

CLASS STRUGGLE

Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain.

Incorporating

NEW AGE

PAPER OF COMMUNIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

6p. Fortnightly Vol.4 No. 15 July 24th to August 20th, 1980.

STEEL CUTBACKS WILL BE RESISTED

From a "Class Struggle" correspondent in the North East.

Over 600 workers from the Durham steel-producing town of Consett marched through London on July 9th to put their case against a closure that would push the town's level of unemployment to at least 44%. This was the first full-scale steel workers' protest in the capital over BSC's closure and redundancy plans.

From Kings Cross one column of people marched to Downing Street to hand in a 20,000-name petition, the other column at the House of Commons heard those well-worn parliamentary tunes of 'full support' from Tony Benn, Michael Foot and Dennis Healey, who wished the steel workers 'good luck.'

The message the demonstrators were getting across (and if they've said it once, they've said it a thousand times) was: The well-being of the whole community depends on the steel works. The social consequences of closure would be disastrous. "This Durham community doesn't want to be the Jarrow of the 1980's."

If peaceful protest is ignored then French-style tactics will be considered. A delegation of French steelworkers have visited the town recently - part of a workforce that raised barricades and stole the French F.A. Cup to publicize their plight to successfully fight closure.

Economically viable

Consett works has proved that it is economically viable as demanded by the Steel Corporation (BSC). BSC has deliberately steered orders away from the threatened plant in a bid to strengthen its 'case.' While 53%

of Consett billet output went to private companies in the last quarter of 1979, this dropped dramatically to less than a third of that in the first quarter of 1980.

The continuing demand for steel was vividly illustrated by the delay in the delivery of 2,000 'Save Consett' badges - the months' delay was due to a shortage of steel!

The fears of the campaign organisers now centre on the danger that the plant might not re-open after the two-week summer shut-down from July 25th, or that the campaign might lose momentum during the summer months and subsequently allow the promise of redundancy concessions to be the Achilles' heel of the struggle.

Joseph hounded out

Two days after the Consett march, Consett workers were amongst 300 who 'welcomed' Industrial Secretary Sir Keith Joseph to South Shields as he opened a Plessey plant there. Chants of "Go home" were clearly heard from the crowd of workers, housewives, pensioners and unemployed, and there were placards saying: "Pay cut Joe must go!" and "Joseph's throat, the kindest cut to make!"

While Sir Keith and management cronies lunched in the workers' canteen, on lobster and salmon, Plessey workers had to queue up in their factory carpark for meat pies and sandwiches. Several hundred shopfloor workers walked out in protest over the arrival of the Industrial Secretary. This anger was vocally expressed when Sir Keith tried to emulate Thatcher by going on a 'walkabout'. Like Thatcher

**East London..
Asian youth
murdered.**

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he had to be whisked away as the protest grew noisier.

Later, asked for his reaction to the Consett march, Sir Keith insultingly replied, "I don't think I was aware that there was a march or that I was invited to meet them." He turned down an invitation to meet a delegation of steelworkers on the same day.

Joseph's attitude to Consett was that it would close and remain a "unique problem" for the next few years, adding that any fall in unemployment depends on the "enlightened self-interest of the trade unions". The barrage of abuse that he had faced should have made it clear that our "enlightened self-interest" tells us that he, and the rest of his ilk, must go!

JUST THE BEGINNING!

The Tory Government is going to try to limit picket lines to six. That disclosure was made on July 15th - the day after the Employment Bill was passed in the House of Lords.

The Bill itself will contain no legal limit. The kick comes when the Bill gives power to the Government to establish "codes of conduct". We know, to our cost already, how the state will use its powers. Breaking such a "code of conduct" will mean that workers can be convicted of a whole variety of offences such as "threatening behaviour". Prior, the Employment (or Unemployment) Secretary, has already

stated that in the government's view it is "intimidating" to have more than 6 on a picket line.

But this is just the beginning!

The Employment Bill is an attempt to consolidate existing laws to make it easier for the courts to convict workers involved in trade union struggles. It also gives new general powers to the Government. Most importantly it will be used as a springboard for new and even more vicious laws. That is the declared intention.

In early August it will become law. It must be fought - and fought through united mass action. We live in a class system, and there is a class war. This Bill is an attack on us. We must fight back!

(See also article on page, 4.)

From our postbag

LABOUR, TORY - BOTH THE SAME. From a Liverpool reader: I have been reading with great interest a series of articles in the "Daily Mirror" entitled "A waste of a nation". The paper cites the plight of ordinary working people from various parts of the country who are facing up to the problem of being thrown out of work and into the dole queue, when the firms they worked for have closed down or have cut back their workforce.

The paper went on to attack the Thatcherite 'monetary' policy. What they did not say was what the Labour Party's record was and is. Under Labour we had over a million people out of work. But under Labour working people were no better off really. And Labour had the support of the trade unions to put their policies into practice.

Labour and Tory serve the same interests (capitalism), but each in their own way. The Tories are more blatantly anti-working class. Labour are more subtle in their approach, so as not to show ordinary working people their true colours, and so as to dupe people into believing them when they say they are for the workers and their families, which in my opinion is a load of rubbish.

NHS RUNDOWN. From a Tyneside reader: Earlier this year a local Wearside paper launched an appeal for £18,000 to buy hospital equipment for Sunderland and Durham Eye Infirmary. The target was surpassed owing to the generosity of local people who donated over £40,000.

The rundown of the NHS does not worry the ruling class of this country - they can buy medical service. We wouldn't need either the charity or goodwill of potential patients or that of its nursing staff and other workers to provide a better than adequate NHS if we got rid of those who are running it down.

"DAILY MIRROR" HYPROCISY. From a Liverpool reader: Last Friday (4th July) I bought a "Daily Mirror" headlined "Mrs Thatcher's Wasteland". "Most forecasts say there will be nearly two million unemployed by Christmas", it said, "and this is not happening by accident. Increasing the number of unemployed is Government policy." that was the position of this bosses' paper for the bosses' other party. It didn't bother to point out that unemployment rose to over a million under a Labour Government. I notice that they never admitted that was Government policy, did they?

This shows why we must build our paper, "Class Struggle", as fast as we can. There is such a lot of work to do and so much to learn so that we workers can bring socialism to our country. Thank you for the work you do and keep it up! I have already donated to your press fund and intend to try to do so again.

LAME DUCK DIES. From a reader: Alfred Herbert, the state-owned group which was once the flagship of the British machine tool industry, will cease to exist within three months.

Time and again the bosses say that cutbacks will have to be made in order that things can be better in the future. But allowing a firm like Alfred Herbert to close is a move totally in opposition to a better future.

The more that you observe the ruling class in action the more you see that there has been a lack of capital investment, and that this trend is going to continue. The working class are supposed to sacrifice everything for the good of the country, but capitalists have only one loyalty - profit.

The situation that Britain finds itself in today is a direct result of the total anarchy of both capitalist production and investment. We must make the bosses pay for the crisis.

IRELAND AND 'IMPARTIALITY'. From a Birmingham reader: I was interested to read that the British government has protested at a "highly misleading" American TV film about northern Ireland. It was objected that this documentary was sympathetic to the IRA and showed IRA men defending a population disturbed by the British army. What really upset the British Government was that the film "made no moral distinction between the IRA and British soldiers," said the Daily Mirror of 17th June.

The British state talks about morality, religion and so-called pursuance of truth and facts only as far as it serves its own interests to do so. It keeps the people of Britain ignorant of the objective role of the invading Army that the British army in Ireland is playing. The British media which created such a hullabaloo over the programme about the "Death of a Princess" a month ago treated this topic of Ireland in a much lower key. Otherwise many more people would have seen through the hypocritical facade of 'impartiality' and seen whom it really serves - the British ruling class.

"GUEST WORKER" SYSTEM. From a reader in North London. Congratulations on the wide-ranging reports in the last issue about the fight of the national minorities against racist oppression. I would like to raise one question which may be important about the view in the editorial that "The Immigration laws are designed to force black people out of this country". In my opinion this is not quite right.

Both Labour and Tory Governments have been moving towards what the German ruling class covers up by calling the "guest worker" system. This is the system in most of the Common Market. Under it immigrants have no

rights at all as citizens. Despite their militancy they are put under greater pressure to accept the worst jobs in the worst conditions, at the worst rates of pay. This lowers the bargaining strength of the working class as a whole, and the ruling class stirs up racial divisions in order to divide the workers and exploit them even more.

The guest worker system is what the Labour and Conservative Governments have been step-by-step working towards and it should clearly be seen both as severe oppression of the national minorities and as part of the overall attack on the working class as a whole.

LUCAS THREATENS WORKERS. From a reader: First British Leyland stop negotiating and start dictating, then Lucas industries do the same. They have told their hourly-paid employees that the company is in dire economic straits, and have offered these employees amounts of money to leave, and stated that there is no room for more negotiation. It's a 'take it or leave it' position.

The bosses are taking these actions not from a position of strength, but one of weakness. The bosses may believe that they've got the workers on the run, but they should be warned. The more they increase their oppression the greater will become the resistance.

Good times or bad times, the workers always lose. More and more people are beginning not only to see this reality but are also beginning to seek ways to overcome it. The bosses have everything to lose and we have everything to gain.

AZANIA. From a reader in Wandsworth: I am glad to see the coverage of Azania increasing in your paper. Could you explain the historical development of the trade unions in Azania to enable us to distinguish their revolutionary and reactionary aspects?

A documentary on TV the other night showed a sacked farm worker in Kwazulu. His boss had burnt his hut with all his belongings (mainly blankets). This is apparently a common event. Many workers in Britain have been evicted. But how about having your stuff incinerated with the landlord's property itself! That is comment enough on the standard of housing provided for workers in Azania.

Help rebuild the revolutionary press

For every issue of our little paper, "Class Struggle", we receive a tremendous number of articles, letters, and suggestions from readers in many parts of the country. And yet we are only able to print a small fraction of these items, and then often in shortened form. If we had the resources to publish a paper with more space, we could make better use of the time and effort which so many of our readers put into writing to us. Among the items contributed to this issue, for which we have no space, were:-

- * At least 10 full-length articles, on: shipbuilding on Wearside; BSC; unemployment; police harassment; cutbacks in benefits; unemployment on Medway; SAS, etc.
- * About 30 shorter items on all kinds of subjects.
- * Numerous letters and innumerable cuttings from local and trade union papers, etc.
- * Factory bulletins.
- * A collection of 8 poems from a reader in the North-East; and a very long poem of 12 stanzas denouncing Trotsky, from Birmingham.

Send us a donation to help build up the "Class Struggle" press fund, so that we can start to publish more of what we receive. The working class needs its own press.

Address donations to: CS, c/o New Era Books, 203 Seven Sisters Road, London N.4.

A WORKER'S NOTEBOOK

BIRMINGHAM TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT staged a two-hour picket of the "Post and Evening Mail" building on July 12th, in protest against the total lack of coverage given by the staunchly pro-imperialist local press to the conditions in jails in northern Ireland and to the treatment of Republican prisoners. Needless to say the picket went un-mentioned in the pages of this local press!

"PAY RESTRAINT BY EXAMPLE" was Thatcher's expression for the cut of one third in the recommended salary increases for MPs and public sector chiefs. Like hell it is! There are two catches. First, this is the second salary increase in the last 12 months, so, for example, the saintly 9.6% increase for MPs now will make a total increase since last June of 24%. Secondly, some of the salaries in question are so huge that the increases amount to thousands of pounds each (for example the Chairman of British Steel will get a 9.3% rise of £4,500 bringing him to £53,000 p.a.). So OK Maggie - we'll modestly follow your example - we'll accept whichever increases you like: 24% or £4,500 p.a. (£90 per week).

THATCHER DOESN'T CARE. She's given the successive requests by Northern MPs for a personal meeting to discuss the problems of the region her third thumbs down. However, she did find time to see other MPs complaining that the latest racist immigration laws "weren't tough enough".

WHILE EDUCATIONAL CUTS are rapidly making new books an extinct species in our schools, local authorities are paying out large sums in public school fees. In fact 33 authorities are paying out more in private school fees each year than on books for all their secondary schools, and 9 of these plan to continue unashamedly. An example is Trafford (Manchester), which spent £1,300,000 on school fees for 1,700 children and only £282,000 on books for all the other secondary school children. Of the 9 councils, two are Labour-controlled.

"WE ARE HERE TO STAY" was one of the slogans changed by over a hundred demonstrators outside a meeting on community relations addressed by Home Secretary Whitelaw in Birmingham on July 11th. Indian, Kashmiri and Bangladeshi organisations and their supporters were expressing their opposition to racist immigration controls. They heckled and jeered Whitelaw and his anti-working-class cronies as they left the meeting.

26 PICKETS AT ADWEST ENGINEERING in Reading were arrested on July 12th. The pickets were mounted in support of 39 workers who were sacked from the firm recently.

£500 FOR A ROUTINE OPERATION should be paid by a 'well-off' family, with an average family paying around £100, said the Council Chairman of the British Medical Association, Anthony Graham, to 2000 doctors at a BMA conference recently. As for Health Service unions who oppose his cash-for-treatment formula, he calls for them to face redundancies. He dismissed the ideal of a free comprehensive National Health Service as a "fairly story".

PATRICK JENKIN, Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, was previously economic advisor to the Distillers drug company, of thalidomide fame. In his constituency of Wanstead, Essex, nearly 300 elderly and handicapped people have had to give up their home helps because they cannot afford a weekly charge of £1.50, the highest in the London area.

WITHOUT COMMENT: Company director John Silsbury was jailed for eighteen months for a £260,000 fraud of his company's funds. (Telegraph, February 27th). An unemployed woman who stole a purse containing 50 pence was jailed for eight months. (Telegraph, February 28th).



Edmonton factory raid

MORE FACTS COME TO LIGHT

In our last issue, we carried a report from a "Class Struggle" correspondent in North London about a racist raid carried out by police on Main Gas, a factory in Edmonton. We have since received the following further report:

More facts about the raid on Mains Gas are coming to light, showing that it was a clear case of state racist harassment, and that the Thorns' management was involved:

Fact 1. Workers at the Mains Gas factory have confirmed that the management gave a list of

names to the Home Office.

Fact 2. The same Mains Gas plant has recently announced that 250 workers are to be made redundant next month. Some coincidence!

Fact 3. Police showed their racism by detaining one of the workers - a seven-month pregnant woman - for 3 hours in a van and then for another 5 hours at Winchmore Hill police station.

Fact 4. Even some workers who were 'innocent' according to the racist immigration laws were held by police. This was after they had produced documents to prove that they were legal immigrants.

TRADES COUNCIL MEETING

Sixty trades unionists attended a meeting called by Harringey and Enfield Trades Council on July 10th to protest against the raid, which is the third in 6 weeks in North London. The Trades Council Secretary declared that "such raids are part of a systematic repression of black workers," and that the raid "is a direct attack on the trades union movement in general and working people in particular."

From a "Class Struggle" correspondent, Manchester

TRIBUNAL APPROVES SEX DISCRIMINATION

An industrial tribunal in Leeds has highlighted the difficulties faced by women who dare to undertake skilled manual work normally reserved for men. Helen Sanders, who was fired from a joinery course at a government skill centre after just three weeks, claimed damages and reinstatement on the grounds of sex discrimination.

CONFIDENCE UNDERMINED

She described how the course instructor had made her twist a screw into a piece of wood without first boring it as a "Strength test" and continually undermined her confidence. Other women told the tribunal how they had been made to feel like freaks by course instructors and how this had affected their confidence and performance.

Naturally, the capitalist press gave an entirely frivolous coverage to the case. Concentrating on foolish suggestions that a woman carpenter's breasts would "get in the way" they hoped to distract attention from the main issue. That is, should women workers be allowed to take part in skilled manual trades which today are almost totally dominated by men? Class conscious men will say that they should, knowing that every advance in employment rights for women leads

to an increase in the material and spiritual well-being of the entire class. A defeat for women workers is a set-back for the entire class.

Under capitalism, women will never be able to play a full and equal role in producing the nation's wealth. Generally they are confined to the most boring, menial and low paid jobs - while the almost total lack of nursery facilities ties countless women to their home. If all the women who have never found a job were included in the unemployment figures they would show far more than the 1.7 million admitted by the ruling class. In times of recession and rising unemployment the state will not tolerate ideas that women workers should have the same employment opportunities as men.

"STILL DETERMINED"

Although Helen passed a skill test, and other trainees told the tribunal that her work was better than that of several men who were kept on, her case was dismissed. Adding insult to injury, the tribunal declared that jibes from male chauvinists would provide women with an added incentive to do well! We feel that the best encouragement women can get is to follow the example of Helen Sanders. She said afterwards she was "not deterred by the outcome of the tribunal" and is still determined to become a carpenter.

Tory Employment Bill SMALL FIRMS

DANGER

On July 14th, the Employment Bill passed its third reading in the House of Lords. This means that it has to get through the Commons just once more, and then it will become law.

Under existing laws, police can already use massive violence against pickets, as seen at Grunwicks and now at the Adwest factory in Reading, to name only two examples. Also, Industrial Tribunals order the reinstatement of less than 1% of sacked workers who appeal to them. The purpose of this new Bill is to institutionalise these anti-worker policies, and make the judges' job easier for them, so as to prepare the ground for even bigger attacks in the next few months.

Small firms

One of the themes running through the Bill is a concerted attack on the rights of workers in small firms. The reason is to divide the working class, create two separate camps, encourage strife between them and pick off those who have less economic muscle. And if this succeeds, then other workers will be taken on in a big way.

In Unfair Dismissals cases, the Industrial Tribunal will take into account the size and resources of the firm. If the firm is a new one, and employs less than 19 people, it is automatically exempt from any Unfair Dismissal provisions for two years - it can do what the hell it likes. In cases involving Maternity Leave, a firm with 5 or less workers is completely free to refuse to take the woman back.

The only workers that had anything to gain from the pathetic provisions of the Employment Protection Act for claims against Unfair Dismissal were workers in small firms. They often had to rely on this law, because they were not strong enough or organised enough to take the bosses on themselves. And now it is precisely these workers who are to be hampered from claiming under the new Employment Bill.

Second class citizens

Add to these vicious measures the government's intention to make sympathy strikers and most secondary picketing and blacking completely illegal, and you have the full picture of how they plan to isolate workers in small firms and turn them into second class citizens.

BCA & UNITY

"Class Struggle" recently conducted the following interview with a spokesman for the Birmingham Communist Association.

"Class Struggle": The Birmingham Communist Association (BCA) has just united with the RCLB, but many of our readers in other towns will know little or nothing about you. Could you give us some background about yourselves. How did the BCA come into existence?

The BCA was founded five years ago. Before that we were part of a loose Marxist-Leninist discussion group led by Comrade Jagmohan Joshi in Birmingham. Some of us saw the need to build an active communist organisation and with help from Comrade Joshi we formed the BCA. At that time there was no national or local organisation with which we were in political agreement. But we saw ourselves as a temporary organisation which always had the aim of uniting with other groups to help build a new Communist Party.

CS: What was the political outlook of the BCA?

We have always taken the stand that socialism could only be achieved through revolutionary struggle and that the leading, and main, force in the struggle is the working class. We have also thought it important to use "united front" tactics to get as many people as possible involved in particular struggles. We have stressed the idea of integrating theory and practice so that our theory is not just dogmatic phrases but really aims to understand the real world. In this way our practical work is guided by a real understanding and not just a spontaneous reaction to events. We support the "three worlds theory" which helps us to analyse the developing international situation and also puts our work in Britain into the general perspective of the international struggle.

CS: What political work has the BCA been doing?

Wherever possible we have been active in our individual workplaces and in our trades unions. We have always thought it important to be involved in the struggle against racialism and the oppression of national minorities. To do this we have been active in broad fronts against racialism and fascism and we also directly supported struggles led by the various national minorities' organisations. Over the years we have taken part in a number of demonstrations

on various issues and put out leaflets in local communities.

In addition we were involved in the Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding.

Also we held regular weekly meetings of the members and did theoretical study.

Probably we were very similar to the other small Marxist-Leninist groups.

CS: How did unity with the RCLB come about?

As I said, we always had the aim of uniting with others. We started the discussions with the RCLB on a regular basis over a year ago. Despite the difference in size and experience of our two organisations we found that we could have principled discussions about the main issues involved in the revolutionary struggle in Britain.

Through our joint meetings we were able to establish that we had a common position or approach on the major items. These included Ireland, women's emancipation, a class analysis of Britain, the struggle against racialism, and the international situation. Equally important we came to understand that we both had a similar style of political work. We began to do some joint anti-racist work. This was a good test of the unity that was developing during our discussions.

CS: What do you see as the advantages of uniting?

There is always the danger that a small group will become liberal. It is very easy when you are a small local group to degenerate into just a social group or only see the struggle from the point of view of your town. It's difficult to have a definite direction in your political work. Being small you cannot achieve a great deal and it's easy for members to become disillusioned.

As members of the RCLB our work will have clearer priorities and direction. Also our experience will be summed up by a larger number of comrades. Our work will have a national perspective. A national organisation is in a better position to study and understand international affairs. All this will mean that individually we will have the chance to develop our political understanding further. Also of course we will be able to use the experience gained in the BCA to help build the RCLB.

Also we will have a national newspaper ("Class Struggle") to aid and publicise our work.

Uniting is a small contribution towards building a new Communist Party in Britain.

Ford redundancies

Ford workers in Britain were stunned recently when the company announced more than 2,700 redundancies in 11 plants. 1,300 jobs are to go on the Dagenham estate in the engine plant, the foundry and the forge. Another 1000 will be cut from Swansea, Enfield, Basildon, Woolwich, Treforest, Leamington and Belfast. And 405 are to go from the highly profitable Halewood transmission plant.

Ford's advertising slogan in this country is that they are "the bright spot in Britain's motor industry". While Leylands, Vauxhalls and Talbot/Chrysler have been struggling to survive in the highly competitive world market, Fords have been pushing up their profits year after year. So while many Ford workers have been laid-off over recent months, many thought that with such high levels of profits redundancies could be avoided.

Not so though! As soon as Ford profits are in any way threatened, it's the workers who are to suffer. Never mind who created those profits in the first place!

'Class Struggle' summer break

There will be no issue of "Class Struggle" in a fortnight's time. The next issue will appear on August 21st.

"CLASS STRUGGLE" PRICE RISE

Unfortunately we are not immune from rising prices. These have affected both our production and distribution costs. From August 21st the price of "Class Struggle" will rise to 10p. New subscription rates are as follows:

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| INLAND | |
| 13 issues | £2.75 |
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- Ireland her own. An outline history of the Irish struggle. By T.A.Jackson. £1.50 + 50p post
- The Irish case for communism. Documents on the building of the Communist Party of Ireland, 1930-1935. 70p + 13p post.

Address: 203, Seven Sisters Rd., London N4.
Open Mon-Sat. 10-6 (Thurs 7.30).
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O.A.U.—UNITY AGAINST IMPERIALISM

The Seventeenth Summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was held in the capital of the West African state of Sierra Leone, Freetown, from 1-4 July. Attending were heads of state or their representatives from 50 member states and a number of national liberation movements. Overall, the conference of this important third world organisation was a successful one of unity.

NATIONAL AND ECONOMIC LIBERATION

The main themes of the conference were the struggle to overthrow white racist rule and win national liberation in Southern Africa and the struggle to overthrow the legacy of colonially enforced backwardness by developing the African national economies on the basis of self-reliance and regional co-operation.

The liberation of Zimoabwe - which was warmly welcomed as the 50th member state - provided great encouragement to the discussions on Southern Africa. The conference recognised that the liberation movements in Azania (South Africa) and Namibia were now entering a decisive stage and many delegates called for a special plan to be drawn up to assist the liberation movements. The Summit adopted resolutions to increase aid to the liberation movements, calling for an oil embargo on South Africa and requesting a meeting of experts to discuss the possibility of a boycott of airlines maintaining links with South Africa.

The conference also condemned the latest South African aggression against Angola.

President Siaka Stevens of Sierra Leone said, "Zimbabwe shall remain a beacon in the history of Africa, and the remaining enclaves of oppression on our continent...shall not be forgotten."

In a warmly received speech, Zimbabwean Prime Minister, Comrade Robert Mugabe, thanked OAU members for the support they had given to the Zimbabwean peoples' struggle. He called for greater support to the reconstruction efforts of the frontline states and for a concrete plan of assistance to the Azanian and Namibian liberation movements. He



also exposed South Africa's aggressive and subversive activities against its neighbours.

ECONOMIC LIBERATION

The Summit also considered ways of getting rid of poverty and backwardness. Africa has fertile soil and abundant resources but centuries of ruthless plunder and exploitation by the imperialists have left Africa with a very low level of economic development. In recent years the situation has been made more complicated by natural disasters and the attempts of the imperialist countries to shift the burden of their crisis onto the backs of the Third World. The Summit called on the African states to enhance co-operation in the spirit of 'collective self-reliance' in order to build a prosperous Africa. This was building on the first OAU economic summit meeting held in the Nigerian capital of Lagos in April which drew up an economic action plan for the next twenty years.

PALESTINE

The OAU adopted a resolution in support of the Palestinian peoples' struggle led by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). It condemned the Israeli settlements on the occupied West Bank of the Jordan River and



the annexation of Jerusalem. Importance was attached to developing Afro-Arab solidarity.

Resolutions were adopted on steps towards an OAU Defence Force and Political Security Council. A resolution on Africa's five million refugees appealed for urgent humanitarian assistance.

CHAD

The conference adopted a resolution on Chad, where a civil war is going on. It called for an African solution to the crisis through the sending of a neutral OAU Defence Force. The civil strife in Chad has been manipulated by France, the former colonial power which still has extensive interests in the area, and Libya which has its own claims to areas of northern Chad and which, to a certain extent, acts as a proxy for the Soviet Union.

The Seventeenth OAU Summit Conference showed that the African countries are capable of solving their own problems, eliminating all foreign interference and building a prosperous free Africa.



AFRICA IN BRIEF

Diego Garcia

By unanimous vote the recent OAU Summit voted for the return of Diego Garcia to Mauritius. Diego Garcia is a small island in the Indian ocean. When Mauritius won its independence from British imperialism in 1968, Diego Garcia was bought for £2 million and its entire population deported. The original intention was to use the island as a communications post but Britain has now allowed the United States to develop a huge military base there. This has met with the opposition of all Indian ocean countries, particularly after the persistent rumours - which have not been denied - that Diego Garcia was used as a staging post for the military aggression against Iran earlier this year.

Garcians on Mauritius have repeatedly staged demonstrations this year for the right to regain their island and go back home. Mauritian Prime Minister, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, pressed this demand during his recent visit to London. Calling for the Indian Ocean to be made a zone of peace, he has said,

"We are watching...the growing tension in the Indian Ocean where the superpowers are racing against time to overbuild their respective strengths and armaments, leaving in their trail the inherent dangers that such actions carry."

Western Sahara

Western Sahara was the most contentious issue at the OAU Summit Conference. The people of this former Spanish colony have been fighting for their independence for many years. Before the Spanish colonialists had even left, the reactionary Moroccan regime sent its troops to occupy this phosphate rich area. Since then, the POLISARIO front, which heads the Sahara Arab Democratic Republic, has been fighting an increasingly successful war of liberation, placing Morocco in a more and more difficult position.

The Saharan peoples' cause of national liberation is strongly supported by Algeria and a number of other countries. This year a determined effort was made to install the Saharan Republic as a full OAU member. Speaking out most strongly were Zimbabwean Prime Minister, Comrade Mugabe, who likened the struggle of the Saharan people to that of the peoples of Namibia and Azania, and Samora Machel, President of Mozambique. President Samora said, "We are seeing a country that liberated itself trying to dominate another people." Accusing Morocco of genocide he said that colonialism knew no colour and no race. President Samora said that if the OAU supported Morocco it might as well admit South Africa to membership since apartheid was only colonialism in another form.

A small majority of member states favoured the admission of the Saharan Republic. However, the Summit adopted a compromise resolution so as to guard against a split in the OAU. It appointed a committee to negotiate a peaceful settlement with all parties concerned and called for a referendum to be held so as the Saharan people could decide their destiny. Whether or not the Moroccan regime will co-operate is another matter.

NAMIBIA - A recent meeting of the United Nations Council on Namibia denounced the South African sponsored plunder of Namibian uranium resources. Rossing Uranium owned by South Africa, Britain, West Germany and France, has plundered 870 million U.S dollars worth of uranium for sale as a fuel element in nuclear reactors. One of their main customers has been the Soviet Union, that "natural ally" of oppressed peoples! When challenged at the U.N. on this by a representative of the West German Anti-Apartheid Movement, Soviet diplomats were unable to deny it.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES



POLAND - Poland has been wracked with strikes since the beginning of July. The most immediate cause was the threat to worsen the already chronic meat shortage by price increases of between 35-80%. Despite censorship, over 50 strikes and sit-ins have been reported, including workers from aircraft, car, textile and tractor factories.

In addition to calls for wage increases to compensate for the rise in prices, workers have demanded improvements in conditions and drawn attention to the wasteful use of raw materials. A television appearance by revisionist (phoney communist) boss, Gierek, which attempted to calm people down, only led to new walk-outs. In attempts to conceal the truth, the Polish media has referred to the strikes as, "temporary disruption of production dynamics".

In the third week of July, the eastern city of Lublin saw the biggest upsurge. Bakery and dairy workers went on strike forcing troops to maintain essential services. Railway workers joined other transport workers on strike and train drivers together with other transport workers parked locomotives and empty trains on the four main lines linking Poland to the Soviet Union. Polish officials told foreign journalists that the strike had "awakened fears in Poland's neighbours".

VIETNAM - The authorities in Hanoi recently staged the farce of 'trying' Comrade Hoang Van Hoan in his absence and 'sentencing' him to death on a charge of treason. Comrade Hoang Van Hoan is a veteran Vietnamese revolutionary who fled to China last year in order to carry on the revolutionary struggle. Commenting on his "trial", Comrade Hoang Van Duan said,

"The court under Le Duan and company imputed to me the charge that my coming to China means taking my place in the enemy's ranks. This is sheer distortion. China is the best friend of the Vietnamese people. In the past 30 years, she has given the Vietnamese people dozens of billions of US dollars worth of aid in their struggle against the French and then the US aggressors and for national salvation. During the war against the French aggressors, hundreds of Chinese cadres were in Vietnam offering advice and fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Vietnamese people. During the war against the US aggressors, hundreds of thousands of Chinese helped the Vietnamese people in construction in the rear. Several thousand of them sacrificed their very lives under US bombing."

Comrade Hoang Van Hoan pledged himself to struggle as before to build, "a truly peaceful, unified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam as President Ho Chi Minh had hoped to see." On Le Duan and company he said, "I hold them in utter contempt and repudiate them."

BURMA - The Burmese Peoples' Army, led by the Communist Party of Burma, has successfully smashed a major government offensive against its liberated areas. Launched in November last year, the Burmese government deployed over half of its army in the operation. Between November 1979 and May 1980 the Burmese Peoples' Army fought 577 battles, with the support of the local people. They killed 1,458 enemy soldiers, wounded 2,749, took 233 prisoner and five others defected. A large amount of military equipment was captured and 39 military vehicles, two armoured cars and 18 communication bridges were destroyed.

CHINA - Coal miners in socialist China have had their working day reduced from eight hours to six. During this time they will have a meal break in a free canteen. China has recently reaffirmed that the most important criteria in mining is the workers' safety.

MURDER!

From a "Class Struggle" correspondent.

At 4 pm on July 17th, a young Pakistani was stabbed to death by four racist youths outside the Halifax Building Society in High St. North, East Ham. This is the third racist murder in three years, in this part of East London alone.

On hearing the news, over 100 members of the local Asian community staged an angry march to the local police station. Many Asian workers were late turning

up for the night shift at nearby Fords, Dagenham, as local people got together to discuss how to resist this type of attack on their community. £150 was collected for the family on the night shift at Fords.

The following Saturday 2000 marched on Forest Gate Police Station. For an hour the road was blocked. Attempts by police to arrest protesters were beaten off by the angry crowd. Aggressive gestures and taunts from racists were met with a hail of stones, as the local people chanted "self-defence the only way." Local people are angry because they know that racist thugs and murderers walk scot free from the courts while victims

who organise to fight back are sent to jail. The thugs who last summer murdered another Pakistani worker, Mr Anklesaria, were let off because they 'thought he 'looked like' a homosexual whereas the four Virk brothers received vicious prison sentences for defending themselves from a racist gang.

Reflecting the concern of the traditional and 'moderate' community leaders, Mr Sibghat Kadri, president of the Standing Conference of Pakistani Organisations, said after the attack that community leaders would be powerless to stop the Pakistani community from "rising in violent anger" unless the government acts against racist violence.

AZANIA WILL BE FREE

This was the theme that drew 100 people to a meeting organised by the Revolutionary Communist League on July 17th.

Opening the meeting, Pula Kommune gave a stirring performance of poetry and drums focussing on the peoples' fightback against oppression.

forces and the unity between them, rather than the sectarian style of supporting only one movement as some forces in the solidarity movement, such as the Anti-Apartheid Movement, do.

All the speakers stressed that their peoples' struggle is not just one against apartheid but a national democratic revolution against imperialism, colonialism and the white settler state that has stolen the land from the people. Apartheid is the form that

oppression takes, not the essence.

The speaker from the Pan Africanist Congress showed the necessity of having a revolutionary party to lead the struggle.

What the armed struggle needed was not spectacular campaigns but peoples' war - guerilla war based on the mass line.

The formal part of the meeting closed with the New Era Singers, who premiered their new song on the Azanian peoples' struggle.

Afterwards many people stayed behind for a discussion on how to develop solidarity work in Britain.

Forthcoming events

Saturday-Sunday August 9th-10th.

MASS DELEGATION TO BELFAST

The Troops Out Movement is organising a mass delegation to Belfast to mark the anniversaries of the army being sent to northern Ireland and the introduction of internment without trial. The delegation will take part in a demonstration and picket army forts.

Details from: Box TOM, 2a St Pauls Rd., London N1. Phone 01-267-2004.

Saturday August 23rd.

OPPOSE SOVIET AGGRESSION

Meeting organised by the Revolutionary Communist League to mark the anniversary of the invasion of Czechoslovakia and oppose Soviet aggression around the world.

Speakers from the RCLB, Afghanistan (confirmed), Czechoslovakia and Iran (invited).

Time and venue to be confirmed. Phone New Era Books for details: 01-272-5894.

Also meetings in Birmingham and Liverpool. To be confirmed. Phone NEB for details.



Speakers from three of Azania's liberation organisations addressed the meeting - Pan Africanist Congress, Black Consciousness Movement and African National Congress (African Nationalist). This concretely showed the correct line of supporting all patriotic

Defend Nasira Begum

More than 500 people marched from Rusholme to Longside on July 19th in a Manchester demonstration in defence of Nasira Begum and all people threatened by racist immigration laws.

Organised by the Friends of Nasira Begum, the march was also supported by the Manchester Asian Youth Movement and many other national minority, womens' and political groups.

Amongst slogans raised were: **DEFEND NASIRA BEGUM!** **BRING ANWAR DITTA'S CHILDREN HOME!** **NO MORE DEPORTATIONS!** and **HERE TO STAY, HERE TO FIGHT!**

