and COHSE stewards. There are isolated examples of RCN members taking action.

NHS stewards have no faith in the appeals procedure. Hearings are judged by managers who delegated the job of grading in the first place. It's a long drawn-out process which isolates individuals in a rigid set of rules.

To be realistic very few nurses will take all out industrial action, because they know they will only hit ordinary sick people.

That is why the tactic of collectively working to grade (i.e.

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really want mass action by their membership. However, they are the best leadership on offer to nurses.

CS: Are there any other important issues?

SS: Yes.

Firstly, it must be highlighted that nurses are mainly women. Increasingly they are prepared to take a stand; even in the face of male-dominated organisations. This is particularly important with nurses. Their job is an extension of society's view that women are subservient carers; an extension of the undervalued role they play in the family. It is no coincidence that the NHS mainly employs women and that the NHS is a low pay employer.

their way. They have been overtaken by the nurses' issues.

Many activists are reluctant to take the campaign to the people. They think nothing can be done until Labour win an election. (How many times have we heard that?)

Activists have got to face up to reality. Labour started the cuts. Whenever they are in power all they do is attack ordinary people.

We need to rely on ourselves. Even the Tories have been seen to bend when faced with mass opposition to their attacks on the NHS.

The NHS presents an issue which can involve people. We have to go to them and rely on them.

INES

DFORD....

the Action Group for the Elderly (AGE), who are not a NALGO group. Gingerbread, tenants' groups, voluntary sector groups were there in large numbers. There was a broad base for a campaign, ready for action. Just look at the letters page of the Telegraph and Argus, which is hardly a left-wing paper! A vast majority of these letters were against these proposals. The AGE ballot in the area, 14,000 against closure of old people's homes, 500 for, illustrates this feeling. We are going to have to regain this feeling. In a sense, this feeling is still there, but is untapped.

CS: There was a lot of support on the national level given to Bradford NALGO on 25th October. Has this been followed through?

NALGO Member: There has been a lot of support. At a recent NALGO meeting in Glasgow, a lot of money was pledged for the strike fund. The national executive of NALGO called a day of action supporting Bradford and Brent. Brent with a Labour Council is suffering similar cuts.

I must emphasise the speed at which all these events have happened: strike one day, off the next; one day calling for non-cooperation, the next pull-

will happen, what shape and strength it will take depends on the people involved.

I'm worried that NALGO may have problems in the future, because we have agreed to cooperate with the cuts. We might find it difficult to win support and trust if a general campaign develops.

I think the problem is that NALGO can't fight to protect its jobs and to protect services. We have to realise that we must fight the political battle to save our jobs, not just fight over negotiations for jobs and conditions.... But if we can accentuate the positive about what we have won so far, we can go on and win support for a strike and win that strike. We must win that strike.



City of Bradford Metropolitan Council

Directorate of Housing and Environmental Health Services
Central House, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD1 1DJ Tel: 753970
Director: J A Feather

October 1988

Dear Sir or Madam

RENT INCREASES - COUNCIL DWELLINGS

The Council has decided to increase rents on dwellings in the Housing Revenue Account in order to improve the standards of service for Council house tenants. Rents will increase by an average of £3 per dwelling per week from 2nd December 1988.

Your new rent will be shown on the new "Front Sheet" which will be sent to you for insertion in your Rent Voucher Book.

I am required by law to advise you of the increase and to draw your attention to your right to terminate your tenancy, if you so choose. I must emphasise that the Council is not asking you to do so. Should you decide to do so please notify your Area or Neighbourhood Housing Office in writing BEFORE the date shown below. If you would like any further help or advice, your Neighbourhood Housing Office will do all they can to be of assistance.

I wish to draw your attention to the Housing Benefits Scheme. If you are already receiving benefit this will continue to be allowed taking account of the increases in your rent and will be assessed on the circumstances declared in your last application. A notification of your entitlement will be sent to you in due course. If, however, a change in your income or family circumstances is likely to result in a change in your benefit you must notify the Council immediately.

If you are not receiving benefit but think you may be entitled to do so due to this increase please contact your Neighbourhood Housing Office or the Housing Benefits Office, Directorate of Finance, Britannia House, Bradford without delay.

Yours faithfully,

J A Feather
Director

IN SPITE OF OPPOSITION, THE COUNCIL IS STILL PUSHING AHEAD WITH RENT INCREASES AND THE REST OF THE CUTS PACKAGE

From: 2nd DECEMBER 1988

CS: The Labour Party in Bradford made quite a show to the public on 25th October. What do you think their role has been in Bradford?

NALGO Member: Firstly, we have to face the fact that the Labour Party are basically to blame for a lot of this mess. They did not really fight the by-election which put the Tories in control. They were out leaf-letting the weekend before the lobby. But that is about all I've seen of them.

At the lobby, I didn't like the way Phil Beeley, the Labour group leader, spoke out of a City Hall window with a megaphone, welcoming and thanking everyone for their support, as though it was a Labour Party demonstration. They have tried

to use the courts. But I haven't seen them doing any campaigning on the streets. We can't expect much from the Labour Party. But they've been even more disappointing than NALGO. At least NALGO has achieved the narrowest brief of a union - trying to protect its members' interests. The Labour Party hasn't protected the people whose interests it is supposed to represent.

CS: Do you think NALGO and the Labour Party are not geared up to cope with the sort of events happening in Bradford?

NALGO Member: NALGO has never been in this position in Bradford. The Bradford branch as a whole has never taken action before. The half-day action on 25th October was the first time that we'd taken industrial action against our employers. There is no experience we can draw on. It's a learning experience at the moment - this is a learning period.

I've never seen the Labour Party fight yet, so they've got no experience either!

ing back. The stewards, who would rather be building support amongst their members, amongst the community, getting the debate about the cuts going, had to spend their time trying to inform their members what was actually happening! It was very difficult to keep up with events ourselves.

CS: The strike has been called off. The Tories are pushing ahead with the cuts. What do you see in the future for NALGO in Bradford?

NALGO Member: In my section, we are facing up to the fact that the fight is still to come. At the end of March, when the budget for 1989-90 is presented, there will be more cuts. The real hard fight will then have to come.

CS: In the light of what has happened in the last month, do you think the membership will be prepared for this fight?

NALGO Member: I think I must say that a half-day strike and a very positive result in the non-cooperation ballot won, for a short while, some breathing space for us - for our jobs, our conditions, and of recognition of the union.

We've won that in the short term. We can win again. We might have to take further drastic action and go for the strike ballot - we'll have to strike. There will be more cuts. If we keep this in mind, keep some sort of campaign alive in the branch, we'll be in a stronger position in March.

CS: What about the future for Bradford?

NALGO Member: I think all the groups affected by the cuts must get together to try and build a broad-based campaign, whether it is by petitioning, letter-writing, leafletting, civil disobedience, pressuring councillors or strike action. I think NATFHE and NUT are planning some action in the near future. I'm sure a campaign

The Asian community in Bradford has urged the council to think again on its controversial cuts package.

The Joint Committee of South Asian Organisations in Bradford, which represents the city's Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities, is particularly concerned at the cuts' effects on schoolchildren.

The committee says in a statement: "The drastic cuts in various services are affecting the lives of the people of Bradford as a whole, and the Asian communities in particular."

"The increased school meals charges are alarming, because a good, balanced mid-day meal is essential for a growing child's health, because sharing meal-times collectively is part of education, and because children whose parents can't afford the exorbitant increases have either to bring something from home or do without.

"We have been monitoring the effect in Bradford schools, with 15,000 children now having stopped having meals at school. We are fearful for the consequences for the children, and would urge the council to reverse the increases in the charges before more damage is done."



We reprint below extracts from a working mother's diary. This will hopefully be a regular feature of 'Class Struggle', and will include comments on news items from a woman's point of view.

November 11th:

Didn't buy a poppy this year. I always used to. Some poor sod on the telly with half his face burned away was appealing for the 'victims of the Falklands War'. That finished me. He shouldn't have been there in the first place. I never wanted the army to go to the Falklands and I'm not paying for them now they've got their come-uppance.

November 13th:

Life's not treating me too well at present. Had the 'flu all last week. There's a lot of it about. Didn't stop work of course. Stopped going to work, but no chance of a lie-in. The baby had it too. The childminder wouldn't have him. Can't blame her really. So I had to dress him up warm and take him when I took my daughter to school. Wonderful, isn't it? The only time I take the baby into school is when he's got something infectious, because nobody wants to mind him. I had to tell all the kids to keep away. Should have carried a notice saying 'Unclean, unclean' and rung a bell.

November 18th:

Soon be Christmas. Haven't started thinking about it. It was 'Children in Need' today. Reminds me of this time last year. The baby was in need all right. He was in Birmingham Children's Hospital. You know, where David Barber died and the other children who had to wait too long for treatment. They're still waiting for cash and trained nurses. The government had £8 billion to give away in the budget and none of it went to the Health Service. Instead, a man came round doing a door-to-door collection.

'Covered walkway for the Children's Hospital', he said. 'To keep the rain and snow off the kids as they're wheeled from one ward to another.'

I told him straight: 'Do you think I'm made of money?' I said. 'What about that £8 billion the government gave away in the budget? That was my taxes, some of it. What about that £14 million 'Children in Need' got last year? That was my charity. My kids are in need too and who cares? What do I get? Frozen benefits, that's what.'

'Not my fault,' he said. 'I don't run the country.' 'That's a pity,' I said. 'Bet you and I could make a better job of it.'

November 26th:

Started my Christmas shopping today. My daughter wants everything she's seen on the telly adverts. Apparently, the "average child" in this country gets £250 in Christmas presents. No wonder parents get into debt and spend all year paying it off. I don't have a credit card. It's too easy to spend money you haven't got. Especially at Christmas. It's not just our children; there's all my husband's family. His sister's got four children. The two eldest are teenagers and into pop music and videos and all the new technology. And there's my parents and brother and his family.

That reminds me, my mother phoned last night. Why aren't you spending Christmas with us? The annual Christmas row - you have to disappoint one family or the other. You can't be in two places at once. 'It was your turn last year, Mum. It's their turn this year.'

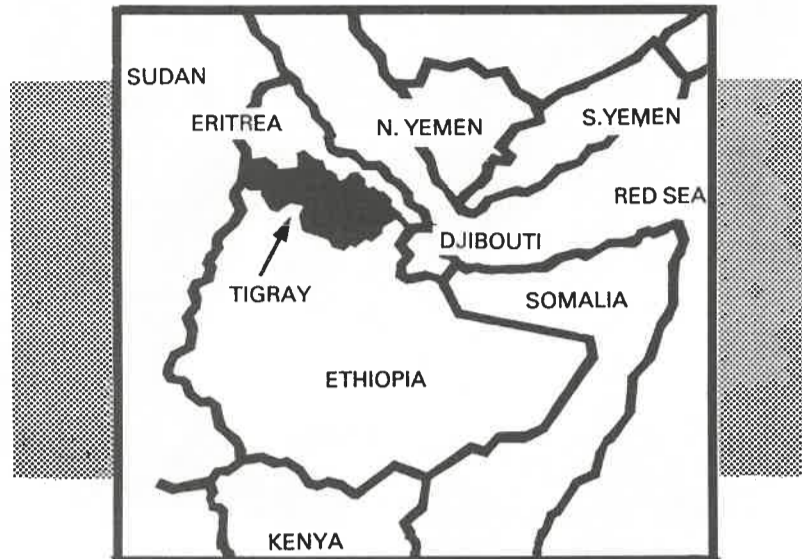
'It looks like we're going to be on our own again for Christmas Day. It won't be the same without the children.' It's a nightmare trying to please everybody. So then I start feeling guilty. Season of good will, they call it.



TIGRAY: CIVILIANS BOMBED

Three members of REST (Relief Society of Tigray) UK SC (Support Committee) emergency medical team have now returned to Britain, bringing with them confirmation, including photographic evidence, of what the Derg's scorched earth and war by famine policy means to the ordinary people of Tigray.

5. We were strongly urged by people throughout the areas we worked and travelled in, that the most effective thing we could do to help, was to go back and alert people in our country to what they are undergoing and what they need in the way of assistance.



REST UK has informed the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that the medical team are prepared to brief them on their findings. The evidence that the Derg is waging war against the civilian population and, in using starvation as a method of combat, is contravening international conventions, is overwhelming.

MPS CONDEMN ATTACKS ON CIVILIAN TARGETS

Chris Mullin MP tabled the following Early Day Motion on 8th November, which is already attracting all party support:

"That this House calls upon the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to express to the Ethiopian Government his condemnation of the recent attacks on towns and villages in Tigray and calls also on HMG to initiate discussions with donor governments, particularly in the EEC with a view to taking coordinated and concerted action to relieve the suffering of the people of the area."

MEDICAL TEAM STATEMENT

The medical team who have just returned from Tigray, have issued the following statement concerning attacks on the civilian population:

1. The provision of health care in Tigray cannot be considered without taking into account the effects of aerial bombardments of towns, villages and the civilian population on the badly stretched health structures. Hospitals and clinics, both medical and surgical, have had to be relocated. The bombing of market towns has seriously disrupted all economic activity; agricultural production is threatened, as fields cannot be worked during the daytime. All towns and villages have to be evacuated during daylight hours.

2. Many civilians, from towns, villages and rural areas, have sustained injuries from aerial bombardment, including the use of napalm, and attacks by ground troops and are now being treated by PEST and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) medical services.

3. There is an urgent and pressing need for medical equipment and drugs.

4. Having visited prisoner of war (POW) camps housing several thousand prisoners (ranging in age from 14 to 83), we strongly support REST's call for food, medical supplies and blankets to care for an estimated 15000 POWs.

Over the last six months, REST has issued several statements calling the attention of the world community to what is happening in Tigray, aerial bombardments of civilian targets, atrocities carried out by ground troops and the effect these activities have on the relief situation. Attacks on civilians have caused massive population displacement, at a time when farmers should have been tending their lands, and attacks on rural economic and marketing centres have disrupted the economic life of the area.

These statements have been sent to MPs, Ministers, humanitarian agencies and the media.

Interviews with residents of Adi Haggara, a small village of no military significance:

Haile:

When the planes dropped the bombs, there was dust and smoke everywhere. We found it hard to see. It was terrible for us. We felt it was the end. Everybody running here and there. It was very noisy.

Many houses were damaged... My best friend was killed... When we went to his house, he was buried under the house with sheep, chickens and other animals, also killed. Part of his face was missing. He was the father of six children.

Umnet: (12 years old)

When the planes came over, I saw my father's dead body. I fell on it and cried. Me and my brother need to beg for a different home each night. We have no place to stay. Our house was destroyed. I will become a fighter, to fight against the Derg in the future.

Jacob (Chairman, People's Council of Adi Haggara):

16 bombs were dropped. There were two cluster bombs and fourteen napalm bombs. It will take one year to settle the problems of the town, to repair the buildings. The economy of the town has been badly affected, as now the people have nothing to sell in the market, and the town cannot operate in the daytime, only at night. There is a shortage of medicines and shelter, we need tents, and food.

Habkom (Vice Chairman, People's Council):



Tigrayan Relief Centre



Migrants from Eastern Tigray at Kalema, a transit camp in Western Tigray.

After the bombardment in one village ground troops burned five children in one house. They scattered the stored food grain on the ground, mixing it with dust. They stabbed people with bayonets.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Routine condemnation will have little effect. What is needed is the threat of withholding of bilateral aid, without which the Derg could not continue in power, let alone prosecute the war.

British taxpayers are subsidising Mengistu's war through E.C. grants. If you feel this is wrong, write to your MEP. Speak up for those civilians caught up in the war. Their voices cannot be heard by politicians here; yours can.

* * * * *

HELP REST

Buy Greetings Cards and Calendars

The cards are in colour, blank inside, with a brief description of REST's work on the back. Packs of four different cards, with envelopes, available for £1.50 including postage. Reductions for bulk orders.

Calendars available for £1.00 including postage.

All profits go to REST.

Information in this article comes from the Bulletin of the Relief Society of Tigray, 27 Beresford Road, London N5 5HS. Tel: 01-354-2380.



FIELD REPORT

FROM DR ERIC CHARLES

We arrived in Asrigar by moonlight after a nightmare journey by truck through the mud and heat of Eritrea and Northern Tigray in the rainy season....

Hospital Location

The hospital at Asrigar had about 500 patients when we arrived, housed in long huts, each hut housing about 30 people. ... There was a separate operating theatre, pharmacy and pathology laboratory and kitchen....

The Injured

The injured were a complete cross section of the people of Tigray. About a quarter of the patients were fighters and three quarters were civilians. To list some of the patients in a typical ward: a boy of 4, recovering from a paraplegia produced by a crushing injury to the neck; a lady with a mid-thigh amputation - she was very ill in that she had developed gas-gangrene in the leg, following a blast injury and she had had to travel a considerable distance to get to the hospital. A boy of 14, who had a half amputation of his left hand, caused by a large piece of shrapnel. An elderly priest with a compound fracture of his right femur from a bullet wound in his leg. A prisoner-of-war with a bullet wound in his abdomen.

The Staff

Asrigar is staffed by field surgeons, nurses and dressers who have been trained at the Central Hospital and who by experience have become very adept at treating very severe injuries.

... After two months' work at the hospital, I returned home leaving a hospital which was in good spirit and where the standard of care was very high.



AZANIA

On Wednesday, 24th November, the Sharpeville Six won a last-minute reprieve.

The death sentences on the Six - Theresa Ramashamola, Duma Joseph Khumalo, Francis Don Mokgesi, Reginald Sefatsa, Mojalefa Mokoena and Oupa Moses Diniso - were commuted to long prison sentences, ranging from 18 to 25 years.

There is no doubt that the racist South African regime was forced to make this concession by a mass campaign for the release of the Six, including international pressure. However, they still face long years in apartheid's prisons for a "crime" which they did not commit.

In the same week, the South African regime announced that Nelson Mandela would not be returned to prison. It seems that he will be held under some kind of house arrest. The regime also released two long-serving prisoners: Zephania Mothopeng, leader of the Pan-African Congress and Harry Gwala. Both men were reported to be seriously ill.

While we welcome any concessions made by the racist regime in South Africa, it is clear that there is no basic change. The regime is only interested in granting some demands in order to break out of its international isolation. Repression continues.

Seven men were hanged on the day the Sharpeville Six were due to die. Among these was Paul Tsepo Setlaba, convicted in the same way as the Six, under the "common purpose" doctrine. In the same week, leading ANC members, Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim and Simon Dladla, were convicted of treason.

USA: No Change

"Under Reagan, the rich got richer, and the poor got poorer. The economic "prosperity" at the top has enabled the wealthiest 1% of the population to enjoy a 50% jump in income. But for workers, Reaganomics (which Bush promises to continue) has meant:

*** A loss of 5 million manufacturing jobs, most of them unionised.

*** A drop in the unionised sector of the work force, from 23% to 17%.

*** 44% of the newly created jobs pay poverty-level wage

*** 25% more people now live in poverty, including 1.6 million children.

*** The number of "involuntary part-time workers" - people who would take full-time jobs if they could get them - is growing three times as fast as the rest of the work force.

*** 37 million people have no medical coverage.

*** 70% of the unemployed have been jobless so long they can no longer collect unemployment benefits."

PALESTINE IS MY HOMELAND

FROM FRONT PAGE

it was possible and in their homes and other buildings where it was not. The UNLU had called on them to sing 'Biladi' ('My Homeland'), a nationalist song, at 4 o'clock on the day of the declaration, and they did so. At night, fireworks could be seen going off on rooftops, and youths threw lighted sparklers through the air.

PARTITION

The Declaration referred to UN General Assembly Resolution 181, of 1947. This was the one by which the UN approved of a plan to partition Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish. The Zionist leadership in Palestine accepted it at the time, as it gave over half of the land to a Jewish population which only numbered a third of the total, and they believed that it could be a first step towards taking over the whole land.

The Palestinians rejected it, for the same reasons. The fact that the Independence Declaration includes a mention of this resolution does not mean that the Palestinians now accept that it was just, or that they regard it as an authority on the borders of a Palestinian state: they simply point out that it gave international approval of sorts to the establishment of Jewish and Arab states in Palestine, but only a Jewish one was actually brought into being. They are now declaring the Palestinian state.

The PNC approved a political programme which implies acceptance of a Palestinian state alongside an Israeli state within its pre-1967 borders. Palestinians still hope for the ultimate re-unification of their homeland into one state where all its inhabitants enjoy equal rights. But they have now effectively declared a willingness to sign a peace treaty upon the basis of two states existing side by side.

NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT

Whether anything like that will happen is another matter. At the same time as the PNC was adopting decisions which, in part, were intended to meet US and western demands for Palestinian "moderation", an Israeli government was being established which was the most openly chauvinistic and uncompromising in the history of the Israeli state.



There will be a new day.
A day when the sun fears the slaves
and the dawn mocks its shackles and chains.
When the child can sing,
can beat the earth,
crush its snakes and shake their thrones.
The child will change the sun which every morning
brings another day of fetters round our necks.
We will overcome this crucifixion, this burden before us,
So let us embrace our nation's new dawn.

Fawzi al-Asmar

The Likud party, which has made it clear that it has no intention of pulling out of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, became the senior partner in the new government following Israel's elections on November 1st. Its partners are extreme right wing and religious parties.

They include Rafael Eitan's Tzomet Party and Rehavam

Ze'evi's Molodet, both with two seats. Eitan has called for the expulsion of large numbers of Palestinians from their land and Molodet was established solely in order to campaign for the expulsion of the entire Palestinian population from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Tehiya, another far right political party, which has three seats, is also on

record as calling for large scale expulsions of Palestinians and the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The religious parties are mainly concerned with enforcing their ideas about what Judaism is on the rest of the Jewish population, and only secondarily with relations with the Palestinians. The National Religious Party (5 seats) supports the annexation of the 1967 occupied territories by Israel and a sharper crackdown on resistance. The other religious parties are scarcely any better, although Shas (6 seats, with an Oriental Jewish constituency) have said that it would be permissible to give up territory if that would mean that Jewish lives could be saved.

The reactions of most Israeli leaders to the Palestinian Declaration of Independence were predictable. Likud leader, Shamir, claimed that the PNC decisions were simply another step in a campaign to destroy Israel, while Labour leader, Peres, still serving as Foreign Minister, told a press conference on 18th November, that "what happened is that the PNC took a more extreme position". Peres rejected Palestinian self-determination totally.

The PNC decisions were also condemned by Syria, several Palestinian splinter groups based in Damascus, and by Muslim fundamentalists within Palestine who want an Islamic state established throughout Palestine.

All the same, the new Palestinian state was recognised by most Arab governments within a few days of the Declaration, as well as by a number of governments throughout the world. These include Bangladesh, Brunei, Burkina Faso, China, Cuba, Cyprus, Gambia, India, Indonesia, Malagasy, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Senegal, the Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Zambia. Greece and a number of other countries were also expected to extend recognition soon.

The Declaration of Independence is expected to strengthen the Palestinian position diplomatically and particularly to give added force to the argument that any attempts at a Middle East peace settlement have to involve the PLO as a participant on an equal footing with others.

product of such 'think tanks' with the daily task and demands of the trade union branch activity. Is there the long-term vision by trade unionists at the shopfloor for involvement in such projects?

The steady erosion of the more radical positions throughout the 1970s is described, and the strains are showing within the official trade union structure. The predominance of bread and butter issues over a more overt political stance does now seem to be beginning to change. It would be the only way to defend basic trade union rights taken for granted in the past. It may well be that a left TUC grouping of the TGWU and MSF may emerge against the right dominance of the AEU and GMBATU, with the probability of EPTU participation.

The book concludes on the question that is again asked of the Labour Party and its leaders: "The history of the wasted years in eloquent, if bitter, testimony to the inescapable connections between solidarity and sacrifice. There cannot be one without the other."

BOOKNEWS

LIVING BY THE WORD

Alice Walker

In this new collection of essays and memoirs, letters and poems, the popular black American author Alice Walker speaks directly about her life, about the filming of the Colour Purple; about sisterhood and black culture; about a visit to China.

£5.95 + 40p P&P
HELL OR CONNAUGHT!

Peter Beresford Ellis

Cromwell's ruthless colonisation of Ireland is a story of cruelty and terror. This account of the period recreates "the curse of Cromwell", the executions and mass transportations, the confiscations of lands and the banishment of Irish landowners to 'Hell or Connaught!'. The Cromwellian colonisation of Ireland, 1652-1660 reverberates throughout its pages.

£5.95 + 46p P&P

TIMEBOMB

Irish Bombers, English Justice & the Guildford Four

McKee & Franey

To many who look at the evidence, the case of the Guildford Four is a "plain miscarriage of justice". The four innocents sentenced 14 years ago, are living through some of the longest prison sentences ever imposed in Britain. This book argues their innocence. It presents the testimonies from the four men who actually carried out the attacks, the deliberate concealment by the Crown of forensic evidence and an exclusive disclosure about the circumstances in which the confessions were obtained.

£4.99 + 60p P&P

A HISTORY OF RESISTANCE IN NAMIBIA

Peter Katjavivi

In a sense, Namibia has been overshadowed by events in the rest of Southern Africa. The armed occupation by South Africa that denies Namibian political destiny intermittently hits the headlines. But this book traces not so much the history of domination as that of African resistance. Resisting in culture and religion in some epochs, through strike action and boycotts in others, Africans have united across clan boundaries to demand an end to colonised rule and to struggle for complete independence.

£4.95 + 46p P&P

LOWEST OF THE LOW

Gunter Wallraff

Disguised as a Turkish worker, investigative journalist Gunter Wallraff, chronicles the daily reality of migrant labour in West Germany: the racial insults, appalling low pay, humiliating, degrading and dangerous jobs until 'guest workers' return to their home.

£4.99 + 32p P&P

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BOOK REVIEW

HOW TO DEFEND TRADE UNION RIGHTS?

Contributed.

Review of 'The Labour Movement in Britain' by John Saville, Faber & Faber, £4.95.

In 1851, Britain was still at the first stage of capitalism. The workforce was largely agricultural, with domestic servants the second largest occupation. Fifty years later, in 1901, we have reached a completely different stage of development. Those digging up coal and iron and those engaged in heavy engineering and building ships make up the bulk of the labour movement.

Over the same period, we can observe the different developing political perspectives between the Marxist Social-Democratic Federation, the 'respectable' Fabian Society and the federally structured Independent Labour Party. However unlikely it seemed, these groups came together at the behest of the trade unions to form the Labour Representation Committee.



Hyndman, head of SDF

POLITICS AND ECONOMICS

Unlike on the Continent, where politics was the primary issue, in Britain it was the trade unions which were dominant in the labour movement from its beginning. The fact that the mass working class party was the creation of the trade unions at the beginning of this century has been very important in the evolution and concerns of the dominant working class politics in this country.

This has been borne out clearly in Ralph Milliband's study of the politics of Labour, 'Parliamentary Socialism'. John Saville's book provides a wider, if less detailed, thematic exploration tracing the developments and dominant ideas of the labour movement. In a hundred and fifty pages, he takes a good critical look at the last hundred years or so.

SERVING THE MEMBERS?

He observes that the British trade union membership has been inadequately served since the 1950s. Amidst the changing structure of British capitalism he feels that: "Trade union research departments have remained wholly inadequate and the unions' attitude towards research have mirrored the intellectual philistinism of their employers."

But there have been a few exceptions, perhaps notable because they are exceptions. Saville builds up the Nottingham-based Institute of Workers' Control and the Lucas Combine Committee plans as the most "imaginative" proposals for trade union work. There remains the question of how to marry the relevance of the

FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



SHOOT-TO-KILL INQUEST....

The farce continues



The farce that is called "justice" in the North of Ireland continues to degenerate. The latest in the catalogue of horrors is the so-called inquest into the death of three

unarmed IRA men murdered by the RUC. The three, Jervase Mcken, Eugene Toman and Sean Burns died in a hail of bullets in 1982, just outside Lurgan.

All three were unarmed and shot without warning. Anywhere else this would be called murder. But in the occupied Six Counties the killers have already had their crime whitewashed and have been set free..

When it was discovered that there had been a massive cover-up by senior RUC officers, who had instructed their men to lie in court, their crime was absolved "in the national interest". Even Stalker, then

Assistant Chief Constable of Manchester, was too honest in his enquiries and he was sent packing.

The inquest, which is supposed to uncover the facts about the deaths of these three men, is now taking place six years after the event. The first stage of the inquest started in 1983 but was delayed by the Director of Public Prosecutions. This whole process was so dishonest and there were such grave irregularities in the RUC files that the then Coroner Mr J. Curran resigned in disgust.

At the present inquest, the British government has employed a 'Public Interest Immunity Certificate' which greatly reduces the scope of the evidence that can be brought before the jury, (again, in the so-called "public interest"). This certificate will ban topics of evidence such as organisational

detail about the RUC murder squads, activities of the Special Branch, RUC 'intelligence' units and MI5. This will make any concrete evidence such as chain of command in the RUC, difficult, if not impossible to discover.

But if concrete evidence is not to be made available to the inquest, what kind of evidence is allowed? Apparently the most outrageous hearsay evidence is permitted by the Coroner for the police witnesses. These witnesses have so 'poisoned' the jury that the families of the dead men and their lawyers have walked out in outrage!

We should also remember that the police who actually committed the murders do not have to be present. Their unsworn statements are acceptable. It is clearly impossible to find out the real truth when

the killers are not present and the truth or falsity of their statements cannot be tested under cross-examination.

In Britain, these witnesses could be sub-poenaed and forced to give evidence. But in the north of Ireland, no such demand can be made on them. So much of a farce are these proceedings that even Seamus Mallon, of the SDLP, stood up in the court to interrupt in protest.

The request from the families' lawyers to a judge to review the ruling on the RUC witnesses and on the Public Interest Immunity Certificate has been refused. As we go to press, the inquest goes on. Few people who have followed its proceedings can have any illusions about anything like justice emerging from it.

NOTEBOOK

Internment

A Loyalist MP has demanded that Southern Ireland start using harder methods against Republicans living there.

Ken Maginnis, Official Unionist MP, for Fermanagh and Tyrone, claimed on radio, that he had a source of "reliable information" on the IRA operati-

information" on the IRA operating in his area, stating that they were operating from across the border, and that to counter this, the Dublin government should put into action a campaign of selective internment. This, Ken Maginnis claimed, would make it easier for the British government to implement an internment campaign in the Six Counties.

If this does happen, it would show just how much the Haughey government is controlled by the British, who would be the only ones to get any advantage out of the introduction of this Gestapo-style tactic south of the border to crush Republicans. The Dublin government is already being over backwards for the Brits, with handing over Robert Russell and allowing British army helicopters to fly over the border into the south.

There has been talk by some of trying some form of internment plan in the Six Counties.

The army is supposed to have half the population of occupied Ireland on file and a few hundred activists on close surveillance. This, Alan Wright, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Police Federation, claims will make internment a more effective weapon.

Whatever form internment takes, the nationalist community will still defend itself as it did back in 1971 when the Brits tried internment before. Whatever they do, they will never crush the revolutionary spirit of the Republican Movement.

Soviet Union

Readers may have seen, in Saturday 13th November's 'Morning Star', the main front page story of an Irish nationalist family's home being torn apart by the British army. But look in the bottom right hand corner and you will find a smaller article about a Soviet government spokesman criticising Britain over the treatment of Irish people.

The USSR has no interest in

the liberation of Ireland at all. It just uses the struggle as a weapon when the British government criticise them over the treatment of dissidents.

Readers will remember the attack on the IRA by the Soviets after the tragic accidental bombing in Enniskillen just over a year ago, in which the IRA were condemned as terrorists.

For the Soviet Union to begin to criticise Britain on the occupation of Ireland is nauseous hypocrisy as they are still in the process of pulling out their own occupation forces out of Afghanistan, after bombing the Afghan people with napalm, bombs and rockets, destroying villages and making many refugees.

The nationalist people of Ireland do not need such two-faced hypocrites who use their struggle and give only lip service whilst posing as world revolutionaries. True friends of Ireland will carry on giving unconditional support to the Republican movement, regardless.

Pogues

A song by the group, The Pogues, in support of the Birmingham Six has now come under the government's ban on Sinn Fein and

their supporters. The song which is a protest against the framing and imprisonment of the Birmingham Six, will now be outlawed by radio and TV stations as it comes under the ban on IRA supporters having access to broadcasting.

Censorship

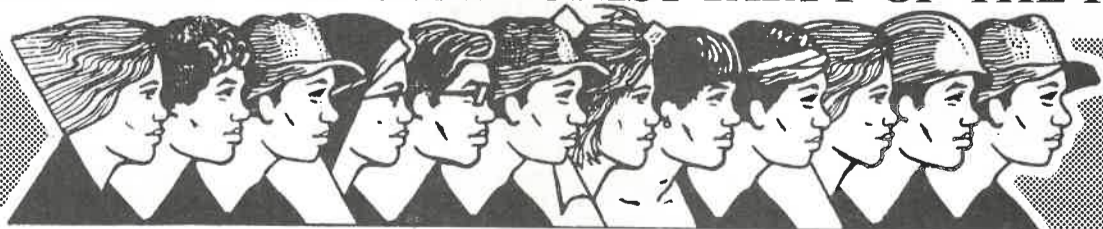
Scottish football club Celtic may be the next target for the new censorship guidelines for broadcasting, banning Irish Republicans and their sympathisers from voicing their opinions.

The BBC and IBA want to remove the supporters' chants and songs which are strongly pro-Republican, such as "Say Hello to the Provos" which can be clearly heard on TV and radio recordings of matches.

Methods may include switching off microphones sited to record crowd noise as soon as pro-IRA songs are heard, or using tapes of pre-recorded crowd noise at appropriate points in the matches.

This censorship is designed to put about the lie that there is no support for the IRA's armed struggle in Britain at all and is part of the plan to keep the working class apathetic and ignorant of what is happening in the Six Counties.

TWENTY YEARS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES



AN INDEPENDENT REVOLUTIONARY WAY

Speakers from RCL and Philippines Support Group, plus video

Place: Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

(Nearest Underground: Holborn)

Time: 2p.m., Sunday, December 11th.

Meeting organised by the Revolutionary Communist League.