

CLASS STRUGGLE

POLITICAL PAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF BRITAIN

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Despite massive distortion by the papers, radio and TV, it is clear to many people that May 14th was a day of intense struggle against the Government's anti-union and anti-working class policies. A million workers gave a resounding NO to the Thatcherite onslaught, as towns and cities throughout the country saw rallies, marches and demonstrations on a scale not seen for years.

These excellent actions, which often took place in spite of official union 'leadership' rather than because of it, gave a good rallying call to the many millions more who have yet to rise up and fight alongside them. Many of the non-strikers have already begun to think seriously about the issues involved as a result of the action taken by their fellow workers.

As a worker from Leeds told *Class Struggle*, "In my factory there were meetings in every room to discuss May 14th. Such a thing had never happened before. Though the majority decision was not to come out on strike, we had much more thorough discussions and learnt a lot more from each other than on the usual official strike when people just spend a day at home in the garden."

Our correspondents report

The following reports from our correspondents around the country give examples of actions undertaken on May 14th:-

Leeds

May 14th saw the biggest turnout on the streets in Leeds for a long time. Over 2000 people, mostly from the public service unions, marched from the City Centre to Woodhouse Moor. The central question on the march was opposition to Thatcher's policies and particularly to the cuts in public services.

BCA salutes Joshi

On the occasion of the first anniversary of his death. SEE PAGE 4.

"We are fighting for the light, and if I am sacrificed, it doesn't matter; For there will be others who will see the dawn."

(From a poem by Comrade Joshi.)



A MILLION WORKERS SAY NO!

However, other targets also drew the anger of the marchers. For example, an interviewer from Radio Leeds had to go up to seven or eight different people before he could find anyone ready to talk, so great was the anger at the media campaign against the Day of Action.

Boos and hisses were directed at the few buses that drove past. (The bus workers had voted by majority vote to strike, so they were in a different position from the many workers who went to work because they were in a minority on the question.)

One *Class Struggle* seller talked to two retired workers, a steelworker and an engine driver. One of them said "Why leave it till we've got a Tory govern-

ment? We should have been doing this all through the sixties not just now." I got made redundant under Labour not Tory."

Birmingham

"When you go to work tomorrow (May 14th) the overwhelming majority of your workmates will have turned up too." This is what Birmingham's extreme right-wing paper, the *Evening Mail*, said about this "despicable, undemocratic attack on a government which can only be properly attacked through the ballot box", an attack mounted for the most part by "lefty politicians and the wearisome bearded weirdies who form the tiny but vulgarly noisy rent-a-mob of the left."

Newspapers like the *Evening Mail* interpret press freedom entirely as freedom to serve the bosses - freedom to distort, abuse and slander with impunity and attack with every weapon at their disposal the working class and the trade union movement.

On the Day of Action itself, local workers chanted the words: "The *Evening Mail*", to which came the deafening response from over 4000 marchers: "Rubbish, rubbish, rubbish!"



Liverpool
Sunderland
London

See page 3

Editorial

AFTER MAY 14th

According to the bosses' press, May 14th was an absolute flop. Their editorial comments were full of self-praise, attacks on the strike and condemnation of the union leaders.

Indeed the press barons had themselves taken a stand against the strike. The Evening News in London was advertised on placards the day before with the words "How to beat the strike". The Daily Express group had taken the unions in their print shops to court to get an injunction.

But in fact a significant number of factories, council offices, mines, transport depots and schools were shut. Many other factories suffered a loss of production. More people were out protesting on the streets of Britain than there have been for many years.

What did not take place was a one-day general strike. And that didn't surprise anyone. In our editorial on April 17th, we said "Despite TUC passivity and sabotage, let's make May 14th as effective as possible." The failure, or blatant refusal, of the great majority of the trade union bureaucrats to call or support factory leaflets and mass meetings (Murray was even taking the sun in a fancy hotel in Madiera) left the field wide open to the Fleet Street rags. Why did they fail to take such obvious and democratic steps to build support?

Their failure was no accident. It is because of their outlook. They want Thatcher out and Labour in. They will put up a bit of a fight to that end. But the thought of a mass movement of conscious workers scares them silly. They want actions that they can control by pushing buttons.

Our attitude must be the opposite. A mass movement to fight the cuts, fight redundancies, and fight wage cuts is what is needed!

From our postbag

Write to the Editor - CS, c/o New Era Books, 203 Seven Sisters Rd, London N4.

Pickaxe handles

Dear Comrades,

In your front-page article in the last issue of Class Struggle you suggested that the private arsenal of the SPG might be put in "deep storage" for a while due to the adverse publicity received as a result of the Blair Peach inquest. Frankly, I doubt it.

Only last week it was reported that an SPG raided some suspected bank robbers in South London.

The SPG squad were described as jumping out of their cars armed with guns and - pickaxe handles!

Before the recent publicity, such equipment was presumably regarded as not worthy of comment. Now that more people have woken up to what is going on, we should demand that the coshes clubs, etc., are left behind in their lockers until the SPG is disbanded - and let's try to make sure that that day is not far away. It depends on us.

Otherwise we could well see frequent cases of police arriving at demonstrations, pickets, etc., armed with these gruesome weapons.

From,

A Class Struggle reader

Labour Council

Dear Comrades,

Sunderland's Labour-dominated council has been allocated little more than half of what it had requested for its building grant for 1980-1981. No proper reason was given by the Department of the Environment who makes these allocations. The homeless people of this deprived North Eastern town were just fobbed off with the remark that there were "financial considerations".

Instead of fighting back against this savage and insulting

action, the council did what Labour councils everywhere do. It made a token protest by "deploring" the low allocation, and then promptly backed down and accepted it without further ado. Most of the money allocated is already committed for ongoing work, so these champions of the working class have decided to make no provision for further new house building in the borough.

One recent vacancy in the Housing and Estates Department was promptly filled, however - the Homeless Officer!

From,
A North Eastern reader

Gun fodder

Dear Editor,

Last year the recruiting figures for the British armed forces were the second best for seventeen years at 50,652. The deepening economic crisis and the prospect of mass unemployment sends young men and women to the recruiting offices.

Many of them will go to Ireland and learn to maim and kill Irish patriots. Some of them will commit suicide in Northern Ireland...some will be wounded...and others will be sent home in boxes.

I believe that anti-recruitment work is of great importance at a time when the British state will use the crisis to turn workers into gun fodder for its war in Ireland.

From,
A CS reader

From other letters

I enclose £1 for the fund to pay the fine and costs of the black worker mentioned in your article in the last issue about NF harassment on the shop floor. I would like to say how much I like this report - first-hand

stories like that are among the best features of Class Struggle and I hope there will be many more like it in future issues.

* * * * *

I wonder how many EEC countries celebrate May Day four days late as the British ruling class would have us do? Even the Trotskyites have noticed that Xmas Day, New Year's Day, etc., are not celebrated on the last and first Mondays of their respective months. (CS reader.)

* * * * *

I should like to criticise Class Struggle for failing to include anything about May Day in your last issue. May Day is an important day in the international labour movement and a revolutionary paper should highlight its importance. (London reader.) (This letter refers to our last issue but one. We agree it was bad to omit any mention of May Day in that issue which was on sale on May Day. We did of course carry reports of May Day events in the following issue. Eds.)

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We must strive increasingly to expose the lie and myth that Labour's nationalisation policy is socialism. I know the Tories are using capitalist nationalisation run under the Labour government to smear true socialism. One good instance for nailing the lie was the £1½ million compensation paid to compensate the last firm of the new British Steel Corporation Chairman who replaced Villiers. (A steel worker.)

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As a former subscriber to New Age I may be 'conditioned', but I did prefer the larger format of that paper which made it easier to read. Will you consider using it for Class Struggle in future?

Liverpool

May 14th saw the biggest demonstration through the City of Liverpool for many years, as 15,000 workers followed the SOGAT and Trades Council banners to the traditional rallying-place at the Pier Head to demonstrate their opposition to cuts and vicious anti-working class laws. Contingents from many trade unions took part, including hundreds of health and NALGO workers.

There was the usual crowd of Labour Party and 'Communist' Party activists busy using the day's political protest to win support for the Labour Party. But in spite of the pro-Labour flavour of some of the speeches, they did not succeed in turning it into a pro-Labour rally. The most enthusiastic applause was reserved for those speakers who hammered the anti-union press campaign.

Throughout the demonstration a contingent of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain(RCLB) raised such slogans as: Hands off workers' rights!, Fight the cuts - make the bosses pay!, Rates up or services cut - Labour Tory, both the same!, Un-Employment Bill out, Political strikes in!

As well as shouting our own slogans, we also took up workers' slogans attacking the Tories.

Sunderland

Shipyard workers were told on the Thursday before May 14th that a rally was to be held at Sunderland's Boilermaker's Club. But at the last moment the rally was switched to Sunderland Polytechnic, and no information was given to them of this change.

This was only one example of the complete lack of propaganda and information from the trade union leadership, who made half-hearted gestures at protest, 'inviting', 'encouraging' their members to come out, or 'not expecting' them to go to work. All in all, they did a brill job of misleadership, conducting about as much agitation as Len Murray did in Spain.

To get back to the rally, 200-odd managed to find it, to be confronted by an official union speaker who went on about the so-called 'Employment Bill' clause by clause...Now when you've lost 25% of your wages while the salaried officials haven't (and most of them were absent from the rally) it's no wonder many of the workers at the rally were bloody disgruntled and some left.

First they nearly succeed in hiding the rally, then they call out the bores to drive you from the hall!

North London march

"Fight the crisis, Fight the cuts, Make the bosses pay!" This chant was heard from a small but vocal contingent on a 1500 strong demonstration on May 14th through Haringey in north London. Its ranks were swelled by a further thousand workers from a twin march starting from Ponders End in Enfield. The two marches converged on Pymmes Park in Edmonton.

Both marches were made up largely of local government workers and teachers. But there were also contingents of factory and railway workers. Workers from local factories like Thorns, MK Electric and Gestetners took part. The BOC/Cryoplants and the furniture factories Beaulity, Nathens, Qualcast and Stonehills in Edmonton were all out on the day.

The two marches were loudest in attacking Thatcher and her Tories for their cuts in housing, education and welfare.

Members of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain(RCLB) joined in the Haringay march and gave out a leaflet which strongly attacked the Tories.

At the same time, the RCLB leaflet pointed out, workers should not fall for Labour's lies. In uniting to fight off the present assaults by the Tories and the bosses as a whole, we should not be fooled by the crocodile tears of the Labour Party and trade union leaders. As the leaflet said when Wilson and Callaghan were Prime Ministers, their governments also made cuts in education health and welfare. They did it alright - maybe not as much or as fast as the Tories - but they made cuts just the same!

At the rally in Pymmes Park, Labour Party speakers were jeered with taunts like: "What about the Labour cuts?" and "What about Labour's 5% wage limit?" They had no answer.

A teacher's story

Although the NUT had merely 'urged' or 'permitted' us to go on a half-day strike, nearly all our area's secondary schools were closed. The Labour Council had sent letters to head teachers threatening striking teachers with disciplinary action, but in our school over 40 teachers came out and a good number of pupils also came along on the march with us. When, according to NUT instructions, we returned for work in the afternoon, there was still a caretakers' picket and 35 teachers refused to cross it.

For most teachers, the issues on May 14th were perfectly clear - the government's cuts are threatening the whole education system. Fewer teachers, less books, dear-

er school meals, no more nursery places...In our school we have no Physics teachers, and Maths is fast becoming a luxury subject. Over half the school's entrants are backward readers. This is why so many teachers are angry.

The Day of Action made a good start in explaining to the children we teach, their parents and the ordinary people of the area just what is going on in our schools.

* * * *

Local Education Officers in many cases had to take out injunctions against school caretakers to force them to hand over the keys so that schools could open on May 14th. In Tower Hamlets a local NUPE official agreed to collect the keys from all the schools himself. Before depositing them in the local education offices, he threw them all in a big bag and gave it a good shake.

Buses

The media gave the impression that London buses were running normally on May 14th. Nothing could be further from the truth. At least 5000 bus crewmen were out, and many garages, for instance Battersea, were 100%. London Transport at first tried intimidation, threatening a lockout if the action went ahead. They backed down when it dawned on them that a lockout would only make the action more effective!

Become a Class Struggle correspondent

This paper is not written by professional journalists. All our correspondents are working people who send us news of struggles and events they are involved in. We invite every reader of our paper to become a Class Struggle correspondent.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO: Write to us as regularly as you can with your news. If possible, also answer inquiries from us about subjects in your area or workplace which we should like to cover in the paper. If you've no time to write, then pass on your news to your Class Struggle seller by word of mouth.

If more of our readers can find the time to help us in this way, we'll be able to build Class Struggle into a more effective and forceful workers' paper.

Class Struggle is your paper. Help it, and use it.

The struggle against racism & fascism

REMEMBERING COMRADE JOSHI

Birmingham Communist Association tribute

The following is a statement by the Birmingham Communist Association (BCA) on the occasion of the first anniversary of the death of comrade Joshi.

Comrade Jagmohan Joshi was known as a determined campaigner against racialism and imperialism and for his support of the struggle of the Indian people for national liberation. He opened many eyes to the realities of oppression in India and other parts of the Third World, and introduced many people to a greater understanding of racialism.

At this time, we particularly wish to remember Comrade Joshi as a Marxist-Leninist. In Birmingham he was instrumental in our development as communists, bringing together various progressive people, and facilitated the formation of a discussion group.

He always emphasised the need to participate in the working class struggle in this country, and to strive to build a communist movement. He struggled against revisionism and never hesitated to denounce the so-called parties of the working class as frauds. At the same time as a mature communist, he understood "who are our enemies" and "who are our friends", and worked and discussed with progressive people at all levels, always involving as many people as possible in broad front work.

With Joshi's support and encouragement the BCA was formed in 1975 from members of the discussion group. Our relationship with him contributed greatly to our development as communists. Our tribute to Comrade Joshi is to continue the struggle in which he played such an important part.



Jagmohan Joshi was born in Hoshiarpur, Punjab, in the then 'British' India. At the age of 15 he engaged in revolutionary work under the leadership of the Communist Party of India. At 21 he came to Britain and was later a founder member of the Birmingham branch of the Indian Workers' Association (GB). From then until his death he played a leading role in anti-racist, anti-imperialist and communist work in Britain. He was General Secretary of the IWA from 1964 until his tragic death at the age of 43 on the 3rd June last year.

Middlesbrough Asians organise

We have received the following report from Middlesbrough of how some Asians got together and organised to rub out a racist slogan on the interior of a suburban pub:-

Only those people who were free on that day and at that time were asked to come. Many Asians could not attend because they work continental shifts. Some, however, were so keen that they changed shifts. Two actually took time off - this when British Steel, where many work, are using the tiniest excuse to sack people.

We arrived at the pub in groups of 6, at 10 minute intervals. After the second wave, the regulars sensed that something was happening. When we erased the slogan there was clapping with some of the regulars joining in.

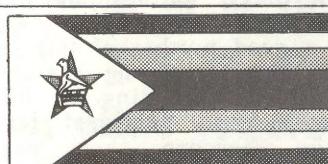
A Sikh then spoke, inviting people to think about this, about why we had organised over such an apparently trivial problem. A Pakistani then said that despite the differences among us, we had shown we could organise ourselves, irrespective of culture, religion or nationality. A short speech in English thanked the people for coming and asked them not to be critical of those who refused to attend and those who "forgot". Those present were asked to assist in the formation of a small nucleus, so that the structure of a formal organisation could be thrashed out.

HACKNEY SALUTES ZIMBABWE

Class Struggle correspondent. About 150 people attended a successful meeting and celebration in Hackney on May 17th to salute Zimbabwe's recent hard-won independence. This was organised by the Hackney Committee Against Racialism (HCAR) in conjunction with the Islington Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM).

Armed Struggle

The meeting heard a Namibian priest speak with great passion about the indignities suffered by the people of Namibia (South West Africa) at the hands of South Africa's racist rulers. He defended the necessity to resort to armed struggle, and called for support for the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO)



This flag - in red, green, gold and black - was hoisted in independent Zimbabwe on April 18th 1980. The golden bird is based on a statue found in the ruins of the old Zimbabwe

which is leading that struggle.

Lively Discussion

In the lively discussion that followed the speeches, various different points of view were put forward regarding the situation in Africa and our solidarity tasks in Britain. One speaker from the floor castigated the AAM for the limited and selective nature of its support. It only recognises one organisation, the African National Congress (ANC), as an authentic liberation movement, instead of recognising that all patriotic liberation movements should be supported, including the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) and the Black Consciousness Movement.

Film and Disco

A film, *The Battle for South Africa*, was shown, which included scenes from the Azanian resistance movement during the past two decades.

Afterwards there was a buffet, bar and Afro-disco whose proceeds went to medical aid for Namibia. Janet Moir, chairperson of HCAR, made a spirited speech at the disco in which, to warm applause she welcomed the South African anti-imperialist victories as a powerful impetus and encouragement to anti-racist and progressive struggles here in Britain.

This was a high-spirited occasion which raised the flag of internationalism in this imperialist heartland.

NOW OUT! HCAR Bulletin, 2. State racism, schools, courts, etc. 5p+10p post. HCAR, c/o CRE, 245 Mare St, E8.

Leeds meeting

"LET'S WORK TOGETHER"

"Why should we pay £50 or £100 to register to be British when we've been here for years? We've worked. We've paid taxes and national insurance." This was the angry reaction of one of the 200 people who attended a recent meeting in Chapeltown, Leeds, called by the local Law Centre to urge West Indians to register for UK citizenship.

Starting with Jamaica and Trinidad in 1962, the West Indian countries have been reaching independence one after the other and at the same time British immigration and nationality laws have been steadily tightened up. At the moment, black people born here to Commonwealth parents are automatically British citizens. Those who came here from the West Indies before independence had the old colonial British citizenship.

But when their countries become independent the people who were born there lose that status and become citizens of the new independent states instead. Very few know about the changes or realise that they have to register if they wish to become British citizens. The British government has kept them in ignorance of the facts, with the result that many think they are still British until they apply for a passport and discover that they are not.

NEW RACIST LAW PLANNED

The Tories are now planning a new racist Nationality Law under which the right to register for British citizenship may be withdrawn. This would particularly affect people from islands such as Antigua which are not yet independent. What is supposed to happen to people from there who have lived and worked in Britain for decades and may have children and even grandchildren who are British citizens?

Such people would in future be classified as 'non-patrials', in other words, they would merely have 'indefinite leave' to stay here. 'Non-patrials' can be deported if they are sentenced for any offence, no matter how long they have lived here. That this is no empty threat is shown by the fact that in Armley (Leeds jail) alone roughly one black person every week is detained for deportation.

ACTIVE RESISTANCE CALLED FOR

What was clear at the meeting was that people are not going to sit and wait while all this happens. People called for some action to be taken. Speakers pointed out that the Asian community has long faced this kind of situation, and called for coordination and cooperation with Asian organisations.

Other speakers called for an Action Committee to be set up. "Let's forget about the difference between us because we come from different islands, and work together."

From a Class Struggle correspondent

BLACK FREEDOM MARCH POSTPONED

We regret to announce that the Black Freedom March organised for this summer by the Asian Youth Movement, details of which we recently published in Class Struggle, has been indefinitely postponed. It is likely that the AYM will issue a statement on this in the near future, which we shall report as soon as possible.

The preparatory activities for the march achieved some success in their own right, and we are confident that the hard work performed by the AYM will have helped to prepare the way for another good project along similar lines in the future.

A WORKER'S NOTEBOOK

"I STOPPED STRIKE AFTER STRIKE...On countless occasions when shop stewards wanted to walk out I played a part in stopping it". These words were spoken at a recent Birmingham Industrial Tribunal by none other than Derek Robinson, the so-called 'Red Robbo' who has been cracked up by the media as the worst scourge of the bosses since Lenin. Like all the leaders of the so-called 'Communist' Party of Great Britain, this fellow makes a big career for himself on the backs of militant workers, then squirms with excuses when driven to the wall by the bosses and their tricks. The workers are well rid of such careerist 'leaders'.

A RECENT PETITION BY OVER 50 MEDICAL STUDENTS at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine expressed support for Dr Marshall, whose job at the School is threatened by the withdrawal of a British Government grant. Their petition draws attention to the deliberate running down of Britain's tropical medicine study facilities which have in the past trained many doctors, nurses and community health workers who have performed valuable work in the developing countries of the third world. These cutbacks go hand-in-hand with attacks on the medical services for working people in Britain, who face longer hospital waiting lists, closure of homes and hospitals, increased prescription charges, etc. This action has united medical students from Britain and many other countries in opposing the attempts of the British ruling class to shift the burden of its crisis off its own back and onto the backs of others.

PLANS FOR A £40 MILLION NATO AIRBASE in the Outer Hebrides have been overwhelmingly rejected by the Western Isles Council because they would threaten the safety of local people and destroy high quality farmland. The Ministry of Defence will now press the Secretary of State for Scotland to overrule the clearly expressed opinions of the local people. The Lewis Keep NATO Out Action Group has collected an impressive 4,000 signatures on a petition against the plan.

BIRMINGHAM'S THORNHILL ROAD POLICE STATION is notorious for its brutality against the local black community of the Handsworth area. Recently indignation flamed into resistance when about 200 black people were driven beyond endurance by the unjustified arrest of a black teenager, and subjected the police station to a full-scale siege. Two police were hurt as they fought with young black people to detain the arrested teenager. Local people rushed to the aid of the young people and within minutes a sizeable crowd had gathered to resist arriving police reinforcements. Before long, the police were holed up inside the station, besieged by a large and angry crowd. This incident did not hit the national headlines, as the media try to cover up the hatred felt for the police. As a local reader has written to us, "The media like to show coppers going out of their way to be friendly - you know the kind of thing".

"A SONG THAT'S ANTI-THERCER THAT YOU CAN STILL DANCE TO" is how Birmingham's rock stars of the moment, the Beat describe a track on their new album, I Just Can't Stop. This part-white, part-black band is doing a lot to change the Crossroads image with their fast and rhythmic, yet singalong, sound and their committed, progressive lyrics. "As we go round Britain we notice that blacks and whites don't get on as badly in Brum and Coventry as they do elsewhere in the country." Bass-player David Steele feels the band can achieve more than the established punk bands, "because if the approach is rough and nasty, people who aren't into punk reject it. But if you can make it catchy, and have people singing along, you can reach a much wider audience."

CROSSMAGLEN

A recent issue of the magazine New Society carried an article about the demoralization of the British army in Northern Ireland. The author had visited the army in Crossmaglen, South Armagh, near the border.

The police barracks in Crossmaglen is in reality a fort in hostile country. The army cannot use the roads in the area. "You run off the helipad at Crossmaglen. Helicopters are flying in and out every 24 hours a day. But they never stop longer than the 20 seconds it takes for one cargo of soldiers to run off and another to run on. They have to fly the rubbish out by helicopter here".

The officer in charge of building works at the post said, "It's the costliest police barracks in the UK - it's mortar-proof, sound-proof, everything proof", and another officer commented, "I have grave misgivings about the morality of building something like this. It seems to imply that the

British Army demoralised

army will never leave Crossmaglen".

No wonder the ordinary soldiers feel they are in a hopeless position - this is reflected in suicides, two so far this year, drunkenness crime and disillusion. (A recent report drew attention to an alarming rate of child battering and wife beating in army families.) This also affects the

soldiers' wives - one of them said, "some of the wives have just given up and gone home. Some have had nervous breakdowns. A lot of them are very low. One recently had a miscarriage because of depression and that".

All these are the familiar signs of demoralization in an army of occupation.

6-month wonder

According to a recent report in the Irish Magazine Hibernia, Northern Ireland security supremo, Maurice Oldfield, told the army and police bosses when he took over in Northern Ireland last October that he would "sort out" the IRA within 6 months.

He has not succeeded and the IRA are still fighting to get the troops out. When Roy "Mad Dwarf" Mason was Secretary for Northern Ireland, he made the same vain boast. He also failed.

In the final analysis, imperialists are stupid. They believe their own lies in just the same way the British government thought that ZANU would not win the elections in Zimbabwe.

The British army cannot win the war in Ireland and sooner or later they will have to withdraw and allow the Irish people the right to determine their own future. The only question is how much more suffering they will inflict on the people before they are forced to leave.

Contributed

The World Scene

SAME BOSSES SAME FIGHT

Many of the big firms that workers in this country struggle against every day are the common enemy of workers in other countries. The following two articles show why the workers' struggle is an international one.

British Leyland

British Leyland (BL) recently signed a £14 million contract to supply double-decker buses to the Middle East. This might sound like a good thing for Leyland workers but the work is not going to be done in Britain. It is going to be done at Leyland's wholly-owned subsidiary in Cape Town, South Africa.

Michael Edwardes, BL chieftain, recently visited South Africa (Azania) and he returned home to announce further cuts in the British work-force and threatened the closure of whole plants. He also imposed a pay settlement. It is obvious that his visit gave him the confidence to do these things. Edwardes knows, and so do all the other big capitalists, that as long as they have profitable subsidiaries in South Africa and elsewhere they are in a stronger position to kick British workers around.

In the days when Britain was a leading imperialist power, the ruling class conned many British workers into believing that they

had a stake in 'their' Empire. British workers received higher wages partly as a result of the exploitation and oppression of the colonial peoples. British imperialism is no longer so powerful but it still invests great sums in countries like South Africa (Azania) where cheap black labour makes it possible for them to make super-profits. So, British capitalists avoid new investments in Britain where workers are better organised, have certain democratic rights and higher wage expectations. They move whole factories out of Britain, creating more unemployment and insecurity among workers here.

The capitalists aim to depress Leyland workers' wages here until they finally reach the low levels being paid to Black workers in Azania. This is one reason why it is very important for British workers to stand by the oppressed Black people of Azania in their fight for improved conditions and national liberation.

Fords

1500 Black workers were laid off at the Ford plant in Port Elizabeth, South Africa (Azania), recently. Port Elizabeth is central to the South African car industry.

This was followed by the dismissal of all 700 Black workers at the Ford Cortina plant.

Thomayile Botha, a trainee draughtsman, and 24 other workers at the plant, led a protest against the dismissals and were all charged under the Riotous Assemblies Act.

Thomayile Botha was also chairman of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organisation, formed in the nearby Walmer township to stop the government's removal scheme, which involved the bulldozing of all the existing shanty houses and moving the families out of the area. Ford insisted that he resign from PECO and, when he refused, they sacked him too. He has now fled to neighbouring Lesotho to fight another day.



Durban 1973 -
Azanian workers on strike.

CS June 1980

ZIMBABWE'S VICTORY HAILED

Nearly one hundred people, including many African and West Indian workers, attended a meeting organised by the London District of the Revolutionary Communist League on May 10th to celebrate and sum up the lessons of the Zimbabwean revolution.

After some anti-imperialist songs from the New Era Singers, a comrade spoke on behalf of the Revolutionary Communist League-Communist Workers' Movement outlining the main lessons British revolutionaries can learn from ZANU's victory.

A speaker from the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (South Africa) showed how ZANU's victory gave great heart to the people of Azania and showed the importance of people's unity and remaining independent of Eastern and Western masters.

The main speaker was ZANU's Political Commissar and election organiser, Comrade Takiwara Mangwende, who began by conveying greetings from Comrade Mugabe who had passed through London the previous day. He proceeded to give a detailed and inspiring account of ZANU's victory and the tasks ahead, including rehabilitation and development of the national economy and the struggle for the total liberation of the African continent. The new Zimbabwe desperately needs doctors and teachers, comrade Mangwende pointed out.

Class Struggle correspondent.



During 1978, the RCLB carried out a campaign to support ZANU and eventually sent a landrover to assist in the Chimurenga (liberation war). At the meeting Comrade Mangwende recalled the friendship between the RCLB and ZANU and thanked us for having sent the landrover. Giving us news of its fate for the first time he said, "Actually your landrover did a lot of useful work...but you know how things are in war and the sort of tricks that imperialists get up to. I'm afraid we lost the landrover - it was blown up in fact."

The RCLB has always attached great importance to supporting the national liberation movements fighting our common enemy, British imperialism. We are proud if we managed to assist ZANU's heroic armed struggle in any way.

ZANU lost a landrover but won a country!

NEW ERA BOOKS

NEW ERA BOOKS have just published a Mail Order Catalogue for the first time. It lists hundreds of books and pamphlets, giving a short introduction for many of them to explain what they are about. The list ranges from classical theoretical works to modern political books. It includes cultural and children's books, books from Britain, China and other countries.

NEW ERA BOOKS, 203 Seven Sisters Road, London, N4. Tel: 01-272-5894. Opening hours 10am to 6pm. Late opening - Thursday until 7.30pm. Nearest Tube - Finsbury Park.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES



CHINA - Socialist China achieved complete success in launching its first test carrier rocket on the morning of May 18. This represents a considerable advance in the modernisation of China's national defence and restricts the ability of the superpowers, in particular the Soviet Union, to threaten China and throw their weight around in the world.

ISLAMIC CONFERENCE - "If we do not unanimously condemn aggression against one Muslim country today, any one of our countries could become the victim of such an aggression tomorrow...We vehemently oppose the Soviet military presence in Afghanistan. We also oppose the presence of US naval forces which have been deployed in a threatening posture in the vicinity of Iran." This was stated by Pakistani President Zia Ul-Haq in his opening speech at the Islamic Foreign Ministers Conference on May 17. Representatives from forty countries are attending to discuss Afghanistan, Iran, Palestine and other questions.

KOREA - The South Korean authorities declared full martial law on the evening of May 17, after having been shaken by several weeks of growing protests by workers and students demanding democratic rights and national reunification. Under martial law all forms of political activity are banned. The regime has also introduced press censorship, closed all universities and colleges, banned strikes and carried out mass arrests of opposition politicians, workers' and students' leaders and religious figures. Martial law cannot quell the heroic Korean people. Massive upsurges have even seen the people take control of the city of Kwangju and arm themselves. Our next issue will carry a full report on the situation in Korea.

NAMIBIA - The South West Africa People's organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia will fight on until South Africa agrees to fully implement the United Nations resolution on Namibian independence, stated SWAPO president Sam Nujoma on May 17. On May 4, SWAPO guerillas attacked the South African air base at Ondangwa destroying several helicopters and jet fighters. Five days later, they shot down a South African Air Force bomber, killing the pilot. During April, SWAPO guerillas killed over 100 South African soldiers, shot down two fighter planes and seized military equipment.

OMAN - The Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO) has called for the setting up of broad national front to face the challenge of a military alliance between US imperialism and the Qabus regime. The PFLO stated that the Front should include all nationalists concerned for Oman's freedom and independence, without military alliances, foreign bases or imperialist hegemony.

SOVIET UNION - "Why do we need a Helsinki agreement? The Soviet Union is not honouring their obligations; it has not respected a single article." This statement was made to *The Times* by exiled Soviet dissident, General Pyotr Grigorenko in a recent interview. He revealed that more than eighty Soviet dissidents had been arrested in the last six months and that prison conditions have grown harsher with poorer diets and more spells in punishment cells. Those coming to the end of their sentences are charged with "anti-Soviet activities" and given new ones. General Grigorenko, a hero of the Second World War, was imprisoned in a Russian "psychiatric hospital" between 1969-1974 for having denounced the Soviet rulers' betrayal of socialism.

Communist Party of Malaya

50 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

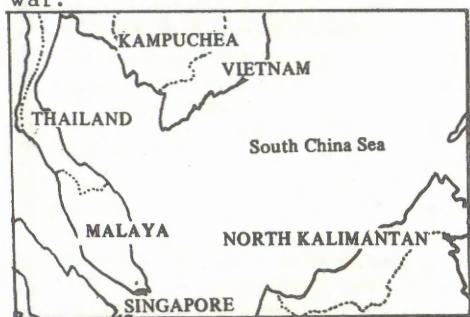
April 30 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Malaya. To mark the occasion, the radio station, "Voice of the Malayan Revolution" broadcast a statement by the Party Central Committee entitled, "Long Live the Communist Party of Malaya", summing up the Party's history and analysing its tasks in the current national and international situation.

Stressing that the Party's struggle is a continuation of the peoples' struggle since the British invasion in 1786 it says, "The CPM is the only genuine force and leading core of the Malayan revolution."

"The CPM has advanced along a long and tortuous road. Our Party committed mistakes, suffered setbacks and made great sacrifices. However, even when its political line was wrong, our Party still did a lot of useful work for the people and obtained valuable results."

ARMED STRUGGLE

Summarising the lessons of the Malayan peoples' war the broadcast states, "For the Malayan revolution to achieve victory, we must...pursue the road of using the countryside to encircle the towns and seize political power by armed force...and not that of so-called parliamentary democracy, armed uprising in the towns or urban guerrilla war."



It cites the victories in the wars against Japanese and British imperialism as fruits of following this road and calls on the Malayan National Liberation Army as a peoples' army to engage in fighting, mass work and production tasks.

UNITED FRONT

The statement shows the need to unite all possible forces into a National United Front against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism. This front should include the national bourgeoisie and be based on the worker-peasant alliance with the working class as the leading and main force and the peasantry as

a main force.

It acknowledges that the national question in Malaya is complex and says that the revolutionary struggle must be waged by the peoples of Malay, Indian and Chinese nationalities and not by one nationality alone.

Dealing with independence in 1957 and the changes since then it states, "After waging a bloody struggle under the strong leadership of the CPM...the people of all nationalities succeeded in forcing the British imperialists to end their direct colonial rule in our country and recognise the independence of the federation of Malaya in 1957. This greatly weakened the dominance of British imperialism in our country. This was the positive aspect of the 1957 independence. But the independence was incomplete. Backed by the British imperialists, the reactionaries of our country set up a reactionary regime and usurped the fruits of the peoples' victory..."

"Precisely because of this, not only were the British imperialist vested interests preserved, but all out efforts were made to attract additional foreign monopoly capital into our country, thereby damaging our national economy and subjecting our people to more ruthless exploitation."

CHANGES SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Turning to the changes that have occurred since independence the statement points out, "In our country, British imperialism still maintains a superior position economically and politically, but its influence has undergone a steady and irreversible decline. The United States, the Soviet Union, Japan and other countries have taken the opportunity to step up their penetration."

"At present, the Kuala Lumpur ruling clique and the Singapore ruling clique are still stubbornly pursuing an anti-communist and anti-popular domestic policy. The contradiction between these two ruling cliques on the one hand and the people of all nationalities and various strata in our country on the other, is the principal contradiction in our society.

"Meanwhile, Soviet-Vietnamese hegemonism, which is frantically engaging in aggression and expansion and spreading the flames of an aggressive war in Kampuchea, is posing an increasingly serious threat to our country's security. The contradiction between Soviet-Vietnamese hegemonism and its running dogs on the one hand and the people of all nationalities and various strata

on the other is on the rise and could become the principal contradiction in our society."

"Only by mobilising all our people by adopting a firm stand in opposing all attempts at appeasement and compromise can the anti-hegemonic struggle be launched effectively."

The statement sets forth a series of immediate demands and addresses itself to the international situation extending support to the peoples' struggles in South East Asia, Afghanistan, Palestine and Southern Africa. It states, "Socialist China, as a powerful revolutionary fortress is playing an ever greater role in the progress of the world revolution." "Voice of the Malayan Revolution" also broadcast messages of greetings to the CPM from the Communist Parties of China, Thailand, Burma, the Philippines, Indonesia and North Kalimantan.

Forthcoming events

Saturday June 7th.

MEMORIAL MEETING FOR COMRADE JAGMOHAN JOSHI.

The Indian Workers' Association (GB) is organising a memorial meeting for its former General Secretary, who was a respected leader of the Indian community and the national minorities, an anti-fascist and communist fighter, on the occasion of the first anniversary of his death.

Exhibition, film, poems and songs. Speakers from the IWA (GB) and ZANU. Birmingham Town Hall, 2 pm.

Sunday June 8th.

ANTI-RACIST MEETING IN LEAMINGTON. This meeting, which was advertised in our last issue, has been cancelled.

Friday June 20th.

THE BRITISH IMPERIALIST STATE. Last meeting in the British imperialism discussion organised by the London district of the RCLB. It will draw together many of the themes from previous meetings.

7.30 pm. Roebuck Pub, Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1. (Warren St. Tube).

Thursday July 3rd.

THE STRUGGLE IN AZANIA. The London district of the RCLB is organising a discussion meeting on the struggle of the people of Azania (South Africa) against imperialism, and the tasks of anti-imperialists in Britain. Details to follow in our next issue.

ADVERTISE IN CLASS STRUGGLE.

Progressive and anti-imperialist organisations are welcome to publicise their activities, free of charge, in Class Struggle. Details for the next issue must be received by Saturday June 7th at the latest.