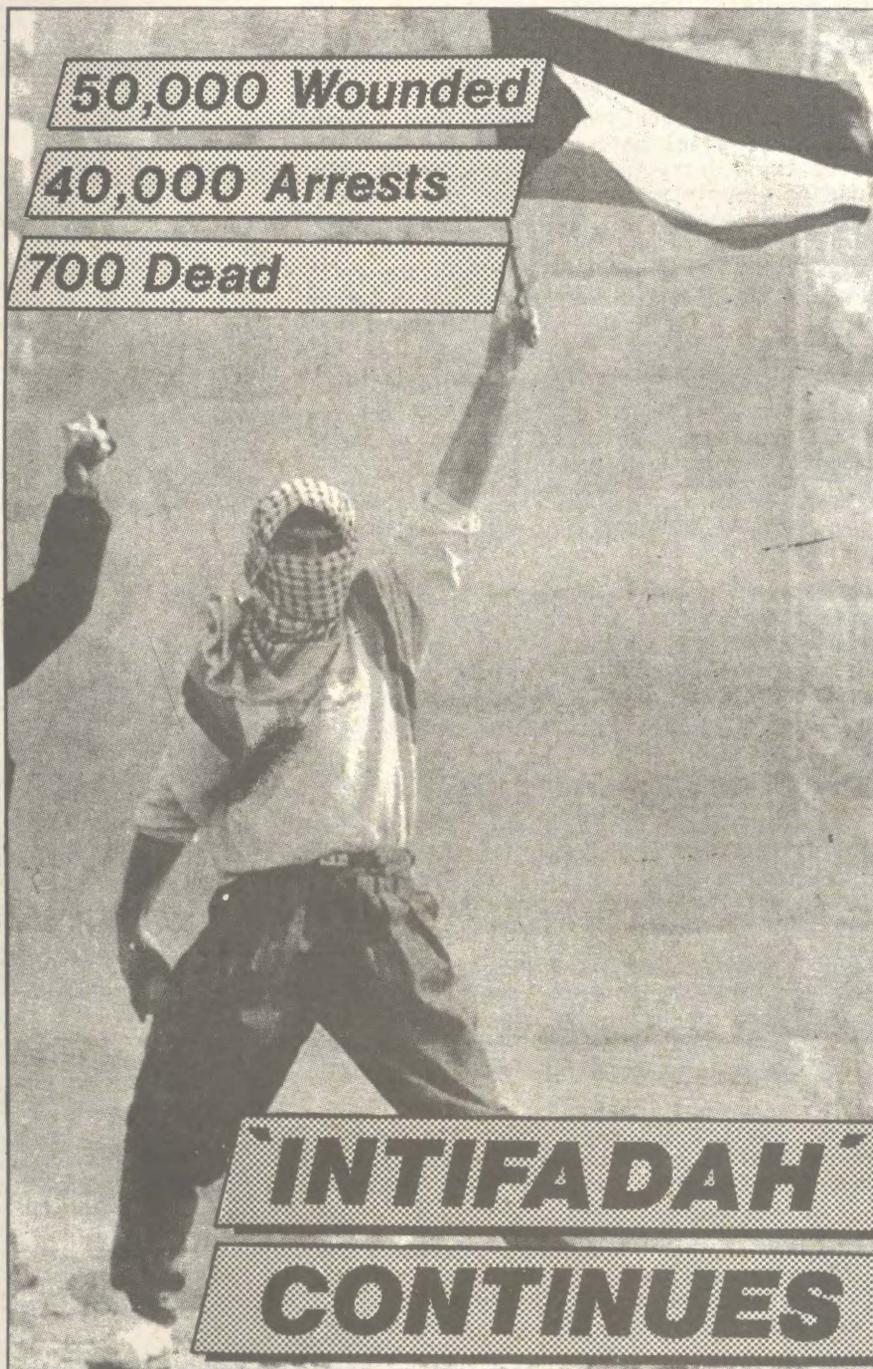


CLASS STRUGGLE

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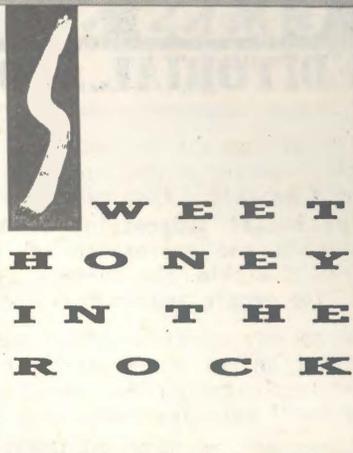
50,000 Wounded

40,000 Arrests

700 Dead

'INTIFADAH'

CONTINUES



INSIDE
common
thread-
garment workers in
Sri Lanka

999-
ambulance drivers
in dispute

birmingham
school scandal
asian parents fight
racist appointment

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CLASS STRUGGLE

EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL

1st October is National Day in China. Forty years ago, Mao Zedong announced the founding of the People's Republic of China. "The Chinese people have stood up," he said. They had taken the first step in their long march to freedom. The brutal suppression of the democracy movement in June and the continued arrests and repression of its supporters are the outward expressions of a crisis within the Chinese Communist Party, in its relations with the masses of the people and in the direction in which it is leading the country.

We do not consider these questions are resolved in China. Whereas, in the Soviet Union, a new ruling class is established and a new system of oppression and exploitation has developed out of the once great socialist country, it is still not clear which way China will go.

Either way, we must not underestimate the achievements of the Chinese Communist Party and their significance for the people of the world. One quarter of the world's people rose up and, relying on their own strengths and knowledge, with the leadership of the Communist Party, overthrew the old system of imperialism and feudalism and set out to build a new society.

For many hundreds of years, the ordinary people of China had suffered extreme poverty, particularly in the last hundred years before Liberation when the western powers drained the wealth from the country. After Liberation in 1949, they began to tackle the task of building a society in which food and clothing, housing and work, were available to all; a society in which women were equal and the national minorities had autonomy to develop.

The achievements of these years were important and particularly relevant still to millions of people in the Third World for whom basic questions are a matter of life or death. If this attempt has failed, we must learn the lessons from their mistakes.

In particular, we do not think that this shows, as many are now saying, that Marxism-Leninism or the socialist system has failed but that the last seventy years is a relatively short historical period in which to attempt to build a new and better society, in a world still dominated by imperialism.

The media are busy trumpeting the death of Marxism-Leninism and socialism in a major anti-communist offensive. At the same time, they proclaim the triumph of "western democracy".

They point to the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries to show that socialism is bankrupt and that people there welcome recent changes to a more democratic society. We also welcome many of the changes. Not because they herald the dawn of western bourgeois democracy but because in the repressive societies that went under the name of socialism, some of the changes open up the way for the working class, oppressed nationalities and other progressive people to fight for further changes.

WESTERN DEMOCRACY MEANS POVERTY AND HUNGER FOR MILLIONS

Bourgeois democracy may well be a triumph for the relatively few in the industrial countries who are accumulating vast wealth and power in their hands. But the vast majority of the world's people, who live in a society either directly or indirectly dominated by imperialism, have nothing to celebrate about western democracy.

In many countries of the Third World, stark poverty and hunger is on the increase. The plans of the International Monetary Fund for their countries' "development" drain their resources and destroy the environment. People are forced to work harder for less reward. When they rebel and fight back, they face a whole range of political and military measures which are openly anti-people and anti-democratic.

As the process of the concentration of capital and modernising the economy goes ahead, the contradictions within imperialist countries are becoming sharper and growing numbers of people face relative poverty, unemployment, homelessness and despair.

After twenty years, Britain continues its dirty war in Ireland. Policies towards black people and refugees are becoming even harsher. Democratic rights have been eroded and the powers of the police and courts strengthened. The welfare state has been drastically cut back and more people are being forced into low-paid work.

The tale of injustice, inequality and violence could go on for ever. In 1989, we have more reason than ever to ally ourselves with the working class and oppressed peoples around the world to fight for change. The achievements of the Chinese Communist Party and people, whatever the outcome of present struggles, remain an inspiration to us.

AMBULANCE DISPUTE—THE ISSUES

by an NHS shop steward

The 19,000 men and women who make up the ambulance crews deserve full support in their pay dispute. Their work is highly skilled, very stressful and can be dangerous. They work long, unsociable hours well in excess of their basic 39-hour week.

As with all health workers, the decision to take industrial action is a difficult one. They have no economic muscle. They, more than anyone else, are aware of the needs of the patients they serve. There comes a point, however, when pay and conditions get so bad that a stand has to be taken. A clear four to one vote by the membership in favour of action showed that that time had arrived. Although at present, the ambulance workers are only stopping overtime and rest day working, even this has seriously disrupted the service.

Even before the present dispute, the ambulance service was stretched to the limit. Campaigners against cuts in the NHS have for a long time been exposing shortages. London's ambulances are 300 people short, out of a total workforce of 2,500.

When the Marchioness pleasure boat disaster occurred, whole areas of London lacked ambulance cover as crews were diverted to deal with the incident. Ambulances were also sent in from surrounding counties.

The unions estimate that up to 1,000 ambulance workers will leave the service if the dispute is lost and pay not sufficiently improved.

SOME PROBLEMS ORGANISING IN THE NHS

There are big problems in organising NHS workers. One reason is the split among different unions and staff organisations. Workers are split depending on what job they do, all with differing pay and conditions.

Pay negotiations are a joke. Some groups in pay review bodies have no negotiations at all. Others who do have formal negotiations, find that what happens is that the government lays down cash limits (i.e. what percentage can go on pay each year). There is a farce carried out over a period of meetings until that figure is reached. Every year it is a pay cut, below the rate of inflation.

That is why the ambulance workers have been offered 6%. And that is why 19,000 workers, out of a total NHS workforce of nearly one million workers, have been left to take on the government.

Other worrying arguments are beginning to surface around the dispute:

Some union leaders seem to want ambulance workers to get into formal pay review committees like the nurses. Although this has got some NHS workers a little more pay in the short-term, there are long-term worries about the pay review body becoming a way to end formal negoti-



ating rights and the right to take industrial action.

There is also the view that the ambulance service should be linked to the police, as part of some larger emergency service. We should be opposed to this as the police are part of the repressive arm of the state, used when necessary to put down workers' struggles. It is not in the interests of ambulance workers to be linked to them.

Another wrong trend in the unions is to rely too heavily on ACAS rather than building rank and file strength to force the employer to begin meaningful negotiations.

Recently, a right-wing think tank has started to advocate that the fire service should be privatised. We already have some private ambulances. And parts of the NHS have already been sold off. We should ask if there are more plans to sell off the ambulance service?

Finally, we should ask if there are plans to use the army to break the dispute? Government spokesmen deny the possibility. Some of us remember that the Labour government set the precedent for this during the firemen's dispute.

Whatever the outcome of the dispute, it is clear that it is not only in the interests of the ambulance workers themselves, but also of the patients who need the ambulance service, that the crews win better pay and conditions.

The responsibility for any problems arising from the dispute, including the possibility that tragically people may die, is clearly the fault of those who have created the need for the dispute, in the first place - that is, the government.

Engineers Strike for Shorter Week

The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) who represent two million engineering workers have put in a claim for a shorter working week. They want a national agreement with the 5,000 member companies of the Engineering Employers Federation (EEF) to reduce the working hours of manual workers from 39 to 35 and of staff from 37 or 37.5 to 35.

Union leaders have adopted a strategy of calling for industrial action at key factories, where strikes will hit hardest, for example at Rolls Royce and British Aerospace. Meanwhile, a levy has been imposed to raise funds for strike pay for those union members who do come out on strike.

There is no doubt that the winning of a 35-hour week would be an important step forward and would inspire other workers to fight for the same. What is not clear is how determined are the union leaders to lead any struggle over the question.

TRADE UNION CONGRESS

by Joe Steel

The TUC (Trade Union Congress) met again last month. It did not generate much media excitement. Nor did it do anything to further the cause of workers' struggles.

The view of most of the so-called left was summed up by the Communist Party's rag, 'Seven Days': "Lots of good motions; little about fighting for them."

In reality, it was the usual annual circus of block votes and backroom deals by so-called workers' leaders who never serve the interests of the working class.

The Congress heard a lot about the greed of the bosses and the need to repeal anti-union laws. There was a token move to increase representation of women. Even some criticism of British occupation of Ireland was accepted. There was a debate on 'green' issues and racism was criticised. (The number of black delegates had meanwhile decreased.) A compromise was reached on defence policy so as not to embarrass the Labour Party.

There will be no real progress until the real weaknesses of the trade union movement are overcome.

BREAKING THE LINK WITH THE LABOUR PARTY

We have consistently exposed the Labour Party as an imperialist party which always sells out workers' struggles.

The only part of the trade union movement that really needs the Labour Party is the trade union leadership, because Labour governments increase their power.

We have to re-build the unions, as true defenders of the working class, independent of any imperialist party.

ARE THEY PART OF THE WORKING CLASS?

The distinction between left and right among the trade union leaders is relatively insignificant compared with what they all have in common. Their life-styles, salaries etc., puts them in a different class from their membership.

They constantly hark back to the times of past Labour governments when they had greater power and were actually involved in the running of the exploitative capitalist system. They do not want to oppose imperialism. They want to run it, blurring the harshest aspects of the system and thus helping to preserve it.

Any real democratic control over the leadership and the policies that they put forward is consistently rejected by them.

INTEGRATION INTO IMPERIALISM

Trade unions are big organisations with large funds, property and investments which they manage within the imperialist system.

Particularly under Labour governments they allow themselves (indeed, they positively encourage it) to become enmeshed in consultative committees,



One big yawn?

joint committees with the bosses, to run parts of the economy, so-called worker participation in management.

All this blurs the distinction of who the enemy really is. Activists are sucked into situations that split them off from their members. Independent trade union activity is weakened.

It was such a policy that helped weaken the trade union movement, ready for the more overt attack by the Tories under Thatcher.

Future Labour Party and TUC policies are all geared to that same integration of the trade union movement within imperialism.

FIGHTING WITHIN THE UNIONS

There is no easy or short-term answer to changing the trade union movement.

The problems in Britain are common to workers in all imperialist countries. Historically, they can be traced to the effects of imperialist exploitation on a world scale enabling the bosses to concede reforms within the imperialist countries. This has created a situation in which parties such as the British Labour Party and the TUC can dominate the workers' movement. The worst aspects of exploitation and oppression can be hidden, at the expense of the people of the Third World. Narrow sectional interests flourish in such situations.

Those who really want to further workers' interests have to stop putting their main efforts into the in-fighting for union positions and committee politics.

The struggle has to be taken on within the existing unions. Efforts have to be channelled into the workplace. Activists have to be part of the rank and file membership. The membership have to become actively involved.

With very few activists, efforts have to be concentrated at the lowest levels of the unions at this stage.

The changing nature of work and the workforce has to be analysed.

What is good about trade union principles has to be built upon in the context of developing them in an all-round non-sexist and internationalist way.

The unions must be transformed into real independent, fighting organisations of the working class. It is only through that struggle that the TUC can be changed.

Green Party Conference

Autumn is the conference season and what is notable about this season is the rise of "Green" politics. Every party conference so far, and the Trades Union Congress, have taken up the issue and made statements on the environment and rubbishing the Green Party. Clearly, the 15% vote won by the Green Party in the European elections earlier this year, has sent shock-waves through the political establishment.

No Green Party in Europe has won as high a percentage of votes as did the Green Party in the European elections in Britain. But most European Parliaments now have Green Members of Parliament. Last June, seven out of twelve EEC states elected Green MPs. In Britain, the Greens already have some local councillors. Because Britain does not have proportional representation, it will be more difficult for them to win seats as MPs.

Many people have been working round environmental issues for years, from Greenpeace to the anti-nuclear movement. But events like the Chernobyl disaster in 1986 and growing awareness of symptoms such as acid rain, the greenhouse effect have raised public awareness. More recently, the scandals about contamination of our food and water have brought the question right into people's homes.

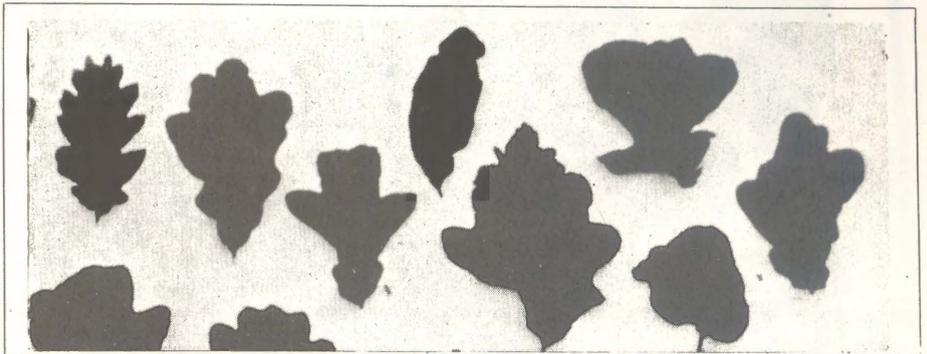
Many different factors have contributed to the growing concern about the environment. There are probably as many different solutions contained under the umbrella of the Green Party. What is certain, is that they are not going to go away.

HINKLEY NUCLEAR PLANT - THE PEOPLE SPEAK OUT

C.S. CORRESPONDENT



Normal oak leaves forming a symmetrical pattern



These oak leaves, taken from the area round Chernobyl, have been deformed as a result of radiation.

The public enquiry into the proposed nuclear reactor at Hinkley Point C in Somerset restarted in September after a summer break. The last few months had heard submissions on local and environmental issues, with local people giving evidence of an overall nature.

In July, after a long battle and a petition with over 13,000 signatures, a two-day session was held in Bristol. Eighty two people spoke. Another seventy were left unheard. All sorts of concerns were raised, from the danger from nuclear material travelling through Bristol, to the lack of emergency planning and risks faced by indigenous peoples where uranium is mined.

LEARNING THE LESSONS OF CHERNOBYL

Another high point was the visit of the Inspector, his assessors and two objectors to Chernobyl, in the USSR. This visit gave rise to some very moving accounts of Chernobyl today. The Soviet nuclear authorities spoke honestly about the effects of Chernobyl, including the statement: "I think if there was a national referendum tomorrow, there would be a clear majority against more nuclear power."

The "exclusion zone" around Chernobyl still stretches to a radius of about 20 miles around the plant, covering an area nearly as big as Somerset. Nobody will be able to live again permanently within this area for at least 50 years. Lorries continually spray the main road surfaces with water to stop people breathing the dust.

During the past three years, over 260,000 people have been involved in the clean-up work. New workers have been brought in to replace those whose have reached radiation dose limits. Two hundred hectares of dying woodland have been bulldozed away. People living outside the exclusion zone still face big risks. Restrictions are in force on gathering wild fruits; on grazing cows and on eating fish. In Kiev, 600,000 people are being checked regularly after their irradiation.

LOCAL PEOPLE SAY 'NO'

Just before the summer break, the Department of Energy was recalled to give new evidence on the privatisation saga. Evasion was the name of their game. Asked whether AGRs (like Hinkley B reactor) are practical and economic, the Department replied: "Well, they exist and they work up to a point, some better than others."

Another long-running battle was won by CND who got to question the Electricity Board on the issue of plutonium accountancy, in other words, what happens to the plutonium produced by the reactors. The Electricity Board accepted finally that it handed over total responsibility for managing its plutonium to British Nuclear Fuels. This led to the conclusion that the Electricity Board was unable to give an assurance that plutonium from its reactors was not diverted or sold for military use.

The last topic at the enquiry catered for local people who wanted to give evidence of a general nature. Many people came forward, despite all the obstacles of formality, intimidation, getting time off work, transport to the hall, etc. These submissions really got to the root of the deep concern for future generations, love of the land and environment, distrust of the nuclear industry and watchdogs and faith in alternative energy sources and conservation.

A recent opinion poll was presented which showed that about 70% of people are opposed to further nuclear expansion, both nationally and in the local area.

Closing submissions from over thirty organisations and individuals and the Electricity Board were heard in September. Then the Inspector carried off a mountain of paper in order to compile his report and make recommendations, due to be ready by Christmas.

The government can take it or leave it. But for local people, there will never be any doubt of the outcome of the enquiry... an overwhelming NO.

*** The Sizewell Enquiry, six years ago, prompted 4,000 individual objections. This time, there were five times as many, including Friends of the Earth, the Council for the Protection of Rural England and Greenpeace. 23 local authorities formed a coalition - COLA - to object to the nuclear plant.

*** In the course of the enquiry, the CEBG was forced to compare the economics of nuclear and fossil fuel, demonstrating that new nuclear stations produce power more expensively than new coal stations.

*** At the end of August, four families began legal proceedings against British Nuclear Fuels, seeking compensation for cancers which they claim were caused by radiation from the Sellafield (Windscale) nuclear plant in Cumbria. A "cluster" of cancers round Sellafield with a leukaemia rate ten times higher than the national average was exposed in a TV documentary in 1983. More recently, a government-appointed committee found that evidence "tends to support the hypothesis that some features of the nuclear plants... lead to an increased risk of leukaemia in young people living in the vicinity..." BFNL disputes this and the case is likely to take two years to come to court.

ASIAN PARENTS OPPOSE LABOUR COUNCIL'S



RACIST APPOINTMENT

C.S. Correspondent

The gross racism of Birmingham's Labour Council over the appointment of liaison teacher, Wendy Bartle, has infuriated the Asian community and stirred up prejudice among many white people.

Springfield Junior and Infants School, in Moseley, has 90% (in some reports 98%) Asian pupils. The Home Office provided funds to create seven posts of school/liaison teacher in Birmingham. The jobs were created because of language difficulties which the school's parents had, and the main work is to forge links with the non-English speaking parents.

The City Council appointed Ms Bartle although she cannot speak Urdu or Punjabi - the languages of the Springhill School parents. An Action Committee was set up, and its chairman, Mr Aziz Hassan, made the obvious point:

"The teacher cannot be expected to communicate with Asian parents if she can only speak English. She does not understand the Asian culture and many parents are totally opposed to the appointment."

The Council gave its reasons for Ms Bartle's appointment. Apparently, she was next in line for a full-time job because she was working for the Council part-time, and this gave her "protected status". One can accept that Ms Bartle had the right to a job, but why a job for which she is totally unqualified?

ASIAN TEACHERS NOT CONSIDERED

The plot thickened when it turned out that two teachers who speak the required Asian languages had applied for the job and had not even been considered. Apparently the post was only advertised to "protected status" teachers, and the other two applications were declared invalid. Ms Bartle was the only applicant so far as the Education Department was concerned.

A Council statement was issued:

"We believe that all involved with Mrs Bartle's appointment have acted with integrity and in accordance with proper procedures."

NO CONSULTATION

As anger in the local community grew, the Birmingham Community Relations Council called for the post to be re-advertised. At the time of the appointment, the CRC had expressed deep concern. CRC Chairman, Cllr. Saeed Abdi, said that it was unfortunate that the CRC, parents and the local community were not consulted.

STIRRING UP RACISM

City boss, Sir Richard Knowles, leader of the Council, weighed in with a characteristically blunt, racist remark: "This teacher," he said, "is not employed as a translator. She is employed as a teacher. If that is not understood by some people who do not speak English, it will be translated."

It is clear that the issue has brought out chauvinist and racist feelings widely in the city. The local freesheet, 'The Daily News', invited its readers' views. In a page of letters, thirteen condemned the protest and supported Ms Bartle's appointment and one one dissenting letter was published, which mildly pointed out that the whole point of the job was to communicate with parents who spoke only Asian languages, a rather difficult task for Ms Bartle. The other thirteen all said, in different ways: "Why can't these people learn English?" Many followed this to its racist conclusion: "If this way of life is so precious to them, then let them stay in their own country and enjoy it instead of changing ours to suit them."

COMMUNITY CONTROL

Deeply disturbing as these reactions are, it is useful to be aware of the depth of prejudice which exists, and which is fed by the media.

What is certain is that the national minority peoples in Britain, Asian or African, Muslim or Sikh, cannot and will not bow down to these pressures. The extreme racists want black people to leave the country, the milder and subtler ones want them to "assimilate".

The only real way in which the national minorities will resist racist oppression and win their right to be free human beings will be through full control of their own localities by the national minority communities. Thus it is not just a question of a liaison teacher who can communicate with the local people, but of schools entirely staffed by Asian teachers and functioning in Asian languages, as the medium of instruction, if that is what the community wants.

And if Sir Richard Knowles does not understand that, it will be translated.

PATEL FAMILY DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

The following leaflet was issued by the Patel Family Defence Campaign who organised a picket of the appeal hearing, held on October 3rd:

KOKILA AND AMRITLAL

For the last ten years, Britain's immigration laws have kept Kokila Patel separated from her husband, Amritlal. In all that time they have seen each other only twice. Kokila is in England and Amritlal in India, but time and again he has been denied permission even to pay her a short visit. On both previous occasions, Kokila had to travel to India and could only stay for a short time during her break from work. -

PRIMARY PURPOSE

The Home Office have never denied that Kokila's marriage to Amritlal is genuine. Their decision is based on the inhumane rule under the immigration laws that entry will be refused unless husband and wife can satisfy the immigration officer that obtaining settlement was not the main or "primary" purpose in getting married. In practice, it is always black people who get caught by this rule as white immigration officers question their motives for getting married.

Kokila's sister, Pushpa, was similarly separated from her husband for many years until she suffered a horrific accident at work. Her husband was only finally allowed to join her on compassionate grounds. They now have a one year-old daughter. Such a family life however continues to be denied to Kokila and Amritlal.

NO MORE DIVIDED FAMILIES

For more information, write to the PFDC, c/o Lichfield Street, Walsall, Birmingham.
Tel: 0922 640424.

Mandy's Diary



Sept. 12th: A university psychologist has come up with the theory that it is realistic to feel depressed in present-day Britain. 'New laboratory evidence showed that sufferers from depression were actually good at evaluating information and had a more realistic view of the world about them', she said. 'It could be that the rest of us cheery souls are deluding ourselves into thinking that the world is a happy place'.

It is certainly true that for the majority of people in the world, i.e. those in Third World countries, life is very hard and there is little to feel happy about. Although our standard of living in this country is immeasurably better, nevertheless over the last few years there has been increasingly oppressive legislation in several important areas of our lives, and this has made the outlook bleak for millions of ordinary people. This includes drastic cuts in social security benefits, big changes for the worse in health and education, discrimination against gay people, attacks on women's reproductive rights, attacks on trade unions, continued deportations of black people and long-term separation of families wanting to come to this country. We don't need a university

psychologist to tell us that it is realistic to feel depressed about all this.

However, the occasional silver lining shows through the clouds. For example, a case brought by six secretaries and typists working at Lloyds Bank claiming equal pay with male messengers has finally been won after a battle lasting 3½ years. An industrial tribunal unanimously ruled that Lloyds Bank's bargaining process 'was tainted by direct sex discrimination'. This ruling could mean that thousands of women secretaries and typists in banks and finance houses will benefit as a result.

The Equal Pay Act has now been amended to make it easier for women working in all-female jobs to claim equal pay with men working in all-male jobs.



Even Christianity is having to give some consideration to the question of women's equality. Reluctantly. There is still a lot of opposition to the ordination of women as priests.

In a new version of the Bible some of the texts have been written in less sexist language. For example, St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, chapter 7, verse 1. The Authorised Version reads:

'Know ye not, brethren, how that the law has dominion over a man as long as he liveth'.

The revised version reads:

'You must be aware, my friends, that a person is subject to the law as long as he is alive.'

Two out of three right. At least they are making an effort.

Sept. 18th: This seems to be the season for bashing single parents. Tonight the TV programme 'Panorama' raised the question of state benefits to single parents (currently £3.4 billion a year) and asked:

'Shouldn't they be supporting themselves?'

I have also heard that a discussion document has been leaked which proposes that state benefits to single parents should be cut, and that the children should be maintained by their natural fathers. If the father doesn't want to know, hard cheese. Or if the mother for whatever reason does not wish to contact the father. Social Security benefits to single parents are appallingly inadequate in any case. Most single parent mothers and their children are doomed to a life of desperate poverty as things are. £3.4 billion might sound a lot of money, but there are a lot of single parents. For a start, one marriage in three ends in divorce. This is not altogether a bad thing. There is now evidence to show that one reason for the high divorce rate is that women are no longer prepared to tolerate ill-treatment by their husbands.

These attacks on single parents have been in the pipeline for a few months. Regular readers of 'Mandy's Diary' will remember that not long ago I reported a statement by some Tory bigot that state benefits to single parents should be withdrawn so as to force them out to work or starve. The state is well aware that the major factor preventing women taking part in paid work is the high cost of child care. Yet it does nothing to subsidise child care on a large scale. Neither does it take effective action to make women's wages equal to men's. (Women's wages still average only two thirds of men's.)

It is cheaper to bash single parents. And after all, saving money is what it's all about.



SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK



• Sweet Honey In The Rock

'Are My Hands Clean?' was one of the songs sung by Sweet Honey in the Rock at a concert in September in Bradford as part of their recent tour in the UK.

The group of five African-American women have an amazingly wide range of words and music. They sang of their origins in Africa - 'My Ancestors Speak Through Me' and of the experience of mothers' responsibility and love for their children in a traditional song from Mali, West Africa. They sang gospel music - 'I'm leaning on the Lord' and 'Where are the keys to the kingdom. Oh, Standing at the door, and I wanna come in.' They sang of love and worries; of work and its occupational risks - 'More Than as Pay Check'.

They sing of personal struggles against racism and of the Civil Rights Movement in the USA. They sing for international solidarity, particularly for the struggle in Azania: 'My soul's in a state of emergency. Apartheid's in a state of emergency'.

And they sang of struggle of people all over the world for peace, for justice and freedom.

The range of their songs links personal experience and international struggles; looking back to their origins in Africa to the present and future struggles for justice in America and all over the world. They sing of suffering and injustice but also of resistance and hope.

The words, of course, are only part of the songs. It is difficult to describe their music - it also brings together many aspects of traditional and modern music, particularly of the African traditions including black people in the US. They sing with no accompaniment except for the occasional use of African percussion instruments.

The resulting music is a powerful and moving experience. If you get a chance to hear Sweet Honey in the Rock, don't miss it. You will feel stronger and more joyful from it.



'Are My Hands Clean?'

I wear garments touched by hands all over the world
35% cotton. 65% polyester.

The journey begins in Central America in the cotton fields of El Salvador
in a province soaked in blood
pesticide-sprayed workers toil in boiling sun
Pulling cotton for two dollars a day.

Then we move on up to another rung - Cargill
A Top Forty Trading Conglomerate takes the cotton
through the Panama Canal
Up the Eastern Seaboard, coming to the US of A, for
the first time

In South Carolina
At the Burlington Mills
Joins a shipment of polyester filament courtesy of the
New Jersey Petro-Chemical Mills of Dupont

Dupont strands of filament begin in South
American country of Venezuela
where oil riggers bring up oil from the earth for six dollars a day
Then Exxon, largest oil company in the world
Upgrades the product in the country of Trinidad and Tobago
Then back into the Atlantic and Caribbean seas
To the factories of Dupont
On the way to the Burlington Mills

In South Carolina
To meet to cotton from the blood-soaked fields of El
Salvador

In South Carolina
Burlington factories hum with the business of weaving
oil and cotton into miles of fabric for Sears
Who takes the bounty back into the Caribbean sea
Headed for Haiti this time
May she one day soon be free

Far from the Port-au-Prince palace
Third World women toil doing piece work for Sears
specifications for three dollars a day
My sisters make my blouse
It leaves the Third World for the last time
Coming back into the sea to be sealed in plastic for me
This Third World sister
And I go to the Sears department store where I buy my blouse
On sale for 20% discount

Are my hands clean?

'DROPS OF SWEAT'

C.S. CORRESPONDENT

"I came here in 1985. Doing this job does not give me any hopes for the future. I can save very little Now I am 23 years old In our factory a lot of injustices take place.... Life in the boarding house is really a sad one.... But when we get together we sing and listen to music. Like children of one mother, we support each other."

These are the words of Pushpa, a garment worker in the Katunayaka Free Trade Zone (FTZ), in Sri Lanka.

Katunayaka, set up in 1979, is the oldest of two FTZs in Sri Lanka, employing about 54,000 workers, of whom 90% are women. There are 69 companies in this FTZ, under both foreign and joint ownership: from Hong Kong, South Korea, West Germany, UK and USA.

The goods produced in the FTZ are for export and the main industries are light - many clothing factories, but also plastics, toys and some electronics.

At a meeting organised by the group Women Working Worldwide, held in Manchester on September 14th, Kumudhini Rosa, from Sri Lanka, described the conditions of work and life for women workers in the FTZ and how they have gradually built up collective organisation and resistance.

WHAT IS A FREE TRADE ZONE?

The Free Trade Zone or Export Processing Zone, is an isolated area in a country specifically designed as an industrial estate, normally with all the infrastructure necessary for production. Foreign companies alone or in joint ventures with nationals, are allowed to freely import raw materials or semi-finished goods, free of duty. They can manufacture, process or assemble products for export.

Companies operating within the zones are given preferential treatment like:

- total or partial exemption from the laws of the country concerned.
- exemption from capital and income taxes.
- repatriation of foreign investments and profits.
- assistance to recruit cheap labour and to control it.
- land, factory buildings, electric power, industrial water.

The FTZs operate very much like a country within a country. In some cases it is even guarded by its own 'zone police'. Most of the production in the zone is for export. Workers employed in the zone are often subject to special laws and restrictions (no right to strike or to organise).

Information from newsletter 'Info', International YCW, Brussels.

Wages are low, below the minimum needed to live decently, let alone send money home to families in the rural areas where most of the women come from. A working day is a minimum of nine hours, sometimes extended with overtime up to fourteen hours a day.

The women mostly live in boarding houses near the FTZ where they share rooms, kitchen, bathroom etc. with only enough room for matspace and a suitcase for their possessions.

WOMEN ORGANISE

Kumudhini spoke of how the trade unions, although strong elsewhere in Sri Lanka, had been unable or unwilling to help the women organise in the FTZ. When the government repealed the law forbidding night work for women, for example, the unions were notably silent.

But other organisations exist, including the women's collective which produces a widely-read monthly newspaper, Da Bindu (Drops of Sweat). Other centres are run by religious and legal rights organisations.

The importance of the support that such centres can give to the women workers was shown by a campaign against sexual harassment, one of the main problems affecting the women, particularly when they have to walk home late after work. This campaign was quite successful because it was carried out with the cooperation of the Buddhist temples.

The Tootal Group, a giant British textile firm, boasts of the scale of its international production and trading, in its annual report for 1988-1989:

"Tootal Group is an international marketing-led group with annual sales of £500 million. It operates in more than 20 countries and markets its products in more than 60 countries."

The report contains pictures of glamorous women wearing Tootal products. For example - "With her blouse from Hong Kong, jeans from Japan and boots from America, the lady on the right has clearly been on an international shopping expedition. The Tootal thread holding these items together has travelled an even more intriguing route. That distinctive orange thread in the jeans, for example, originated as corespun yarn from Lisnaskea in Northern Ireland, was shipped to Manila for dyeing, to be sold to Levi Strauss in the Philippines for stitching before being exported to Japan. For the blouse - a Tootal design, sourced by Tootal Group's Singapore office - polyester yarn from Guangzhou in China wound its way to Malaysia for dyeing and finishing, to blend imperceptibly into the fabric, bound for Marks and Spencer in Hong Kong."

The report goes on to say that "there nothing accidental about this sage of goods".

Over the years, women have also built up their confidence and ability to work together to improve conditions at work. Particularly over the last six months, there have been numerous walkouts, strikes and go-slows. These have been protests against the raising of production quotas, dismissals of workers, safety at work and numerous other issues, big and small. Recently, for the first time, women took the initiative to organise a cultural festival which was attended by thousands.

In her talk, Kumudhini stressed the need for long-term commitment to work to support the women workers. After many years, the women now come to the different organisations for their support because they know they are there and trust them. She also stressed the need to listen to the views of the women, to make the starting point their views and problems.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

Kumudhini talked about the need for international links and solidarity to be built. The work of the Committee of Asian Women has shown the way in this. Women in Sri Lanka have had support from other groups in Asia and this has been important for them.

A recent example of international solidarity took place when workers in a South Korean factory owned by a West German firm, Adler, were on strike in 1987. Support from women's organisations in Germany had been an important factor in helping them win their strike.

A newsletter - Drops of Sweat/Da Bindu - is now being produced as one way of building these links and exchanging information. The first issue, September of this year, reports on the situation of women in Sri Lanka and gives accounts of their action at two firms in the FTZ there; a campaign in Trinidad to stop the setting up of a FTZ; and it contains information from Malaysia, South Korea and about homeworkers in Europe.

The giant trans-national companies are skilful at operating on an international scale to maximise their profits. The Labour Party and trade unions have reacted to this by calling for protection for "our industry" through import controls.

We need to take a stand with women workers around the world and learn from them that even in the most difficult circumstances, such as in Sri Lanka, it is possible to build collective organisation and solidarity. It is in our own interests to build this solidarity, and the stronger the international links are, the better we will be able to fight back.

For more information, or for copies of 'Drops of Sweat', contact: Drops of Sweat, c/o K.Rosa, Rabenstrasse 37, D 2080 Pinneberg, West Germany. or The Labour Behind the Label, Women Working Worldwide, Dept. of Sociology, University of Manchester, M13 9PL. or ask your 'Class Struggle' seller.

NORWAY

BUILDING THE BROAD FRONT

At the beginning of September, 'Class Struggle' interviewed a member of the Workers Communist Party of Norway (Marxist-Leninist), about the political situation in Norway and the party's strategy towards the general election on September 11th.

The Norwegian electoral system works on the basis of proportional representation. Each party or front puts up a list of candidates in the different areas and the numbers elected from each list are in proportion to the number of votes cast for that party or front.

In the event, the 'Front for the Environment and for Solidarity', in which the WCP(ML) participated won 23,000 votes nationally. This was a big increase on the votes won by the Red Electoral Alliance in 1985 but was fewer than had been hoped. The WCP(ML) attribute this to a big swing to the Left Social-Democrat Party in the last week and an effective boycott of their front by the mass media. They will be making a more detailed summing up of the results and their strategy.

CS: Can you tell us something about the background to the elections on September 11th?

WCP(ML): Norway has been quite a stable society, in the political sense, all the time since the last World War, except for one period, 1942-1973, when the capitalists tried to get Norway into the Common Market.

But the last two or three years, the situation has become quite unstable again. We think this is connected to the new strategy of the capitalists, who are implementing quite a crude policy against the working people. Wages do not keep pace with prices and there are severe cuts in public spending. This policy began with the Conservatives, at the beginning of the '80s and when the Social Democrats got power in 1986, they implemented an even harsher policy towards the working class. They were an even more openly bourgeois government than before.

All this has caused unrest among people who had supported the Social Democrats. There have been splits among the Social Democrats. There has been increasing protest in the trade unions, and so on. So, generally, both the Social Democrats and the Conservatives have lost support over the last three years.

The faction that has picked up most support has been a new right-wing party, a right populist party called the Progress Party. They have managed to pick up support from the increasing numbers of unemployed people, who do not agree in every respect with the policy of this right-wing party. But it's a kind of protest against the ruling party.

On the other hand, there has also been a reaction from the more progressive protest movements. I mentioned before the trade union movement. But there has also been a strong reaction from the women's movement; on the environmental question and from the people in the districts of Norway who have suffered very much from the government's policies.

Another matter that has been important is the attitudes towards immigration. In 1986, there was an increase in the numbers of refugees seeking asylum in Norway. For a long time, there had been between one to

This is the background to our strategy in the recent election.

CS: Can you explain the new strategy in the election?

WCP(ML): We think it is important to have an election strategy that can unite most of the progressive forces against the rightist movements and build a broader election front than we have had previously.

We have put up election lists in which people from all the progressive movements that I mentioned participate together with members of our



Gro Harlem Brundtland

Norwegian PM

two thousand people coming every year. But in 86, there were seven or eight thousand because other countries in Europe were stopping immigration. This situation was used by the rightist party to campaign against immigration. They also used the issue to split people. They told all the usual stories - that these people were responsible for increasing unemployment, bad housing etc.

The Social Democrats (Labour Party) and the Conservatives have also moved to the right and adopted some of the arguments. They have tightened the rules on immigration because they thought they could get votes this way. Over the last few years, the Norwegian government has been very strict towards refugees. Last year, only about two thousand were allowed to come in and not all of them have succeeded in getting permission to stay.

But there has also been resistance. The anti-racist movement has grown in strength the last few years, especially among young people and is now a very important political force in this election period.

party and our former election front, the Red Electoral Front. This Red Electoral Front has not ceased to exist. But this year, it has not put forward its own lists of candidates. Instead, they support the new front.

The revisionist party in Norway mainly supports this new front, although several of their district cells have broken away and are supporting the Left Social-Democrat party. We also had discussions with the new Green Party but they ended up not joining the front. But most of the environmental activists disagreed with this and have supported the front.

There seems to be a good chance that by bringing together the progressive forces in this way, we will increase the votes for the left.

CS: How would you summarise the main issues then, this time?

WCP(ML): We are trying to unite the different progressive forces on the main political issues such as the standard of living of working people - wages, welfare, housing etc; from the trade unions, the most important points are wages and trade union

ERITREA/TIGRAY VICTORY IS OURS!

rights because the government is trying to break trade union organisation; anti-racist and environmental questions and women's issues. The main economic questions are important for women but there are also specific issues, like the abortion question.

CS: Can you explain the attitude of the party to elections in general?

WCP(ML): The party has participated in elections in Norway since 1973. We have put up lists of candidates of the Red Electoral Front, consisting of party members, revolutionary and radical people. Our opinion is that, in a country like Norway, it is important to use elections for propaganda means. At election time, most of the people are concerned with politics and usually about 80 per cent vote. We come into contact with many new people and we can use the elections to develop their political consciousness.

The other main reason why we take part in elections is that we think it is important to get delegates into the Parliament. Inside the Parliament we can also propagate our policies, we can raise issues that cause trouble for the authorities and we can get information that is useful.

We have had quite a lot of experience of councillors in local government. In the first elections we took part in in 1973, we got four people into local councils. In the last election in 1987, we got 54 people in.

We have also had bad experiences with parliamentary work. But mostly, it has been a good supplement and an important part of our political work.

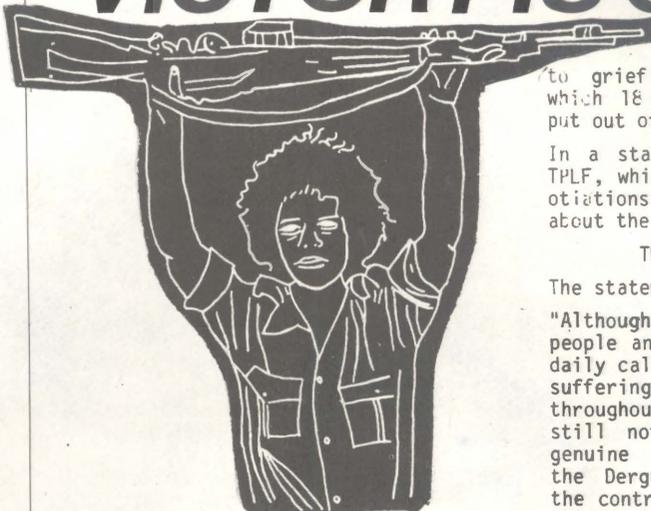
We have not managed to get people in the Parliament before because it's harder to win a seat there. You have to have at least 4 per cent of the vote.

CS: Given that the party has been associated with support for socialist China, has the events there this summer affected support for the front?

WCP(ML): It doesn't seem so. Our party reacted very quickly to the situation in China. Even before the massacre, we went out and criticised martial law. We reacted strongly against the handling of the demonstrations and criticised the massacre in June. So, it hasn't been easy for our opponents to utilise the events in China against us.

Of course, the bourgeoisie and especially the Social Democrats have tried. It almost seems that our party is to blame for the massacre in China, if you read some of their material. But our experience is that the events have not affected support for the party very much.

Our party has been independent of what is going on in China for a long time. We have emphasised the development of policies and a strategy for socialism in Norway in the first place, not relying on models in other countries.



Throughout September, there have been reports of talks between representatives of the Ethiopian government, the Dergue, and the liberation movements that have brought the regime close to collapse by their protracted armed struggles.

At the same time, there have been reports of new Soviet arms shipments arriving in Ethiopia and another massive military build-up in preparation for an autumn offensive against the liberated areas.

Whether the Ethiopian regime is serious about talks or whether it is playing for time is yet to be seen. But it is certain that any new offensive, while inflicting more unnecessary suffering, particularly on the civilian population, will only hasten the collapse of the Dergue, with or without negotiations.

POSITION OF STRENGTH

The liberation fronts of Eritrea and Tigray can negotiate from positions of strength. They have liberated all their territories and will withstand any military or diplomatic offensive on the basis of the full mobilisation of their people, not only for armed struggle, but for political, economic and social change.

Over the last period, important breakthroughs have been made on different fronts. On the diplomatic front, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), which is fighting for separation from Ethiopia, is beginning to win recognition from African states and from the Organisation of African Unity.

Inside Ethiopia, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), is working in a united front with the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement: the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

MILITARY SUCCESS

In a press release of 9th September, the EPRDF reported new victories on the battlefield. The Dergue's plans for military victories to strengthen its hand in talks came

to grief in a ten-day battle in which 18 brigades of its army were put out of action.

In a statement made in August, the TPLF, while agreeing to genuine negotiations for peace, gave a warning about the manoeuvres of the Dergue:

THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

The statement reads in part:

"Although from the beginning the people and the genuine fighters have daily called for an end to the untold sufferings and horrors of war throughout the country, they have still not been able to obtain any genuine and viable solution from the Dergue and its guardians. On the contrary, while on the one hand, the Dergue is now talking more about peace than ever before, it is, on the other hand, blocking any genuine concrete measures which could lead to peace. In constantly calling for the condemnation of the forces fighting for democracy and trying to portray them as carrying out subversive missions, it is reducing the chance for a peaceful solution to the war.

"The TPLF issued its proposal for a peaceful solution in March 1989, at a time when the Dergue was making no such concrete proposals, but simply talking in general terms about stopping the war, creating peaceful conditions and so on.

"The TPLF's peace proposal goes far beyond general statements about the necessity for peace. It makes practical proposals for achieving genuine peace by stopping the war which is ravaging the country. It also clearly identifies the denial of democratic rights as the root cause of the war, and demands therefore that these rights must first be ensured, the release of political prisoners, the free movement of political organisations and forces and the formation of a provisional government representing all opposition forces. The TPLF's peace initiative seeks genuine peace and so must be accepted as a genuine solution by any force which stands for the safety and true aspirations of the broad Ethiopian masses."

"The Dergue, armed to the teeth, is preparing to destroy the democratic organisations and the struggling people in the liberated areas. The people have suffered and sacrificed so much to ensure their free existence and consolidate their institutions. Therefore, they cannot simply wait with empty hope that the Dergue will come with peace.

It has repeatedly been revealed that the Dergue is incapable of accepting peace through peaceful means..... In continuing the struggle for peace it (EPRDF) will contribute to foiling the Dergue's offensive preparations to invade EPRDF areas. The EPRDF believes that true peace can only come about through struggle....."

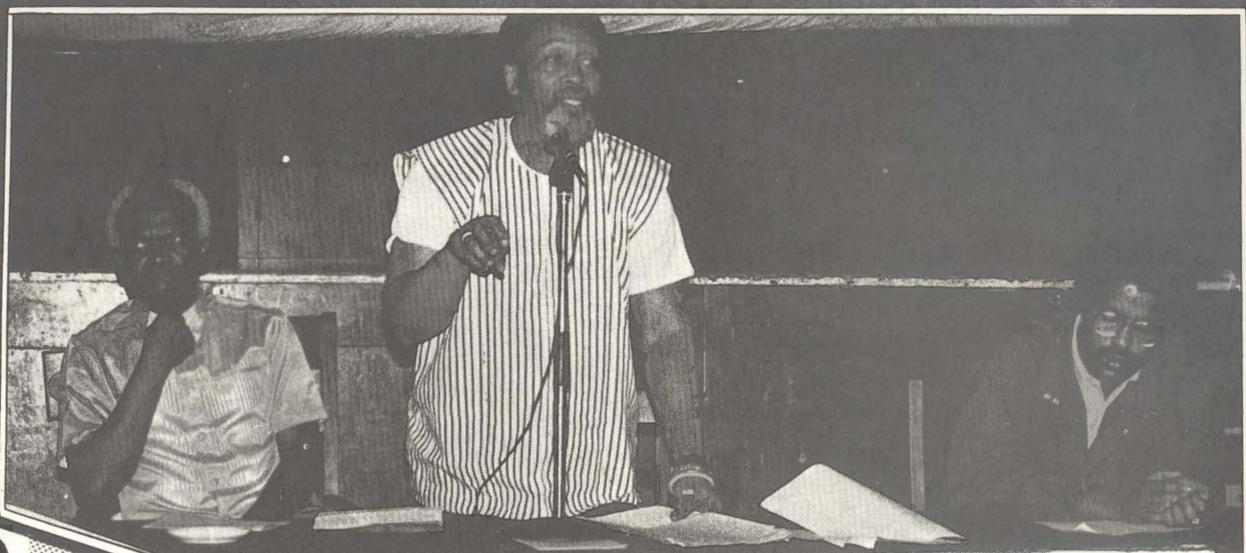
NO
NEGOTIATIONS

Photo: Allan Naldo

BCM spokesperson at a meeting on 12th anniversary of the murder of Bantu Steve Biko



BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT WARNS AGAINST NEGOTIATING WITH RACIST REGIME

Interviewed by the Azanian paper, 'The Sowetan', Mosibudi Mangena, Chairman of the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA), warned against the present talks about a "negotiated settlement" with the South African regime.

Mangena said that the BCMA would only go into negotiations if it was accepted by the government that one man one vote and the redistribution of wealth was the solution: "We do not think there is any point in talking about freedom and democracy without the redistribution of wealth. They present own about 90 per cent of the land and freedom without redistribution would only make us free beggars in our country."

He said moves to force blacks into "premature" negotiations with the government are mainly a result of the change in foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

He warned that: "A negotiating process might start with a variation of actors, so as to split the broad liberation movement. This will seek to exclude, isolate and marginalise the Black Consciousness movement in its entirety, the Pan African Congress and any section of the Charterist camp which is not available to shameful compromise."

He said that the struggle for a socialist order in the country would continue irrespective of the talks. There is certainly nothing on the ground to suggest that whites are ready to countenance a democratic order in Azania.

The same issue of 'The Sowetan' carried a BCM statement on a negotiated settlement being pushed by the imperialist countries, part-

icularly America and Britain. It read in part:

"We believe it is folly for any liberation organisation to fight for negotiation or make negotiation the purpose of the struggle. We believe that our struggle is not based on a compromise which is what negotiated settlements are.

The BCM said it took a principled stand against negotiated settlements in 1981 and again in 1985 it popularised the slogan 'Death to the National Convention' to emphasise its opposition to a negotiated settlement when the idea was mooted among organisations of the oppressed then.

"We have very clear principles by which we carry our struggle to our goal which is the establishment of a socialist worker republic of Azania.

"And we therefore do not believe that any settlement with the present regime will carry with it the aspirations of the majority of our people who are the oppressed and the exploited.

The BCMA and the principles of its struggle and its goals are:

1. The struggle is based on the minimum demands of the oppressed masses of Azania, namely (a) the reconquest of all our land and its resources and (b) the attainment of full democratic rights.

2. We recognise that the national oppression of our people is a direct result of capitalism, imperialism and racism - thus our struggle is anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist and anti-racist.

3. In response to the popular struggles of the masses, the South African regime is making overtures to the black middle class - this

underscores the class essence of the struggle against national oppression.

4. The BCM recognises that black workers are the most oppressed and exploited section of our society and therefore constitute a major force in our struggle - thus the strategy for revolution should be based on the interests of the black working class.

5. We therefore adopt the theory and practice of scientific socialism.

6. Consequently, the means of production in a free Azania will be owned by the people as a whole and controlled by the working class.

7. Because of the structural and institutionalised nature of racism in the South African social system, the class struggle continues to manifest itself in colour terms and, for this reason, we continue to believe in the mobilising role of Black Consciousness in the struggle, in which the black people rally against their common oppression."

The BCM said that if the South African government forces a negotiated settlement now, it would be to "consolidate its rule and entrench its class ideology.

"Because of its position of strength, it would dictate the terms and agenda of the negotiations.

"Any negotiated settlement with them at this point can never be to the benefit of the black working class and the oppressed and exploited in general. It will be nothing short of a sell-out settlement and we reject it."

The BCM said that negotiations were only possible when the balance of power between the forces of the government and the forces of the oppressed was in a stalemate.



A Change of tempo

by DAVID EVANS

After nearly 22 months of the Uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestinians' conviction that the Intifada must go on remains steady. Nevertheless, there is a growing feeling that changes are needed in the form which the Uprising takes.

There are two main reasons for this. In the first place, many activists feel that the protest actions have become a bit routine: regular one-day strikes take place; there are daily stone-throwing attacks by youths on soldiers and settlers; and there is a widespread withholding of co-operation from the authorities, particularly in the area of non-payment of taxes, which have to be forced out of people by the authorities by strong-arm tactics and the threat of hunger. (People who normally go to work in Israel are prevented from going there unless they have paid all their taxes.) These protest actions have become very familiar. The Palestinians are used to them and do not intend to stop them. But there is a feeling that a change of tempo and the introduction of something new is needed.

PUTTING PRESSURE ON ISRAEL

It is also widely felt that something more has to be done to shift the Israeli occupation. By the beginning of October, as the Uprising drew to the end of its 22nd month, over 700 Palestinians had been killed, some 50,000 wounded and over 40,000 had been arrested, of whom over 10,000 are currently in captivity. Living standards had collapsed.

Yet the outside world did not seem to be doing a lot to put pressure on Israel to acknowledge the Palestinians' national rights.

On top of that, the Palestine Liberation Organisation had made a number of concessions on its existing policies to meet US and Israeli objections to negotiating a peace settlement with it. But all that had happened was that the US agreed to talks, which have continued for most of the last year with little result, while Israel has rejected talks with the PLO out of hand, putting forward a bogus "peace plan" as a counter-move in order to buy time to try to suppress the Uprising.

There is a strong belief that the Palestinians have made great concessions, including a clear acceptance of a state alongside Israel within its pre-1967 borders but that has not produced any Israeli willingness to compromise and give up the 20 per cent or so of Palestine on which they have said they are ready to build their state. These concessions have also not persuaded the US to put serious pressure on Israel.

PAYING THE PRICE

Things cannot go on as they are, with the Palestinians facing death and hardship and Israel refusing to budge. Many believe that the price Israel pays for continuing to deny self-determination to the Palestinian people must be increased, even if they do not know how that can be done. But when that does happen, there will inevitably be a roar of indignation from Israel's supporters. They have no right to complain. Israel has had the chance to pull out of the territories it occupied in 1967 and sign a peace treaty with the PLO. Instead, it has chosen to entrench itself more deeply by establishing more settlements and to increase its violence against the

people in revolt.

The US only got out of Vietnam when the price got too high. The Soviet Union only pulled out of Afghanistan when the burden of war became too great. Israel itself only pulled out of Lebanon when it had lost 650 soldiers and the army's morale was collapsing.

Common-sense might suggest that Israel would learn from this and withdraw while the Palestinians are demanding very little and before the going gets tougher. But reactionaries do not learn lessons like this. They have to be taught, again and again.

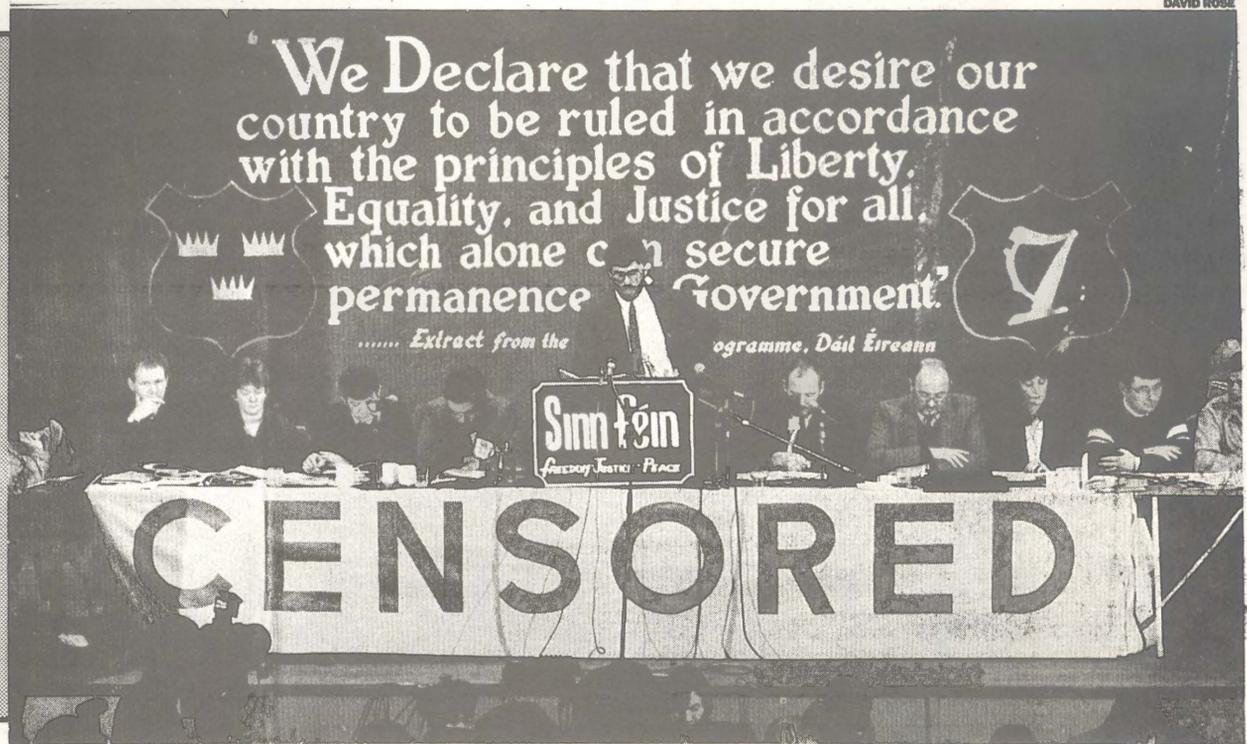


Action for Women in Palestine,
c/o The Pankhurst Centre,
60-62 Nelson Street, Manchester.

Photo: Jez Coulson

FREEDOM FOR IRELAND

DAVID ROSE



WHO IS TO BLAME ?

"Mrs Thatcher visited occupied Ireland with a message of war at a time when we wanted peace. Now we, in turn, have visited the Royal Marines in Kent. But we still want peace and we want the British government to leave our country." With these words, the IRA claimed responsibility for the bomb at the Royal Marine Music School in Deal which killed ten young Royal Marine bandmen.

Mixed with the predictable fulminations against the IRA from the British politicians and media were the equally predictable protestations that the action would not achieve its aims. Every time the IRA strike, the British rulers say that this will not affect the British military presence in Ireland. These protestations are becoming increasingly unconvincing.

The Republican Movement makes no secret of its strategy to bring about withdrawal of the British occupation of the six counties. Speaking of the inevitability of this, Sinn Féin spokesman, Danny Morrison, said recently:

"The tragic thing is that it won't be triggered until a large number of British soldiers are killed, and that's what is going to happen. So you run into a bloody period when they're going to die and we're going to die."

This is no glorification of killing, but a sad recognition that while a war is being fought against national oppression, peace can only come through violence.

Much is said about the selection of so-called "soft targets" by the IRA, regardless of the fact that enemy soldiers are always legitimate targets in a war. Irish freedom fighters do not lack courage, but they are not so foolish as to let the more powerful enemy choose the battleground. The IRA has said:

"Our tactics remain fluid and we will continue to stretch British resources to breaking point. We will never fall into the trap of easing their military nightmare by restricting ourselves to a specific set of targets, whatever their nature."

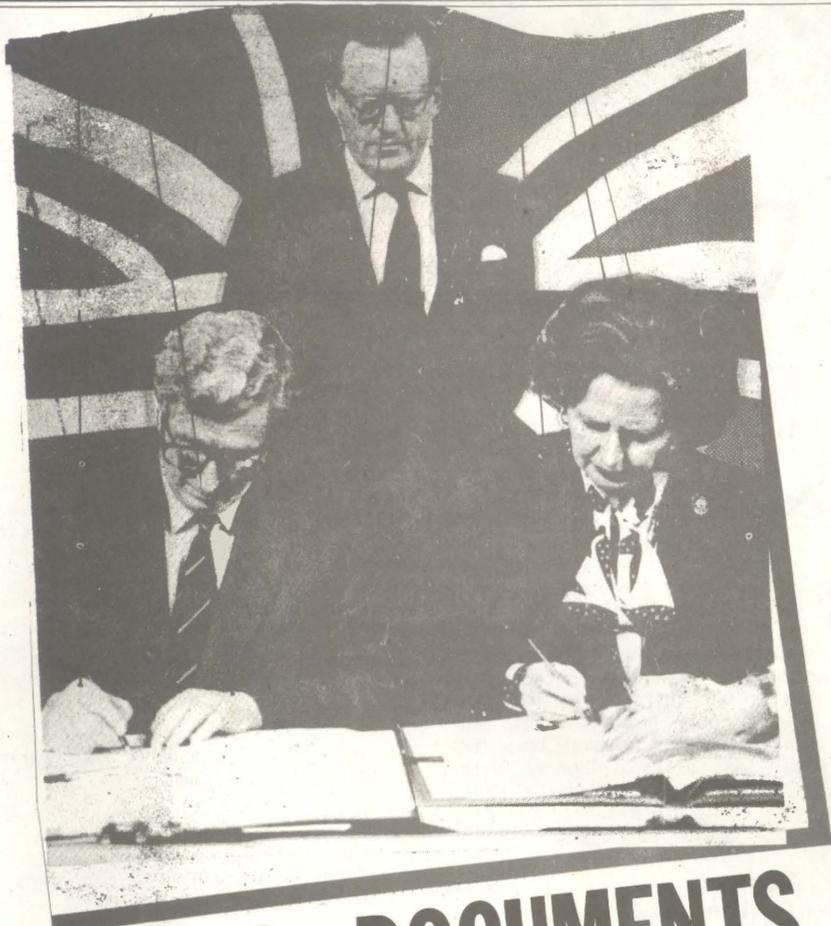
GRIEF AND ANGER

As well as grief at the deaths of the soldiers, a grief which Republicans and their supporters also share, there will be understandable anger among the ordinary British people. That anger will be against the Irish freedom fighters, because most British people are far from the point where they can understand the reality of Britain's enslavement of the North of Ireland.

It is a fact that the nationalist people of the six counties also experience anger, every day, when they see foreign troops on their streets, when their sons and daughters are tortured, imprisoned, shot with live ammunition or plastic bullets. That anger is the spirit of the oppressed nation. It fuels the resistance which will eventually lead to British withdrawal and a time when the British people will understand what their government is doing to Ireland in their name.

And however loud the British politicians shout that they are unmoved in their determination to stay in Ireland, each blow struck by the Irish liberation movement, whether in Belfast or Deal, Dortmund or Ostend, does weaken the support for British occupation among the British people and swells the existing majority who want the troops out. The misfortune for us in Britain is that the British left have so far been incapable of building the strong broad, popular movement for withdrawal which would assist the Irish nationalists to force the British government's hand.





LEAKED DOCUMENTS

It was significant that the main response of the British government to the growing unease about the links between the security forces and the Orange terror gangs was to affirm their full support for the UDR. While the SDLP and even the Dublin government were raising the question of dissolving the sectarian UDR, and new boy, Peter Brooke, was trying to calm the growing storm by gentlemanly diplomacy, Thatcher goosestepped into Northern Ireland to administer a resounding pat on the back to the shaken security forces.

It is clear that, despite a few noises to cover their embarrassment, the British government gives tacit approval to the supply of details of nationalists by the security forces to the sectarian murderers of the UVF and the UDA. This could however lead to the weakening of the Anglo-Irish agreement.

This is particularly the case with the documents leaked to 'The Independent' newspaper, which include details of 25 people living in the Republic. It seems likely that the suspects' photographs and identities were supplied by the Garda to the RUC as part of the notorious "cross-border collaboration" against the Irish freedom fighters. The Dublin government will not be pleased to find that they are seen to be giving indirect assistance to the Loyalist para-militaries by supplying them victims who are citizens of the Republic.

ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY
Criminal Intelligence Section

BULLETIN
FOR POLICE USE ONLY

Bulletin No 13/88



Published with the authority of the Chief Constable.
18th June 1988

STOP — SEARCH — SIGHTINGS

RESTRICTED

RUC H DIV
BROOK SIGHTINGS

on, including (later).

The main advantage of the Anglo-Irish agreement for the British government is the cross-border collaboration between the security forces. It would be poetic justice if the agreement were to collapse because of the way that collaboration has been carried out.

"HE GAVE HIS LIFE TO THE STRUGGLE"

★ In Memory of Seamus Twomey ★

In the last issue of 'Class Struggle' we printed the sad news of the death of Huey P. Newton, the Minister of Defence of the Black Panther Party in the USA. It is with sadness that we mark the death, on 12th September, 1989, of the man who was effectively the Minister of Defence of the Provisional IRA, Volunteer Seamus Twomey.

It was Twomey, along with two other Republican prisoners, who escaped from Mountjoy gaol by helicopter in 1973. A Republican POW wrote of the event:

"One shamefaced screw apologised to the governor and said he thought it was the Minister of Defence arriving. I told him it was our Minister of Defence leaving."

Seamus Twomey was born in Belfast in 1919. He joined Fianna Eireann in 1936 and the IRA in 1937. He and his future wife, Rosie, were both interned during World War Two.

Twomey remained politically active during the relatively peaceful post-war years. But he came to the fore with the beginning of the latest phase of the Troubles. The IRA had been sold out by its leaders, and the men who were to become the Officials and then the Workers' Party had manoeuvred out the true Republicans like Twomey. They had abandoned their arms and left the nationalist community defenceless in the face of the frenzied loyalist attacks of 1969.

Twomey was among those who rebuilt the IRA at that time, leading the new volunteers to fight back against the loyalists and the B Specials. In 1970, Twomey announced that real Republicans must split from the sham organisation which the IRA had become under the leadership of Cathal Goulding and it was this that was to result in the split from which the Provisional IRA was formed.

Seamus Twomey led the Belfast Brigade and served as Chief of Staff in the 1970's. He was arrested in 1973, and following his escape, again played an active part, resuming leadership in 1975 until he was re-arrested in 1977 and spent another five years in prison.

It was under his leadership that the IRA was re-organised into the cell structure which was appropriate to the protracted struggle to wear down British imperialism.

His comrade, Joe Cahill, paid this tribute to him:

"Seamus gave his entire life to the struggle. Without his contribution in 1969, countless nationalist lives would have been lost in the loyalist pogroms. The cause of Irish freedom has lost a great fighter. His one regret was that he could not live to see the day of freedom come."

(We are grateful to 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' from whose longer obituary these lines have been taken. Any inaccuracies or misstatements are of course our own.)

WHERE WE STAND

In this column, we intend to outline some of the main positions of the RCL. We are a small, Marxist-Leninist organisation that, in general, believes that it is in the interests of the vast majority of the world's people to destroy the system of imperialism, in all its forms, that is the root cause of the injustice and inequality in the world today.

We stand in solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggles of the peoples of the world, particularly the revolutionary struggles of the peasants and workers of the Third World.

In Britain, still a major imperialist power, we stand for socialism which alone can begin to answer the needs of the majority of working people and oppressed national minorities. A new multi-national communist party must be built which, armed with Marxism-Leninism, can take forward the people's struggles, developing both the theory and practice of the revolutionary movement in this country.

STRATEGIC ALLIANCE

A basic strategy for change in this country is to build an alliance between the working class and national minority peoples.

Through its exploitation of the Third World, the British bourgeoisie has been able to blunt the contradiction between itself and the working class. Although the working class has been affected, both materially and ideologically by years of reformism, its objective revolutionary nature has not changed and it is in the long-term interests of the majority to struggle for socialism. We must unite with the every-day struggles of the class, around wages, jobs and other issues, in order to build an independent, revolutionary working class movement.



At the same time, there are in Britain national minority communities who face a constant struggle against racism in their lives. Racism is a form of national oppression which links British imperialism's exploitation of the oppressed nations and peoples of the Third World with that of black people here. Within the national minority communities, the working class plays a leading role, but it is possible to unite broad sections of the national minority people in the struggle against racism.

The struggle for the national rights of national minority people can only be resolved by a new socialist society here. The working class and the national minority people face the same enemy and have a common interest in the defeat of British imperialism and the struggle for socialism.

The overthrow of imperialism requires an alliance between the two struggles.

The majority of national minority people are also part of the working class. This forms a strong basis on which the alliance can be built.

A major task for Communists, particularly at this early stage, must

be to win the support of the working class for the struggle against racism and for the national rights of the national minority people. Racism is not in the interests of the working class, but because of Britain's imperialist past and present, it has a strong hold among many people and we need to fight an active struggle against it, as all other forms of bourgeois ideology.

The role of Communists in developing anti-racist and anti-imperialist ideology in the working class is crucial because support for national struggle is part of a revolutionary world view. Communist education is based on the mass line, the repeated combination of the ideas and experiences of the people with the systematised lessons of indirect experience, ensuring that revolutionary ideas are accepted by the people as their own.

In future issues of 'Class Struggle', we will outline other key policies of the League.

There are many important areas where we are still in the process of developing our policies. For example, the above outline does not mention the key question of women's struggles, an area still being debated in the League.

We welcome comments and criticisms from our readers. Correspondence can be sent: c/o New Era Books, 203 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

We apologise to our readers for the sudden change in the format of 'Class Struggle'. This has been forced upon us by printing problems. We would welcome your comments on the new format as, over the next six months, we have to make longer-term plans for the paper and questions of size and style are an important part of this discussion.

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