

CLASS STRUGGLE

VOL.14, NO.10 DEC-JAN 1990-91 30P



**Bring the
troops home**



HERE to STAY

INSIDE

thatcher
farewell?

NHS
going private

philippines
*victory
over bairds*

No War in the Gulf see
10 & 11

CLASS STRUGGLE

To some people, Margaret Thatcher may have been the greatest Prime Minister this century. But she was also the most hated. And after eleven years, she was finally brought down. It was not conflicts in the Tory party, Labour's "loyal" opposition, nor worries about Europe from business circles that finished her, but popular anger.

People had turned against her and all the polls showed that with her as Prime Minister, Labour would win the next election. So the Tory machine swung into motion.

The last eleven years have seen the most open class politics since the Second World War. At a time when the economy was in crisis, the post-war consensus between Labour and Tory was broken, and policies were driven through to make the working class pay the cost of imperialism's crisis. The poll tax was only the latest attack. But people could no longer be fooled. High interest rates; growing unemployment, poverty and homelessness have all made their mark.

The difference is that Thatcher was no longer able to "rally the nation". People were less enthusiastic about a war in the Gulf than they had been about the Malvinas. The Tory attempt to win the Eastbourne election on an anti-IRA platform fell flat in their faces.

And so her former friends dumped her. Now the Tories have a new face and the Labour Party is in disarray. For so long, their policies have been based on being anti-Thatcher that now she is gone, there is little left to differentiate them from the Tories.

There could be no clearer example of the parliamentary system in operation. It will take time to tell whether a new Prime Minister will bring real change. At this time, it seems that there has been a shift to closer unity within the EEC and that reforms will be made to the poll tax.

But few will take seriously the claims being made for the new leadership representing the Tory's new classless society. Whichever party is in power, the system still rests on the exploitation of the working class, as it does on the peoples of the oppressed nations, including the Irish nation and national minority people within Britain.

POLITICAL PAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE

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'Live from London....'

"I'm reporting to you tonight from the entrance to Downing Street, residence of Britain's Prime Minister. It seems hard to believe that merely eight months ago, the guardians of the Thatcher regime, the dreaded Metropolitan Police, beat hundreds of protestors opposed to the hated Poll Tax, just yards from where I'm standing now.

government, and it was when he was finally driven from office that the crisis which finally brought Thatcher down began.

"News of the resignation of the Leader spread like wildfire, but the people of this small West European country are cautious in their celebrations. Many suspect that those who carried out the

they were all compelled to vote for it not that long ago by the dictator of Downing Street.

"As the people of Britain look forward to the restoration of democracy, many questions remain. Will the officials of the old regime be brought to justice? Will the poor, the black, the single mothers, the

"She's resigned..."

Announcement on the London Underground

"There's a great sense of loss.... we all felt safe with her at the helm. I do hope now she doesn't become bitter and upset"

Harrogate Tory

"Good riddance"

Dulwich postman



"Over the last eleven years, Margaret Thatcher dealt mercilessly with those who stood in her way. Local government, trade unions, nationalised industries - all got the Thatcher treatment. Opposition parties were reduced to pale reflections of the ruling party, impotently criticising the style of the Leader while aspiring to little more than introduce modest adjustments to the system she has directed for so long. Even her own associates were not safe. One by one, those who helped her to power in the Party were ruthlessly purged. By this summer, only one of her original Cabinet of 1979 remained in the

coup against Thatcher are simply seeking a way of sustaining this, the last surviving, one-party

dictatorship in the region, behind a facade of change. Yet clearly, all know that change is inevitable, as, in the course of the power struggle in the Party, each of the rivals tries to distance himself from the most detested of Thatcher's measures, the Poll Tax. The monolith has cracked. As one member of the ruling Party after another places on record his long-standing reservations about, or even opposition to, this tax, it seems almost impossible to believe that

pensioners, at last see the end of the long night of Thatcherism? As he contemplates the possibility of at last assuming office, will Neil Kinnock, head of what many here came to regard as a tame opposition, present himself to voters as he is, or will he wear a toupee? To these, and other imponderables, this reporter will no doubt return as the drama unfolds.

"This is Robert Hardcliffe, of Channel Seven News, speaking to you live, from London."

.....

Health Service: RACING INTO CHAOS



Manchester health workers recycle government NHS reform propaganda as waste material.

As the National Health Service (NHS) rushes headlong into the disaster of its 'rebirth' of April 1991, there are many battles being fought and some encouraging local successes. At a time when the Tories seem invincible and deaf to public opinion, small battles won are important and encourage people to keep up the fight.

The NHS is without doubt racing into chaos. The White Paper which went through Parliament earlier in the year, has set April 1991 as the date when the new system of financing health services will begin. Ready or not, it must all happen on April 1st. The new system involves health authorities buying whatever services it can afford for its population and hospitals, opted out or not, selling their services to the highest bidder. It is generally acknowledged that it has not been possible to price health care accurately in this way, especially as there have been no pilot projects, and computer systems will not be up and running. The newspapers are regularly running stories illustrating the madness of it all.

For example last month Mary Wylie, chief executive of the West Essex Health Authority, resigned rather than implement the £1.6 million cuts needed to balance the books by April (a requirement for all authorities). In order to make these savings the authority has agreed to restrict Accident and Emergency services, close a

maternity ward, cut family planning services by 25% and ban the employment of agency nurses to keep services going. There are already over 6,000 people on the district's in-patient waiting list. Other reports involve budget-holding GP's who are complaining that they have had no information on hospital service costs and are unable to prepare their budgets for next year. The majority of GPs have rejected budget-holding, but are feeling the strain of hospital cutbacks.

PLANNED RUNDOWN

Private practice is booming, and the cynical amongst us assume that chaos in the NHS is planned chaos so that private medicine becomes a major sector in patients' desperate need for health care, rather than by any unpopular government decisions. Hammersmith Hospital in London hit the headlines recently by opening a new private ward which had been almost entirely funded by NHS money. An allocation of £300,000 had been made to the hospital to build a ward with isolation rooms for NHS Aids and leukaemia patients. Money had also been raised by leukaemia support groups. This money was used to rebuild a ward, closed in 1988 due to lack of funds, and utilise its equipment plus new additions. With the building work completed, doctors and specially recruited nurses were told that there was no money available to run it, so it was further upgraded and opened as a private ward.

Talk about a blatant use of NHS money to fund private medicine!

FIGHTING BACK

But gloomy though all this is, there have been some active campaigns against some of the reforms, especially the opting-out of local hospitals to form self-governing trusts.

The South West has had the greatest number of hospitals put forward for opting out and has seen perhaps the strongest local campaigns in opposition to this move. Barnstable and Taunton, for example, saw consultants, nurses, junior doctors, GP's and general public pressure groups all opposed to the proposals which had been put forward by management.

In West Somerset, many public meetings were held, local polls and petitions organised and local press inundated with letters of protest. In an area not renowned for its political activity or rebellion, this has been a sign of the great importance people put on their health care and defending the NHS. Although we are still waiting for the final decision from the Secretary of State, there is a feeling of optimism and victory in the air - a victory which will encourage people that they do have power if organised and united, even under the Tories.

In fact, the campaign already seems to have had an effect on people's thinking as there has been a terrific outcry now against the Somerset education cuts. It is proposed to abolish school meals and education to rising fives, and cut back on special needs and music teaching. In response to this attack, parents and teachers have organised together and amongst other things demonstrated on a huge march through the town.

It is very important that people don't lie down and let the Tories trample all over them. Victories can be won and, even if they are small victories, they are worthwhile. They help people to open their eyes and minds to life beyond the present repression...even if it is a long way off! ■

Mandy's Diary

Nov.13th: Two mothers who were refused childminding fees while one went out to work and the other attended a vocational training course took their case against the Department of Social Security to the Court of Appeal today. They are asking the Appeal Court to overturn rulings which prevented them deducting childcare costs from their income when calculating their benefit. Because of having to pay childcare costs, the women are no better off working than they would be on Income Support. They argue that the government is in breach of the European Community's directive which bars discrimination on grounds of sex. I wish them every success but it seems unlikely they will be allowed to win. This is a test case which, if successful, could end a poverty trap affecting one million single parents.

Nov.14th: The Equal Opportunities Commission has at long last spoken out about the inequalities in pay between men and women. For the last ten years, the hourly earnings of women have remained about 74% of those of men, and there is no sign of improvement. The Commission is calling for an Equal Treatment Act to consolidate and reform the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts. One of its proposals is that decisions of industrial tribunals upholding claims to equal pay should be applied automatically to all employees doing broadly similar work.

Nov.15th: The 7th annual survey of British social attitudes states that more than half of voters are in favour of increasing taxes to pay for better social welfare. Support for this view has risen from 32% in 1983 to 56% today. 61% of these chose the NHS as their first priority for extra government spending, 20% chose education. This is all very well. But I wonder whether these voters realise that most of their taxes are not in fact spent on services at all, but on things like repayments of debts and so-called 'defence'.

Nov.20th: Surprise, surprise! Women are not as keen as the government predicted to name the absent fathers of their children in order to get maintenance payments. They had estimated that 95% would co-operate but now admit that the figure is more like 75%.

They are either very stupid or very callous about the genuine problems women face in this situation. At present, the only circumstances where exceptions are allowed are rape and incest. When it was suggested to the Social Services Secretary that women whose divorce was granted because of unreasonable behaviour involving violence should also be exempt, he replied that he "did not wish to create a situation where somebody had only to say that they feared violence for the absent father to be let off". Well, he has made it very clear where his priorities lie!

Nov.23rd: Patterns of work which benefit women are not being introduced as quickly as we might think. A recent report from the Institute of Manpower Studies (the name speaks for itself!) 'Retaining women employees: measures to counteract the labour shortage' states that the private sector is more likely to adopt ad-hoc practices to meet particular situations than to establish new policies. Only 52% of the employing organisations surveyed were flexible over working hours; optional part-time working was allowed by 26%; flexi-time was offered by 24% and job-sharing by 18%. Only 8% allowed working from home, 6% term-time working and 4% career-breaks. Just 3% of the organisations provided a creche, 2% a holiday playscheme and 1% a childcare allowance. There is still the assumption that men will pursue careers regardless of marriage and children, while women will work erratically at whatever they can get between family commitments. (Information from 'Everywoman', December 1990).

Nov.30th: There doesn't seem to have been a lot of news this month. What news there is has been eclipsed by the Tory leadership crisis. I've got to hand it to them: they managed to put on a very good show. They ditched Maggie Thatcher with the minimum of fuss, presented a united front and ended up ahead of Labour in the opinion polls. There was that minor hiccup when they realised they hadn't got any women in the Cabinet, so they hastily appointed one so as not to appear sexist. It just goes to show their total disregard for half the population. But wouldn't it be great if women's oppression



could be so easily resolved? I would have thought that the last eleven years have proved above all else that having a woman at the top does not mean a better deal for women. However many women they pull into the Cabinet, nothing will change until our 'representatives' in government really do represent our views. I cannot think of one single policy introduced in the last eleven years which I have agreed with. Neither can I think of one which has benefited women.

One thing we have gained from the change of leadership: they are having to review the Poll Tax. And they will have to make a thorough job of it if they hope to win the next election. Mass non-payment is beginning to achieve success.

Words are cheap~

CS correspondent

"It doesn't really matter what you do. This lot won't listen. You are just wasting your time. You might as well pay up and avoid the hassle."

Those were typical views of many people who believed there was little point in fighting against the poll tax, even though personally they disagreed entirely with it.

Judging by what a number of leading Tory politicians said during the recent campaign to elect a new party leader, it is clear that those views were wrong.

In his drive to become leader, Heseltine committed his campaign to a thorough review of the poll tax. Speaking to the Tory faithful in Paisley before the recent by-elections, he said: "In order to secure the election of the Conservative Party, it is now important to conduct a fundamental review of the community charge." Then he went on to note that if it were to remain the basis for the funding of local government, its reform would need to reflect people's ability to pay. If taxation was to be acceptable, then for him it had to be seen to be fair.

BOUNCING WITHOUT THINKING

In his challenge for the leadership, John Major was quoted as saying: "We were bounced into it (i.e. the poll tax: Ed.) quickly because there was such a fuss about rates in Scotland and we were bounced without thinking because of the political fuss."

Two days later, Lawson denied that the Cabinet had ever been bounced in that way by Mrs Thatcher. According to his version of the events back in 1985, he had warned that the poll tax would be completely unworkable and politically catastrophic. His preference was for a property-based tax for he believed that taxes on property were both cheap to collect and difficult to avoid.

NON-PAYMENT

The fact that reform of the poll tax became the main issue in the Tory leadership campaign was an indication of how great an impact non-payment has had. How much attention would have been given to the issue if people had only followed the advice offered by the Labour Party on how to oppose the poll tax?

Now that the issue is on the domestic agenda of the Cabinet, it is essential to keep it there. This can only mean that the campaign should go on.

Right from the beginning it was clear that the poll tax was going to be both unpopular and costly to administer. This has been borne out by the most recent national survey carried out by the Audit Commission.

It showed that in November, four million people had still paid nothing. Only 48% of the

Strathclyde region, poll tax payers face a £40 surcharge to make up for those who have not paid. The council is owed around £72 million for the last financial year and this year it is nearly £100 million already.

In the Edinburgh-based Lothian area, the council is still owed £30 million for last year and £40 million for this year. Now their finance officials have just presented an additional £5 million bill to administer the charge, bringing the 1991 collection costs to £17 million, £34 on

Poll Tax bills are not



money due by October had been collected compared to 70% under the old rating system. In addition, two out of three local councils had been obliged to borrow in order to make up the shortfall and administrative costs had more than doubled since the abolition of the rates. It also forecast that the cost of borrowing and the high default rate, poll tax bills could go up by around 20% next year!

SCOTLAND

In parts of Scotland, the whole system of local government is now reaching breaking point. At least 1.2 million people, around one third of all those liable to pay the poll tax have now been sent summary warrants by the Sheriff's Office.

In the Glasgow-based

each poll tax bill. The council needs to spend more money, employing bailiffs to try to get money out of the ever-growing numbers of non-payers.

As one local councillor noted: "The worry is that public resistance to the tax will get stronger - the higher the bills, the greater the problem and more tax dodgers."

But for those who are fundamentally opposed to the poll tax, this should not be a worry. It is the way to defeat it!

TWO YEARS TO WAIT

Heseltine is now talking in terms of two years before any new system can be introduced. As Jean McFadden, President of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, said: "It is about time the government realised that the system has broken down."

Meanwhile, as the politicians talk and promise that things will be changed in the future, thousands are still being summonsed to court and given liability orders. In England, the first bailiffs are now being sent out.

The first person to be sent to prison for non-payment has had his name written into the history book. Bryan Wright, a self-employed bricklayer from Grantham, has been sent down for 21 days for not paying. He lives at home with his parents and two brothers. Last year, the rates cost them £300. This year their total poll tax bill was £1385.

Words are cheap. Poll Tax bills are not.

JUSTICE FOR THE TOTTENHAM THREE

In March 1987, Mark Braithwaite, Engin Raghup and Winston Silcott were convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment, with a recommended 30-year minimum for Winston Silcott. They had been found guilty of taking part in the killing of PC Blakelock during "civil disturbances" on North London's Broadwater Farm housing estate in 1985. They were convicted on the flimsiest possible basis: ambiguous and self-contradictory statements allegedly made to the police without the benefit of legal advice and after long periods of isolation in custody. The disturbances in which PC Blakelock was killed broke out after Mrs Cynthia Jarrett died of a heart attack as a result of an illegal police search of her home. Fighting broke out when police sealed off the Broadwater Farm estate and prevented a protest march to the police station by local residents. Local anger at the killing of Mrs Jarrett and the history of police racism in Tottenham were largely ignored by the national media as the hunt for the killers commenced.

THE INVESTIGATION

Over a quarter of all the homes on the estate were raided, and 369 people were arrested. Perhaps angered by this, or fearing reprisals from Blakelock's colleagues or killers, any eye witnesses there may have been, did not come forward. No forensic evidence was recovered, and none of the 1,000-plus police photos identified anyone involved in the killing. The police concluded that they must get the killers to incriminate themselves and each other. The majority of those detained were denied legal representation. They were kept isolated from any contact with the outside world and questioned aggressively over a period of several days. Psychological evidence shows that under these circumstances most people, especially the young and those with learning difficulties, are likely to agree to suggestions made by their interrogators.

Jason Hill: One such child was Jason Hill, a 13 year old arrested along with his whole family on suspicion of burglary. He was repeatedly questioned without his parents or solicitor present until he broke down and made up a story based on news reports he had seen, naming Winston Silcott.

Winston Silcott: Winston was arrested in October 1985 and taken to Paddington Green police station, usually reserved for suspected terrorists. He was interrogated personally by the officer in command of the investigation, Det. Chief Supt. Melvin. Despite repeated requests, he was not allowed to see a solicitor. No evidence has ever been produced to back up the much-reported allegation that he was the ringleader, or indeed to show that he was even on Broadwater Farm on the night in question. The sole basis of the case against him was the alleged remarks: "You ain't got no evidence against me. Those kids will never go to court. You can't keep me away from them."

The Trial: Jason was one of three juveniles originally tried alongside Winston, Engin and Mark. The case against the three juveniles utterly collapsed. Jason's statements were ruled inadmissible and the case against him was dismissed. This ruling was not reported in the press. What was reported was Jason's story of a mob led by Winston Silcott who planned to cut off PC Blakelock's head and put it on a pole.

Mark Braithwaite: Mark was arrested in February 1986, four months after the events. He too was denied his right to legal advice. He complained of feeling unwell and was at one stage taken to hospital. He eventually told police he had struck an officer with an iron bar. There were no wounds on PC Blakelock's body which corresponded to this "confession". He said in court that he told the police what they wanted to hear because he felt so unwell and wanted to get out. Since the trial it has emerged that he suffers from severe claustrophobia. In these circumstances, his statements are likely to have been unreliable.

Engin Raghup: Engin was arrested in October 1985. He was also not allowed a solicitor. He said he had left the estate long before the killing. The police then made threats against his wife and child, and questioned him so aggressively that he agreed to allegations of affray. He was re-arrested several weeks later and charged with murder, convicted on the basis of "joint enterprise" - despite the British government's condemnation of the identical doctrine of "common purpose" used against the Sharpeville Six in South Africa. Since the trial, it has emerged that

he is of borderline sub-normal IQ and therefore his statements are unreliable.

BRITISH JUSTICE?

The cases of the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six have revealed that the British legal system is unwilling to admit its mistakes. They would rather let innocent people languish in jail than undermine public confidence in British justice. The situation in English law which allows for convictions on the basis of uncorroborated evidence alone is almost unique. The Home Office has refused to re-open the case until there is "new evidence", despite the unfairness of the original trial and the unsafe convictions.

THE FAMILIES' CAMPAIGN

Following the events on Broadwater Farm, a mass campaign was launched by the community on the Broadwater Farm estate to defend those who had been arrested. Out of that mass campaign the Tottenham Three Families' Campaign was formed in May 1990. Bringing together the relatives, lawyers and supporters of the three, it is a single issue organisation dedicated to securing the release and exoneration of these innocent men.

What You Can Do:

The campaign needs the support of a broad number of people in writing letters to MPs to the Home Secretary and in other activities. Contact the Tottenham Three Families Campaign for more information and details of activities: 247a West Green Road, London N15 5ED.

All information in the above article comes from material published by the campaign.



Stop Press:

On 4th December, it was announced that the case of Engin Raghup would be sent back to the Court of Appeal. This was as a result of a psychologist, Dr Eric Ward, now admitting that he had made a mistake during the trial. Raghup's solicitor said Ward's statement to that effect would form one part of a submission to the Court of Appeal. The first step, perhaps, in what will no doubt still be a long struggle for the Tottenham Three.

'All black people they are

The people of Birmingham showed their support for three black women faced with deportation on 24th November. On a grey, cold afternoon, damp and drizzly, their bright banners and placards gave colour to the streets of Handsworth, lively centre of the black communities of the city. Hundreds of demonstrators poured heart into the shopping and scurrying crowds with shouted slogans that resounded in the autumn air - Sonia Malhi has a right, Here to stay, Here to fight; Sheila Surju must stay, Deportations no way. Prakesh, she's a warrior, All black people they are warriors!

The three women each have individual stories to tell of their oppression and the threat they face. Sonia and Prakesh both suffered domestic violence, as a result of which their marriages broke down and they fell foul of the immigration rules. Sheila Surju is seven months pregnant with a child who will be born a British citizen, but still the authorities have decided that the primary purpose of her marriage was to gain entry to the UK.

But all three women face a common oppression - both as women and as black people. And all three are united in refusing to lie down in the face of racist laws and are determinedly fighting back.

At the end of the march, a rally took place where all three women spoke and we record their speeches here:

Dharmowtee (Sheila) Surju

Good afternoon, friends -

Thank you all for allowing me a few words. I am very pleased and extremely encouraged by your show of support.

My name is Sheila. I come from Mauritius. Ever since I landed at Heathrow on 12th April 1990, I have lived in constant fear of being removed by force from this country - even though I am married to a British citizen. The threat from the Immigration office still hangs over me.

Over the last two weeks, immigration officers have repeatedly phoned my solicitor asking if I am fit to travel by plane, in spite of them knowing that I am seven months pregnant. This is sheer harassment, cruel and insensitive, inhuman.

I have been under great stress. I am very worried about the birth of my baby. This child, who will be born in about two months from now, will be a British child, born here in Britain. By putting me under so much stress, the Home Office is putting the life of my child in great danger, right at birth, or even before birth.

My husband came to me and asked me to marry him - and I accepted. To the Home Secretary, I ask - What have I done wrong? How can you expect me to live, away and separated from my child and husband? What is the meaning of 'married'? Are you trying to abolish marriages?

If you, along with the government, are saying that you stand for family values and are committed to them, then you should allow me to live here with my child and my husband, together, in marriage.

Friends, I appeal to you to support our campaign. Thank you.

Sonia Malhi

(As interpreted by a West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign member)

Sonia came from India in 1983 for a visit and later married and settled with her husband in this country. The marriage, however, was not successful and she was left with no option but to escape its misery and violence after making a suicide attempt. Having faced the uncertainty and insecurity of a broken marriage, Sonia eventually found an alternative life with the help of her sister's family in Tamworth. Her sister has supported Sonia

emotionally and financially since the marital breakdown because during this period Sonia's parents and brother died. But Sonia's alternative form of life with her sister's family has not been acceptable to the Home Office and she has been served with a deportation order to return to India. After a lot of public pressure, her Tory MP agreed to make representations to the Home Office to allow Sonia's stay in Britain on compassionate grounds. But, to date, we are awaiting a reply.

Sonia, Prakesh and Sheila, are only three cases the West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign is fighting at the moment. There are many more that exist without coming to public notice. At least 250 black people are deported from Britain every month, whilst numerous white Americans, Australians and South Africans have no restrictions imposed upon their stay.

Black people have been denied the choice of where and with whom they can live, and yet this is a country that upholds the so-called 'permanent' ideals of individual freedom and civil rights. This is also a country which purports to uphold and protect the family as the hub of society. But such ideals seem to be reserved for white families only. Black families in Britain live under constant threat of racist and sexist immigration legislation which deny us the choice of abode. Our family privacy is under constant surveillance and intrusion and we live under a perpetual fear of being separated from our loved ones.

As women our bodies have been violated by the use of the virginity tests and our political and legal status has been made dependent upon our social and sexual relationships with others, not upon ourselves as individuals.

As black people, we are denied the basic human right of deciding and choosing where and with whom we reside. Tory and Labour have been equally responsible in meting out this injustice against us.

Sonia's and Prakesh's marriages have broken down. But why must they return to a place of insecurity where they have no support? Why is Sonia not allowed to continue living with her sister where her family and friends are all

warriors'

more than willing to provide her succour and support? White women's marital relations also break down. But they are not punished by deportation orders. They have the right to build new lives - a right black women are denied. Sonia should have the right to build her life in the country of her choice. She is fighting for this right as are Sheila and Prakesh. With your support we can win.

Thank you for showing your support today and we hope you will continue to do so by writing to the Home Office expressing your horror at these practices.

Thank you very much.

Prakesh Chaurimootoo

Dear Comrades,

My name is Prakesh Chaurimootoo. I thank you all for attending the demonstration. I wish to tell you a little about my case.

I am a Mauritian citizen. A British citizen married me and brought me and my son to England.

Soon after, I experienced domestic violence. I had to leave him and seek sanctuary - sanctuary at my brother's house in Birmingham.

Now I am working in Birmingham Social Services Department and I have rented a house where I live with my son.

The Home Office is telling me that my marriage broke down within one year and I have to go back to Mauritius with my son.

I like my job which is helping people. My son is settled well in his school. Both of us have tried to rebuild a life here.

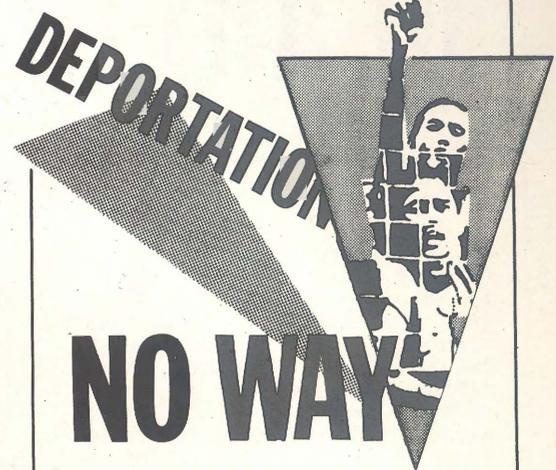
I have no-one who will care for me in Mauritius. I have suffered domestic violence. My marriage has broken down. Despite all that, the Home Office want to send me back.

Why do they want to send me back? Is it because I am black? Is it because I am a helpless, destitute woman? What did they expect me to do? To suffer the violence and the abuse directed to me and my son by my husband? Is that how they expect a woman to be treated in this country before she is allowed to stay in this country?

I think this is extremely sexist and racist. Therefore I urge you all to support me, to support all three of us to fight the deportations.

I urge you to write to the Home Office, sign the petition, lobby your local MP and help us fight this human rights violation, against this racist and sexist government.

I want to thank you once again for your support and for your continued support.



Sonia, Sheila and Prakesh are only three cases the West Midlands Anti-Deportation Campaign is fighting at the moment... At least 250 black people are deported from Britain every month.

Romela Must Stay

Romela Deonanan came to this country from Trinidad in 1985. Until 1989, she worked as a domestic worker for a family on Tyneside. She worked long hours without pay and was kept a virtual prisoner in the home. She was badly beaten by members of the family and is scarred for life, physically and mentally. As a result, she now has recurring nightmares, migraines and sleeplessness. Medical opinion states that her only chance of recovery is with the continued support of the friends she has here and the specialist counselling she is now receiving.

Romela's visa expired in 1986. It was not renewed by her employers who kept her

passport from her. She is now classified as an 'overstayer'. When she escaped from this family in 1989, she applied for permission to stay on compassionate grounds. Her application has been turned down and if she does not leave, she is liable to deportation.

For further information, contact: Romela Deonanan Support Committee, c/o Newcastle Community Law Centre, 87 Adelaide Terrace, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE4 8BB. Tel: 091-2731210.

Racist Attack

Mrs Kumari has faced continuous racist attacks since February by her white neighbours in Tyseley, Birmingham.

In July, neighbours attacked her in large numbers in the presence of the police. Mrs Kumari was arrested for assault.

The local housing officer turned up at the police station and coerced her into signing a paper to give up her tenancy. Immediately, she was treated as homeless but she has not been rehoused.

On 29th November, Mrs Kumari was brought before Solihull Magistrates Court on the charge of assault occasioning actual bodily harm. Seven white people who had attacked her were also before the court. They were bound over to keep the peace and the charges against them dismissed. Mrs Kumari's case now proceeds to the Crown Court.

DEADLINE JANUARY 15th

WHY THEN ?

War clouds still hang over the Gulf as 'Class Struggle' goes to press. At the bidding of the USA, the United Nations Security Council has set a deadline of January 15th, 1991, for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. This, apparently, would give ample time for final efforts at a peaceful settlement of the Gulf crisis to be made, before the go-ahead for a military assault on Iraqi forces is given.

That would be a charitable explanation. But there are other reasons why the USA, Britain and their allies might want to allow such a long interval before going to war. In fact, from a military-political viewpoint, there are clear limits to what would be a good time to fight.

Military strategists have concluded that a war in the Gulf which involves Western forces must be fought in the winter, if at all possible. Or, at least, its decisive phase must be. In spite of the hundreds of billions of dollars squandered on military equipment over the years, the western forces found that much of their equipment's performance was severely impaired in the hot desert conditions of the Gulf.

Dust and sand penetrated into engines, making frequent servicing essential. Some US helicopters were found to need servicing so frequently that it was only safe to put them into the air for half an hour at a time. The desert sun caused engines to overheat quickly, and sophisticated electronic equipment, including guidance systems for rockets, to malfunction, meaning that, even if the western forces achieved surprise in an attack to knock out Iraq's air force and missile systems, there could be no guarantee that their weaponry would function sufficiently well to destroy Iraqi air power as an effective strategic element. Furthermore, there were the problems of soldiers themselves functioning in the heat, particularly if Iraq did resort to gas warfare. In the sun, troops could only wear chemical warfare protection suits for ten minutes before collapsing from the effects of the heat. Yet the effects of the types of nerve gases

possessed by Iraq would linger for periods ranging from a couple of hours to over two weeks!

Nothing much could be done about the sand and dust. But winter would bring the temperature down considerably. Then there are political factors to take into account. Iraq's flagrant aggression against Kuwait put it in the wrong as far as the overwhelming majority of the world was concerned and the USA has sought to capitalise upon this by trying (with great success) to convert condemnation of Iraq into support for the deployment and use of US forces in the Gulf.

avoided. Bullets, shells and rockets would have made a poor accompaniment to Christmas dinner, which might have upset voters unduly. So, it made sense to get the western holiday season well out of the way before any fighting took place.

But a festival also provides a deadline for the time when the decisive phase of any war needs to be over. That is during the month of Ramadan, in the Islamic calendar, when hundreds of thousands of Muslim pilgrims from around the world will converge on the holy city of Mecca. Among them will be many who feel extremely hostile to the presence of any non-Muslim army in Arabia. The Saudi leadership is known to be very jittery about the prospect of a large number of pilgrims who are critical of it arriving in any case. But if they were to come when Saudi Arabia was in the midst of a war with Muslim Iraq, fighting at the side of the USA, then its position would be even more difficult. Ramadan begins at the end of March, so, for those set upon a war with Iraq, the "window of opportunity" is the period from the middle of January until late March. From then on, the capacity of the western forces in the region to mount a successful offensive with minimal casualties will deteriorate sharply.

INSTABILITY

While the US and British governments appear set on course for war, there are also those who are working to avert one. The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), which risks losing a lot whichever way the Gulf crisis is resolved, is trying to find ways to obtain a western withdrawal from the Gulf, followed by an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, with some sort of face-saving arrangements for both sides.

The USA and Britain have shown no interest to date. But some states have listened sympathetically to the PLO's arguments. In the Arab world, popular hostility to a war with Iraq has made some anti-Iraqi regimes become more cautious about joining in the endorsement of the US-British approach. Syria, for example, claims that its forces have

THE GREAT DISCOVERY



The US wants to keep backing for its actions as broad as possible, both because of the possible repercussions of the Gulf crisis and as part of a longer term aim of enforcing an international order which corresponds to US interests. This dictated a certain delay in the moves towards military action to allow time to negotiate with cautious western powers (such as France) over the next steps, as well as the Soviet Union and China.

It is bad for a government to have a war during the Christmas period, if it can be

only gone to Saudi Arabia to defend its security, not to join in an attack upon Iraq.

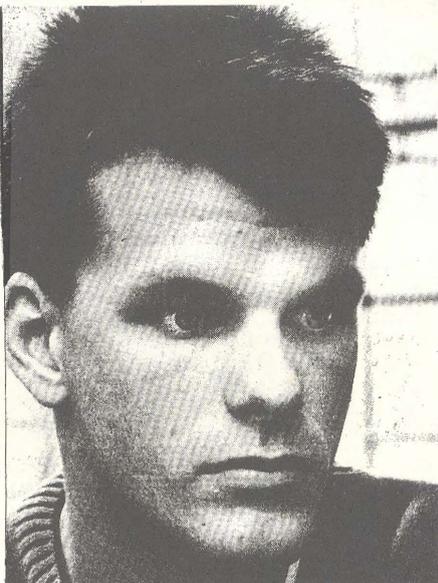
Meanwhile, the crisis, and particularly the deployment of western forces, is having repercussions in the Gulf states. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the radio stations in the United Arab Emirates and some other states carried on with their regular programmes, as if nothing had happened. The rulers of these states were plainly too terrified of what Saddam Hussein might do to them to speak up against Iraq's action forcefully.

It was only when the USA promised to commit troops to the region that they recovered their voices. This has undoubtedly shown these regimes to be utterly dependent on the West, and thoroughly delegitimised them, bringing their survival into question. Paradoxically, the US-British moves, which were said to be aimed at protecting the area's stability, have had the effect of undermining it.

In Saudi Arabia, the state censors have had to loosen their grip on the press, and there has been a certain relaxation of repression. It would have looked bad to have had a host of public executions, for example, during a time when the West was upholding the Saudi regime as something worth defending.

In November, a group of women took advantage of this situation to drive cars in Riyadh, the Saudi capital, which was something the religious police had always stopped before when individuals tried to do it. (Saudi Arabia has religious police who supposedly work to enforce observance of Muslim law and religious practices.) This time, the women were victimised after the incident and the authorities bewailed this sign of western influence and moral decadence. But if it had not been for the particular conditions prevailing now, the demonstration would not have taken place and this issue would not have been publicised abroad.

Most Kuwaitis want changes in their state when the Iraqi occupation is ended. Those arguing for democracy have been strengthened by the behaviour of many members of the ruling al-Sabah family, who live off their wealth at a safe distance from the potential war zone, while calling for war. Meanwhile, those Kuwaitis who stayed behind in their country take the main burden of resisting Iraq.



A Marine who has said farewell to arms.

ANTI-WAR MOVEMENTS

While public opinion polls suggest that most Americans would back their government's going to war with Iraq, the Bush administration is worried about just how solid that support is. That is another reason for wanting to appear to have strong international support. It can be used to reassure the public at home. But there are significant sections of the public who are anti-war. A conservative minority are just anti-war because they don't believe in, as they see it, Americans getting killed fighting for one group of Arab dictators against another Arab dictator. But most of the peace movement is made up of people who do not believe in going to war for cheap oil or to assert American power where it is not wanted.

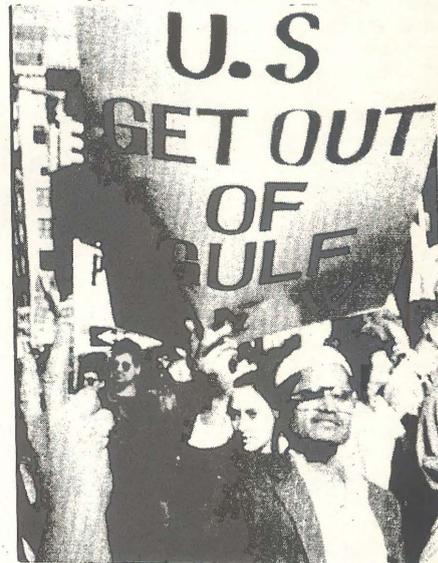
Across the USA, young people of military service age are playing a big part in protests, and have called on veterans of the anti-Vietnam war movement for advice and support.

In Britain, the anti-war movement is less developed and has less support from figures within the establishment parties than the movement in the USA does. Given the comparative sizes of the US and British contingents in the Gulf, some Americans thought that Mrs Thatcher's warlike posture amounted to a readiness on Britain's part to fight Iraq to the last American. The anti-war movement here still needs to gather support. But, typically, the left is divided over what policy to take, and expends much of its energy on damning others campaigning against war in the Gulf. Some argue against even raising the issue of Iraqi withdrawal from

Kuwait, and denounce those who stand for this, on the basis that the imperialist powers of the West call for Iraqi withdrawal. This is a particularly stupid attitude. Presumably, by the same logic, we should oppose measures to protect the ozone layer because the imperialists now support them! An invasion is an invasion. Occupation is occupation. Denial of a people's right to self-determination should never be acceptable, whoever is responsible for it, and whoever is on the other side.

This is not to deny that the most important thing at present is to try and prevent war and to get western troops out. That is the main objective now. But the public which the peace movement seeks to reach is surely capable of grasping the concepts of both western withdrawal and the restoration of Kuwaiti independence as being goals to be worked for without getting confused into supporting a war drive.

Fortunately, local anti-war groups are mobilising in a large number of localities where the dogmatic sects have no support and so are able to



Protesters on the streets of New York.

get something constructive done. While it may not be possible for the anti-war movement to stop the war drive, by the work it does now, it can contribute to the discrediting of the warhorses of the government and its loyal opposition on the Labour front bench when the devastating consequences of a war become apparent. That will help to prevent further adventures of this kind in the future and will bring any war in the Gulf to a quicker end.

WESTERN TROOPS OUT OF THE GULF

A PENNY A BAG

— campaigning on homework

West Yorkshire Homeworking
Group.

This is a book which is based on women's own voices and experiences of homeworking and then enriches this information by placing it in an international context. It is a practical book, describing successful organisations and campaigns both here and abroad and has a strong and positive feel to it. It is a good example of putting into practice the feminist slogan "the personal is political". It does not see women as passive subjects but delivers them alive and kicking from the invisibility of homework.

The sheer numbers of homeworkers discovered when any one small area or trade is properly investigated is amazing. For example, in the Cypriot community in London over 20,000 women are employed in the clothing industry and about 60% of these are homeworkers. In Japan, there are 180,000 women outworkers in the electrical component industry alone. In Britain we still have no idea of total national numbers. Women of all nationalities and backgrounds engage in homework for a variety of reasons— childcare problems and racism amongst them. The tremendous variety of jobs done at home also surprised me: sewing of all kinds, packing, knitting, typing, making toys, electronic work, and many more unusual tasks.

PAY AND CONDITIONS

The rates of pay are insulting. The average earnings of women homeworkers interviewed in Kirklees, in the summer of 1989, worked out at 82 pence an hour. In April of 1989 average earning of male workers nationally were £6.29 an hour. Although some of the work was unskilled and depended on speed and concentration, there was some highly skilled tasks which were totally deskilled and denigrated by the pay rates. Home knitting, for example, where a woman was paid £4 to knit a Fair Isle jumper, and machining of

leather, and complicated circuit boards. However, there were some women paid wage council rates...they only subsidised the employer by providing their own premises, heating, lighting etc!

The sections on who profits and the international dimensions contained a lot of information and some analysis of how national and multinational companies use homeworkers, both in the past and looking to the future, in order to boost both profits and flexibility. Many such companies, such as C&A, Littlewoods, Toyoto, depend on subcontracting: "International subcontracting is an important feature of homework and characterised by a long chain of contractors. Each contractor in the chain receives a commission which in some countries is 20-30% of the unit price. This means that for a baby's dress, for example, which sells for \$15.00 in a department store in North America or Western Europe, the local producer who made it may get less than \$0.10". Firms such as Benetton work on the principle of having materials and manpower "just in time, not just in case". Benetton have 2000 employees on their payroll but provide work for another 6000 via subcontractors. Homeworkers, especially in the 'home' country are ideal for this flexibility, with sales, ordering and dispatch being highly centralised and computerised.

CAMPAIGNING

The book both opens and closes on the practicalities of campaigning. The West Yorkshire Homeworking Group have produced and used Fact Packs and exhibitions, had public meetings, involved the local authorities, all with the prime aim of making homework visible and involving the homeworkers themselves in any action or campaign around the issues.

It has uncovered a wide range of views and feelings that women have about their work and which must be the jumping off point for improvement: "Some are



grateful for the work they do at home and see it as a hobby. Others are angry at what they perceive as their exploitation by big and small companies. Most are dissatisfied with the pay, sometimes angry. Some are happy to work at home, others would like outside work. Some want to work at the things they know best, sewing or knitting, while others would like to learn new skills or start their own business."

The book also draws some lessons from other countries. From Italy: "Italian women homeworkers experience is a lesson that a law, however well drafted, will not succeed if not accompanied by strong grassroots organisation of the women concerned." From Ela Bhatt in India: "In 1981 I was ridiculed when I talked of recognising women piece rate home-based workers as "workers" and providing them with legal protection and social security....Now many of these women are organised in labour unions and co-operatives...The joint action of struggle and development have been our major strategy, and through the alternatives that are emerging from our work, we are creating our own body of knowledge, our own meaning of development."

This book is a very positive step towards giving women visibility and a voice. It is based on a good style of work which makes it easy to read, interesting and relevant, and with a concrete international perspective. It is available from Yorkshire and Humberside Low Pay Unit, Field Hill Centre, Batley Field Hill, Batley WF17 0BQ, priced £3.50. ■

Bairds Boycott Over

Year-long dispute makes international legal history

IGMC DISPUTE ENDS HISTORICAL SETTLEMENT

Women workers at the Intercontinental Garments Manufacturing Company (IGMC) rainwear factory, a subsidiary of British-owned William Baird PLC, have negotiated an end to their year-long dispute in the Bataan Export Processing Zone (BEPZ) in the Philippines.

The Philippines Support Group has campaigned in support of the IGMC workers since they were locked out in September 1989 after the company refused to implement a new wage law which would have increased wages by about 70 pence a day. IGMC, which had been located in BEPZ for sixteen profitable years, threw some 1,000 people out of work. Many of the workers have been living outside the factory in a makeshift cardboard shelter since the dispute began. Their peaceful picket line has been repeatedly harassed by the armed Zone Police, who several weeks before the settlement pulled down the cardboard tent and left the 285 remaining workers without shelter.

The workers negotiated a remarkable settlement, which not only won an improved financial settlement for those left on the picket line, but also made international legal history!

In March 1990, Baird issued libel writs against 'Women Working Worldwide' and 'International Labour Reports' magazine for reporting on the IGMC workers' struggle. The defendants owe a great debt of thanks to the IGMC workers who refused to end their courageous picket until Baird agreed to stop the legal proceedings.

We feel both humbled and inspired by this unique gesture of international solidarity from workers who endured difficult and dangerous conditions during the year-long dispute.

Sadly, the workers had to give up their demand for the factory to be re-opened when IGMC sold off the assets in the Bataan factory to another British company, Henry Butcher

& Co.. However, the redundancy pay that was finally negotiated was considerably better than the company's original offer. The union thus established an important principle by forcing IGMC to set the redundancy pay and unpaid back wages at the increased wage rate. This sets a precedent which should discourage other multinational companies from attempting to sidestep wage legislation.

EFFECTIVE BOYCOTT

The IGMC union has called off the boycott of Philippines-made Baird products, which had attracted support across Britain and other European countries. The boycott proved

struggle. Lucy led a delegation to the William Baird head office in Mayfair, accompanied by Labour's overseas development spokesperson, Ann Clwyd MP and TUC President, Ada Maddocks. Baird representatives declined to talk to them.

A major breakthrough came when Littlewoods agreed not to order the boycotted products in the future and became the first British retailer to come out with an ethical purchasing policy.

Throughout the campaign, the Philippine Support Group has worked alongside a wide range of organisations that have actively supported the IGMC workers' struggle, including trade unions at a national and local level, church groups, women's groups and consumer groups. We have forged particularly close working links with 'Women Working Worldwide' and TGWU Region 6



an extremely effective way to put pressure on the company. In Britain, thousands of signatures were gathered from high-street shoppers, while leading women trade unionists and MPs lobbied the company. Women in the Netherlands staged a large International Women's Day demonstration outside the Amsterdam branch of Dutch-owned C&A, one of Baird's biggest customers, before being dispersed by mounted police.

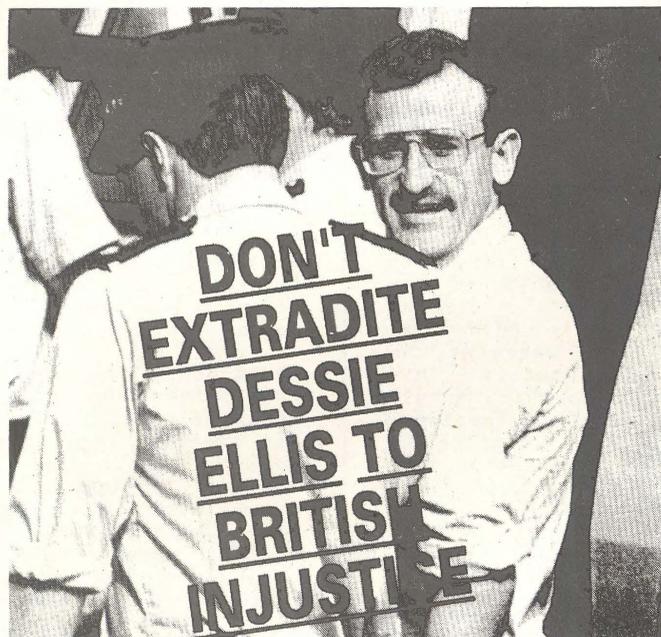
In March, IGMC union President, Lucy Salao, came to Britain as a guest of the Philippine Support Group and the Transport and General Workers' Union to raise money and publicity for the union's

(North West England), which will be lasting value to Philippines solidarity work in Britain.

The IGMC picket may have ended but the story is not over. The IGMC union reports that the company has set up a new factory, Prego, in the Mactan EPZ Cebu, and has plans to build a second factory in the Cavite EPZ, both vehemently anti-union zones, with a strong presence of vigilante death squads.

The extraordinary events of the last year have put a strong spotlight on William Baird's activities in the Philippines. Our task now is to ensure that this continues.

FREE DESSIE ELLIS



END EXTRADITION

On the 29th day of his hunger strike, Dessie Ellis was moved from Portlaoise Prison to the Curragh Military Hospital. On Wednesday, 14th November, he lost his last appeal against extradition, was transferred to a waiting plane and flown to London. Charged at a London court, at which he appeared in a wheelchair, wrapped in a blanket, he was afterwards transferred to Brixton Prison.

Dessie had been on hunger strike for 36 days. One day later, he announced the end of his protest. Since then he has begun the long and painful road to recovery. We wish him well in his struggle to regain his health.

Although Dessie has ended his hunger strike, the basic issues have not gone away. We salute his bravery in going on hunger strike and respect his decision to end it. His actions have become the focus of mass protest against this latest example of the Twenty Six County state's collaboration with British imperialism.

Throughout Ireland, there have been mass protests. In Britain, there has also been an upsurge of opposition to extradition. Anti-extradition campaigns have been set up in

London and Birmingham, working in collaboration with the Irish anti-extradition committee. There have also been protests in Scotland.

Protest pickets have been held outside the Irish embassy in London and the Council building in Birmingham. A broad range of people and organisations have come out against this latest British crime against the Irish people. Eight Labour MP's wrote a letter to the 'Irish Post' newspaper in support of Dessie. The Birmingham District Labour Party passed an emergency motion of support. Various union branches passed motions opposing the extradition. The Birmingham Six campaign supports Dessie.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

Dessie's case has attracted support internationally. One hundred members of the New York State Assembly and the Public Employees' Federation in New York have written to Charles Haughey urging him not to extradite Dessie. There was a protest rally and march outside the Irish Consulate in New York. Demonstrations and pickets have also taken place in Chicago, Washington, Atlanta, Detroit and San Francisco.

Protests have also been held in Australia. The Food Preservers' Union and the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union have given their support to Dessie's campaign.

THE CAMPAIGN GOES ON

The ending of the hunger strike is not the end of the campaign. It may be over a year before Dessie goes to trial and he needs our support. There are also others who the British state will try and extradite. The issue of extradition is not lost - each case must be fought as it comes up.

Fianna Fail's 1987 Extradition Act is based on the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. A dozen of the states signing that Convention had reservations about its definition of 'political acts'. Eight states refused to extradite their own citizens.

DUBLIN'S COLLABORATION

Over the years, successive Dublin governments have eroded the right of Irish citizens not to be extradited for political crimes. As Dessie's case shows, the 1987 Act takes away that right.

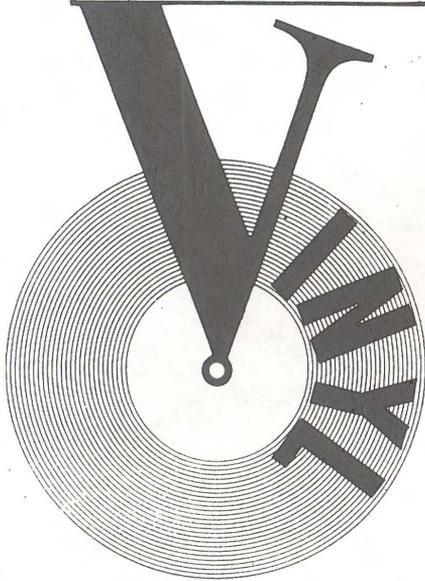
To agree to extradition was clearly a political decision, not a simple matter of the law. Dessie's crime is not crime at all. He is an active Republican in the struggle to free and unify his homeland. To fight for the right of nations to self-determination is not a crime. It is to struggle for a basic democratic right.

The extent of collaboration with the British state has shocked many in the Twenty Six Counties. Haughey and his fellow conspirators have further exposed their true position. Once again, they have sided with the oppressor of the Irish people, rather than defend their own citizens.

Despite what Haughey now claims, British justice is no justice for Irish people. How could it be when British imperialism occupies and divides Ireland? How can an oppressor be fair to those it oppresses?

The cases of the Guildford Four, the Birmingham Six and the Winchester Three expose the truth: never mind the proof, if you are Irish, you are guilty. With conspiracy laws, there is no possible legal defence. The state does not need to prove specific acts. Indeed, nothing actually needs to have happened. It was to avoid this so-called British justice that Dessie went on hunger strike. ■

NEW MODEL ARMY



New Model Army, a band from Bradford, West Yorkshire, have earned a sort of cult status. If you've heard of them, you either love them or hate them — their music inspires that sort of reaction.

They are named after the army which emerged during the English Civil War in the 1640's, and was closely associated with anti-royalism and the Leveller movement. The band is well-named — the views they put forward are northern and radical, not hidebound by ideology or dogmatism. They reflect the struggles of young people who reject, and are rejected by, conventional society.

Followers of New Model Army are easily spotted. They usually wear Yorkshire clogs, an idealised symbol of northern identity and a (supposedly) simpler, more self-sufficient era. If you go to a New Model Army concert, you will be struck by the passion of the 'Following', many of whom travel all over the country (and Europe) to see the band at all the concerts during the tour. The most committed followers usually stay at the back of the hall, exhausted by the travelling, slumped on their kit bags. Many ask for money as you go into the hall. They are travellers all year round, all that they own kept in an ex-army surplus bag.

Musically and lyrically, New Model Army are consciously political, but never jump on any 'socially aware' bangwagon to sell records. They have been writing on issues such as the environment since the early '80s, and are not scared to state their views. Their first single was called

'Vengeance', and the chorus went like so:

"I believe in justice
I believe in vengeance
I believe in getting the
bastards"

'WARNING IN SOLIDARITY'

The 'bastards' are revealed in the verses as Nazis sheltered in South America; drug pushers on city streets and corrupt judges and businessmen, amongst others. Other well-known New Model Army songs include '51st State', about the power the US military has in Europe, and 'Christian Militia', which is highly critical of the new wave of moral majority evangelists. 'Lurhstaap', which is featured here is the best 'warning in solidarity' message to Eastern Europe that I have heard from anyone in the West.

New Model Army never appear to preach. They are as much influenced by their audience as by their own reactions to the world. Often at concerts by other bands, I get the feeling I am just viewing a piece of entertainment which I am supposed to respond to in a personal way. At a New Model Army concert, there is always an atmosphere of community, and a strong feeling of being involved in something which is real, and involves other people as well.

Musically, New Model Army's appeal is limited. They are too loud and raucous for some! However, they transmit very powerfully their ideas and reflect the views of many young people who reject the standard approaches (both from reactionaries and so-called progressives) to the way the world is, or the way it should be.

Lurhstaap

One Swallow never made a spring
You can buy a crown — it doesn't make you King
Beware the trinkets that we bring.

When the visionary dreams set hard and grey
As flesh made into stone
You tore the statues to the ground
Crying 'Let our people go'

And now they're gone, all is gone
But these changing winds can turn cold and hostile.

The freedom passion and the two-faced call
They dance together upon the Wall
With nothing left to break the fall.

Now 25 miles north in the great dark woods
The college buildings stand
And the ghosts of hope walk silent halls
At the death of the promised land
All is gone, all is gone
And these changing winds can turn cold and hostile.

In the shadows of the crowded square
A thousand paper deals go down
And hungry sharks from everywhere
Smell the blood and head for town
Innocence starts to peel away
How money changes everything
The past it eats the future up
And this blind desire eats everything.

Now the rats they leave one stricken ship
For another sailing past

Your world was going nowhere slow
While ours goes nowhere fast
And now it's gone, all is gone
And these changing winds can blow cold and hostile.

The freedom passion and the two-faced call
They dance together on the famous Wall
With nothing left to break the fall.

One Swallow never made a spring
You can buy a crown — it doesn't make you King
Beware the trinkets that we bring.



In the new 'October, we are pleased to reprint an English summary of a book by a leading comrade in the Norwegian Marxist Leninist-Party (AKP-ML). The AKP(ML) has for many years been active in the Women's Front in Norway. The contribution by this comrade, Kjersti Ericsson, is therefore based firmly in a combination of theory and practice.

The article on Feminism and the Left in India and Sri Lanka also shows how active women have been. The article makes it clear that the role of women and the women's movement is being debated and discussed at many different levels within the Left.

The basic position of the RCL is that we have to apply the scientific method of Marxism to the question of women but that many of the positions held by the Left on women are a crude economist version of Marxism.

In this issue of 'October', we try to take this debate forward by looking at some of the arguments around the basis of women's oppression, an important question if we aim to build a society which removes the basis for oppression as a pre-condition for moving to full liberation. We look at the question of reproductive rights, a key aspect of women's oppression. And we try to put the struggle for women's liberation within the context of the overall struggle against imperialism.

We hope that this journal will take the debate forward. We look forward to hearing the views of our readers and receiving contributions from you.

OCTOBER

THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE



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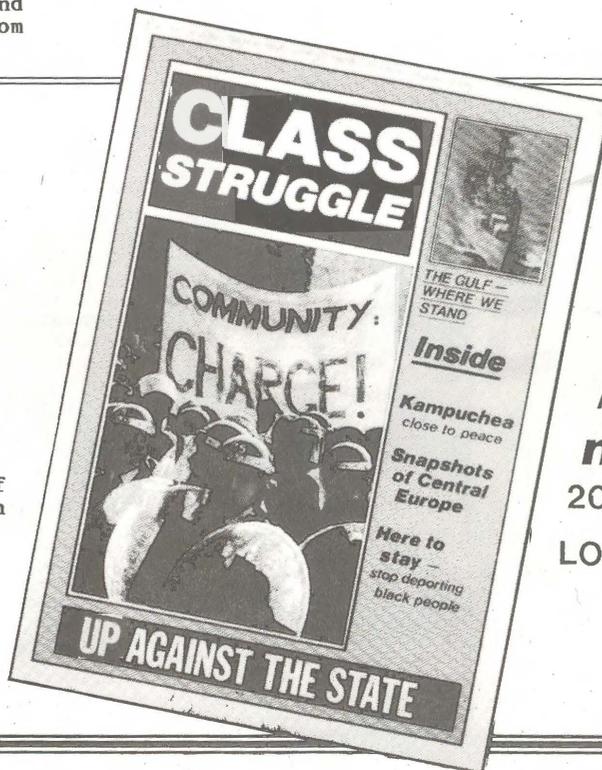
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