

CLASS STRUGGLE

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Incorporating

NEW AGE

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H-BLOCKS IN DURHAM?

From a "Class Struggle" correspondent in the North East

"Does Whitelaw want to start H-Blocks in Durham? It will be like a concentration camp." So said a leading member of the Prison Officers Association, George Elliot. He was expressing concern at the opening of the uncompleted £13 million top security jail, Frankland, outside Durham, to house 160 inmates during the prison officers' dispute, as well as the use of 500 troops to guard Frankland.

What we are witnessing has sinister overtones, coming after the disclosure that the recent Home Defence exercise included provisions for the establishment of internment camps for "hostile elements" - in other words striking workers and pacifists (in a wartime situation) and others labelled "subversives." Is it not strange how the 500 Gordon Highlanders presently employed at Frankland are normally stationed at Kirknewton, near Edinburgh, which just happens to be a Civil Defence control bunker for central Scotland? There is also the talk of army camps being used to 'house' "criminals", notable Long Moor, near Liss, Hampshire, and Rolleston, near Salisbury. A dress rehearsal?

One cannot help but notice the speed with which constitutional niceties were observed, as legislation was bulldozed through the Commons. Thursday 23rd October saw the Cabinet agree to study the possibility of using Frankland. Friday 24th saw the army reconnoitre, authorised under the 1964 Emergency Powers Act. And the troops were arriving on Monday 27th before Whitelaw announced it in the Commons. Will we be given even as much warning as that when the state decides to act against a rebellious populace?

Temporary?

Whitelaw assures us that "all these provisions will be temporary." The day may come when he repeats his words and they will be as meaningful as the phrase "temporary measures" bracketed under that piece of Labour legislation, the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

CAR INDUSTRY ...

BATTLE ON ALL FRONTS

One of the most organised sections of the working class - the car workers, are facing an all-out attack. BL boss Edwardes has grown truculent after two years' success in forcing down BL workers' living standards. He is adopting a 'not-a-penny-more' attitude to pay negotiations and has even threatened to liquidate the company within 48 hours should a strike go ahead. BL workers, in a recent ballot, voted against the pathetic 6.8% wage offer. As we go to press, the shopstewards' conference at Coventry has voted to 'postpone' the strike...

BL workers want to win the fight to keep their jobs and defend their living standards, and are prepared to strike if necessary - not for its own sake, but to win. Union boss Duffy, however, is facing no such dilemma over whether or not strike action should be taken. His mind was made up before the present struggle even arose - his one and only thought is that a strike should be avoided at any cost. The bosses are not in the mood to listen to any language but the real threat of massive industrial action. A leadership like Duffy's is therefore bound to secure a poor deal for BL workers as he is making it perfectly plain that he is not prepared to brandish the workers' main weapon.

FORDS

Meanwhile, Fords have sent a letter to every one of their 70,000 workers announcing a vicious new anti-union 'discipline' code. Any unofficial stoppage will lead to workers, even those who are laid off, being suspend-

ed for the rest of the shift and the following shift - effectively an on-the-spot 'fine' of between £47 and £54. Unions immediately responded by calling off plans for the coming round of pay negotiations.

A third prong of the current offensive against the car workers is the current threat of widespread layoffs in Vauxhall. Throughout the car industry, the story is the same. The industry's bosses are dead set to cut their labour costs and throw tens of thousands of workers on the scrapheap. They are determined that the working class should bear the costs of the current capitalist crisis, not the capitalist bosses whose system has brought it upon us.

In this tense situation of conflict, workers have a struggle on all fronts. Besides this urgent need for a massive, united and militant resistance to the bosses' attack, they also have to fight for union democracy in such a way as to isolate misleaders like Duffy and turn the Unions into real fighting organisations. Without that we cannot fight back against the bosses offensive.

Like Edwardes, Duffy is taking an arrogant attitude towards BL workers based on his recent union election victory. He beat his challengers easily, tho' both Duffy and his main militant challenger Wright got less votes than last time, and only one quarter of the members voted. But Duffy, the democrat, is now president for life! It will be over 7 years till he retires.

That well over 1,000 women attended a Socialist Feminist Conference on the theme of Women's Oppression and Imperialism is a great step forward for the Women's Movement and shows its great potential.

For the past few years organisations of Afro-Asian Latin American and Irish women have fought within the Women's Movement for it to recognise their triple oppression as women, workers and national minorities. The Conference showed the rise of national minority women as an organised political force and a positive

trend within the Women's Movement to link the struggle of women to that of other oppressed and exploited sectors of society.

There was plenty of struggle at the Conference and some Third World and Irish women felt that many of the British women could not appreciate their struggles and aspirations. Despite that, many people were given profound lessons on the meaning of imperialism that weekend and the militancy and large turnout showed that real possibilities of building a mass anti-imperialist Women's Movement in Britain!

From our postbag

WHILE THE RICH GET RICHER... From a CS reader, Leeds. Recently I was made redundant. The youngest member of my family saw one good aspect of my being on the dole. "Oh great," she said, "Now I can go on free dinners like the other kids." Apparently for some time she has been feeling the odd one out because she takes dinner money on a Monday morning.

This reminded me of 12 months back when the poorer parents were justifiably upset at their kids being made to form separate queues at meal times because they were on free dinners. And it set me thinking how rapidly we (the working class) are being pushed downhill. These kids were then in the minority. Not so now. 16 out of 26 are eligible for free school meals in my daughter's class and we all know how hard-up families have to be to qualify for a 'handout' from the state.

NEW MASS MOVEMENT AGAINST WAR From a CS reader, London. I hadn't read "Class Struggle" for a while and looking through back issues for this year was amazed not to see any comment from you on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, which is presently enjoying a rebirth as the fastest growing political movement in this country and which last week held one of the biggest demonstrations in London since the war. Its growing support reflects people's desire for peace in an increasingly dangerous world climate of confrontation between the two superpowers.

The new CND is not however a re-run of the old one, though there are many CND-ers who still have illusions in the Soviet Union and its phoney 'peace' talk. Particularly, the Campaign for European Nuclear Disarmament is a new departure, raising the demand for a nuclear-free zone in Europe, like those maintained and demanded by countries of the Third World.

Moreover, if CND is to attain its aims, it will, as E.P. Thompson says in his pamphlet 'Protest and Survive', have to oppose the Soviet Union as well as the US.

Your bookshop should stock this pamphlet. Also, as Communists we should be active in the burgeoning anti-nuclear movement. This movement is extraordinarily wide and there is room in it to challenge pacifism and the tendency to rely upon the Soviets, with a democratic and popular alternative to the suicidal reliance upon NATO and nuclear weapons to, as the Manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain puts it, "Make preparations now for a people's war of national resistance against any invasion by Soviet social imperialism."

NEW TECHNOLOGY. From a Merseyside reader. In reply to the article on the new technology in your last issue, I would like to fully endorse the conclusions drawn by the article. However I would like to add a couple of points.

Firstly, this kind of thing has been happening ever since Capitalism started. And the revolutionizing of the means of production in the 19th century was, if anything, far more radical than anything happening today. Karl Marx showed that between 1770 and 1840 productivity increased 2700%! According to the examples given in your article at Longbridge 51 will be doing the work of 200. To someone used to spinning using a primitive spinning wheel, the Spinning Jenny must have seemed far more destructive of employment than the microchip will ever be.

Secondly, I recently attended a day-school on the subject of fighting the chip in Liverpool, and the people there were experienced shop stewards from some of the most important factories on Merseyside, and they were desperate, confessing their inability to think of any way to fight. The only people, they thought, who could resist the chip were people whose jobs had to be performed in a particular locality. If our only hope is to defend Parish Pump jobs, then the depths of our desperation are clear. The only correct response can be for the working class to seize control

of society, and the only way to do that is revolution.

Thirdly, the real problem at the moment is not the new technology, but zero growth. Previously, workers rendered redundant through advancing technology were thrown out gradually and then had been reabsorbed as the scale of the economy grew. What is wrong now is that this reabsorption has ceased, and has not been happening now for about ten years. The volume of goods produced has always had to increase under Capitalism. We have to run to stay still. The cause of this zero growth is, in my opinion, the political crisis of imperialism, knocking away the support for the economy of places like Britain in places like Iran, Rhodesia, Nicaragua and so on, and the contention of the Superpowers leading to an atmosphere of general crisis.

In conclusion, I think we should be optimistic about the future, and know that when they talk of entire populations living on handouts, the end of their system is near.

A KNIGHT TO REMEMBER. From a London reader. NALGO members in the Borough of Lambeth, London, are refusing to co-operate in selling off council houses, which is a policy the Conservatives are trying to enforce on local authorities. Although Labour got a great deal of support locally for its opposition to council house sales in the last local elections, the council has knuckled under, and gone along with government policy. When local NALGO representatives wanted to meet the head of the Council to explain their viewpoint, he refused to see them. His name is Ted Knight; he is a trotskyite, a rising star of the Labour "left" and a prospective parliamentary election candidate.

Why don't you write to us and tell us your experiences from work or from activities you have been involved in? Or just send us your views on some of the important issues.

Textiles rundown...

Class collaboration doesn't pay

From a "Class Struggle" correspondent, Manchester.

The Tory government is very crude in its efforts to convince the working class that they are responsible for the lay-offs, redundancies etc. But these arguments are as false today as they were under the previous Labour government. A look at the textile industry shows that it is the bosses, not workers who are wrecking the economy.

The most common argument is that strikes and wage increases are making British goods uncompetitive in international markets. Yet the industry had no major strikes throughout the 1970's. Successive wage cuts have put them bottom but three of 77 manufacturing industries. Many workers earn less than £60 a week before tax.

They also argue that factories employ too many workers who resist the introduction of new technology through 'restrictive practices'. Nothing could be further from the truth. In the 1970's textile workers accepted a halving of their numbers at a cost of 60,000 jobs and co-operated in the introduction of £100 million worth of new investment.

DIVIDE AND RULE

In some areas class collaboration reached such extremes that management was able to operate a racist, divide and rule policy. They recruited black workers for the night shift and white workers for the two day shifts. Before the latest flood of closures there were approximately 20,000 Asian workers employed in the mills in Greater Manchester. Eighty per cent of them worked a permanent night shift.

This arrangement was acceptable to many white workers and union officials. When the closures began management first closed down the night-shifts. On the last-in-first-out basis black workers bore the brunt of the sackings. Then they argued that it was uneconomic not to operate on continuous production and the remaining workers were sacked.

A report published this week by management information specialists ICC Business Ratios points to where the blame really lies. They can afford to be honest because at £65 a copy it won't be read by many workers. While not exactly a Marxist analysis, it comes much closer to the truth than the drivel churned out by the mass media. The industry's management is squarely blamed for not investing enough in new technology, not modernising early enough to keep the large-scale business which is vital for survival and being less responsive to changes in fashion than their overseas competitors.

So far this year more than 100 mills have closed and 80,000 textile and clothing workers are now drawing unemployment benefit. If this trend continues the industry will have folded by the end of the decade. The only way textile workers can secure their future is to unite together and fight to save their jobs. Class collaboration leads only in one direction - to the unemployment benefit office.

MAKE THE BOSSES PAY - ITS THEIR CRISIS!

NEW ERA BOOKS

We sell progressive books and periodicals from Britain and around the world, as well as the classical Marxist-Leninist works.

Address: 203, Seven Sisters rd., London N.4.
Open Mon-Sat 10 till 6 (Thurs 7.30). 01-272-5894

A WORKER'S NOTEBOOK

ACTING FOR THE HOME OFFICE Mr Peter Scott QC recently confirmed what we have known for years, that British Immigration Laws are racist. In trying to prevent the Commission for Racial Equality from conducting a formal investigation into the immigration service he said: 'By its very nature the immigration control system was based on racial discrimination. It was no part of the function of the CRE...to investigate lawful discrimination...it is the function of certain officials to ensure that that discrimination is effective.' Our thanks to Mr Peter Scott for making the matter crystal clear!

INDUSTRY MINISTER LORD TRENCHARD was recently invited, by arrangement with a local Conservative Association, to visit RAB Production Ltd, a Midlands company, to see how well they are weathering the recession. Unfortunately, they mistakenly invited him on a non-working day (they are on a three-day week). "Most interested to see the recession at first hand," commented the stiff-upper-lipped Trenchard to his fellow Tory idiots of the factory management.

SOME WOMEN WORKING AT HOME are being paid less than 20p an hour, and more than 2 million women workers are underpaid. (Report from the Low Pay Unit). So much for the Equal Pay Act! But it is hardly surprising that it is ineffective when the fine for employers who underpay is £100, half that paid by people without a TV licence, and Thatcher is pressing for a reduction in the number of inspectors, trying to stop the campaign against illegal underpayment and abolish the Wages Council.

THROUGH THE CENTRE OF BIRMINGHAM last week Birmetals workers marched in protest to a ruling which prevents them claiming Social Security. An insurance tribunal has ruled that they are still in dispute with the company, although they have been sacked! - which means that the workers have been left without cash since June. One of the guest speakers at the march was former B.L. convenor Mr Derek Robinson, who won loud applause when he called for the dispute to be made official.

CONSERVATIVE PARTY CHAIRMAN Lord Thorneycroft, wished "good luck" to the Vestey's, the aristocratic family at the centre of a tax storm. Speaking about the Vestey's tax-dodging arrangements, Lord Thorneycroft said, "I don't know how he does it - I wish I could find out." Meanwhile, his fellow-Tory philosopher John Knott, the Trade Secretary, was commenting on the benefits derived from cutting Supplementary Benefits: it "increases people's will to work", he said (for people like the Vestey's, of course).

THE BIRMINGHAM EVENING MAIL has been criticised by the Press Council for printing an article about a Bangladeshi family which was 'insensitive'. The Mail had printed an article attacking Mr Dan Miah as a 'scrounger' because he had been unemployed for two years and was taking his children on a trip to Bangladesh. The article was headlined 'Jobless Dan will jet back to a state handout'. The newspaper's policy was said by its editor to be 'to highlight anomalies and loopholes in Social Security payments'. Of course, he did not say what the loophole or anomaly was, because there is none when a person receives the pitifully inadequate benefits to which he is completely entitled. What the Press Council did not say is that the paper's policy is to attack and stir up hatred against the unemployed and particularly against black, Asian and other national minority people. This is the policy of all the bosses' press, and we cannot expect anything else from them.

BIRMINGHAM'S LABOUR EDUCATION AUTHORITY plans to close Shenstone School, a school for 32 handicapped children on the pretext of "encouraging integration with normal children". At the same time these two-faced Labourites have agreed to give youngsters of 'grammar school standard' a choice of their five voluntary-aided schools

POPPY DAY 1922

Unemployed on the march

The following description of a demonstration in 1922 is taken from "Unemployed Struggles", a book by National Unemployed Workers Movement (NUWM) leader and communist Wal Hannington (available from New Era Books, price £3.95). Wal describes how the NUWM turned Poppy day from a celebration of chauvinism into a militant and dramatic protest. With capitalism one again in crisis, there is much to learn from those workers of the past, both employed and unemployed, who refused to let capitalism shift the burden of its crisis onto their backs.

« It was in this spirit that the London movement decided to march to the cenotaph on 11th November, 1922. We informed the police of our intention to march and to lay a wreath at the war memorial in Whitehall. They decided that, whilst we could not be allowed to march in the official procession, we would nevertheless be permitted to march past the cenotaph at the end of the official ceremony.

Twenty-five thousand London unemployed marched to the Thames Embankment. Many of the contingents came from outlying districts in London and had to start very early in the morning to be there before eleven o'clock. Towards the end of the official ceremony the unemployed contingents formed up in one huge procession and moved up Northumberland Avenue, waiting for the signal to enter Whitehall.

Whitehall and the streets surrounding it were densely packed with mourners and

sightseers. This time they saw a sight that they had never seen before. As the banners of the various contingents were raised ready for the march, it was seen that each banner had hundreds of ex-service men's medals pinned on to it. Thousands of ex-service men took pawn ticket from their pockets and pinned them on to the lapels of their coats. The bands of the unemployed movement were draped in red and black, and at the head of our procession was carried a large wreath with an inscription that read: "From the living victims - the unemployed - to our dead comrades, who died in vain."

The police were seriously alarmed at the way in which we had organised this procession, especially the display of pawn-tickets and medals. But it was now too late for them to prevent the march down Whitehall, and, as the last of the official procession moved out, we marched in. It was an impressive sight; in the hush of the occasion and with dense crowds packed on the pavement in Whitehall, the unemployed ex-service men marched under the banners of the N.U.W.M. to pay their tribute to the dead. Clearly the authorities were excited; large bodies of police received their orders to take up their positions unostentatiously on the flanks of the procession.

Then out of the grey mist came the wail of fifes from the unemployed bands and the measured tread of tramping men. Into Whitehall came the long trail of drab humanity, with their medals hanging from the red banners and the pawn-tickets pinned on their

coats, as an indictment against the system which praises the dead and condemns the living to starvation. On they came, steady and inevitable. Be-medalled and bearing obvious signs of poverty they stirred the dense throng of sightseers to a sense of deep emotion and a realisation of the injustice which was being meted out by man to man.

"Who are these people?" asked one young woman to another on the sidewalk. "Why - they're unemployed." "Then good luck to them," said the first girl bitterly, almost savagely. "Disgraceful," snorted a red-faced old man, with a fur-clad young creature on his arm. "Those men are Bolsheviks," he said. "But look at their medals," said the girl. A woman in a black shawl turned on the old man. "Shut up your bloody gap! If you'd been out of work as long as my old man, you'd be a Bolshevik." A murmur of approval went through the crowd.

The head of the procession was now nearing the cenotaph, the banners dipped, the big drum boomed, punctuating the strains of the "Dead March." On came the phalanx of unemployed, the living indictment against the system which they had fought for, but which had now cast them on to the streets to starve.

On they came, almost inch by inch, the police horses curvetting before them. Then as the first ranks reached the foot of the cenotaph, and the wreath bearers dropped out to lay the wreath of the unemployed amongst the many others that were already there, the leading band played "Auld Lang Syne." It was a tense and unforgettable moment. As each contingent passed the cenotaph, men dropped out to place their floral tributes in position, and as the last contingent filed past the "Red Flag" and the "International" were struck up on the bands of the unemployed, and with a quickened step the living ex-service men passed out of Whitehall on their way to cold and hungry homes.]]

PLAID FIGHTS UNEMPLOYMENT

The unemployment situation in Wales was a major theme of the annual Conference of the nationalist party, Plaid Cymru, held in late October. Delegates overwhelmingly voted to support a campaign of direct action and civil disobedience. In recent months, Plaid supporters have occupied the roof of the British Steel Corporation headquarters in London and picketed the home of its chief executive, Bob Scholey, to protest at the axing of 18,000 steel jobs in Wales, where unemployment is already nearing 12 per cent.

Within minutes of the Conference closing, Dafydd Iwan, well known Welsh folk singer, led a dozen supporters to occupy the Conservative Party club at Bridgend.

Delegates described Mrs. Thatcher as another Marie Antoinette, "but without any cake". Other motions passed called for an active campaign against trial borings for nuclear waste dumpings in Wales and called for an independent Welsh energy policy.

CLOSURES IN KENT

The recent massive redundancies in the paper and pulp industry in Kent have ironically, been welcomed by a large section of the people affected by the redundancies. Older workers with from 20 to 30 years service with the same firm gleefully tote up the redundancy pay they will receive and state quite cheerfully that they are prepared to live on the dole till they are of pensionable age. Younger workers, with from 5 to 10 years service also welcome receiving a redundancy hand-out, confident that, to quote them,

'the cash will come in handy; the recession will soon be over, and we are young enough to find work again.'

A recent series of meetings, called by SOGAT officials, hoping to organise resistance to redundancies, have been a dismal failure.

However, a recent closure at the Medsay town of Chatham, may alert workers to the short-sightedness of 'welcoming redundancy'. The 120 year old firm of Mackays, is the latest to close down, with a loss of 180 jobs. Since it was established in 1860, Mackays had a reputation as the finest printers in Britain. Mackays also has the most sophisticated equipment in the book-binding trade. And the latest news is that the 180 workers, soon to be made redundant, will only receive nominal redundancy pay. As the depression worsens, nominal redundancy pay will soon become the norm.

NATIONAL MARCH AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

NOV
29

MEET AT 11 O'CLOCK SEFTON
PARK LIVERPOOL

A contingent will be organised by Liverpool district of the RCL. Special train from London organised by LP. £9 return. Further details from LP offices.

WOMEN AGAINST IMPERIALISM!

London Conference

By a "Class Struggle" correspondent

This was the theme of this year's Socialist Feminist Conference held in London in October. Over 1,000 women attended the conference, many feeling they had little knowledge of third world countries or even of how imperialism affects them in Britain. The tide of events changed that under standing for many

IRISH WOMEN HELD

Maire O'Hare and Ann Boyle were two of several women travelling from Belfast to speak at the conference about the role of British imperialism in Ireland. Particularly they were to speak about the present hunger strike, the conditions in Armagh and H-Block, and the treatment of women picked up by the RUC and the Army. Maire and Ann were arrested at Heathrow under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). The police would not say where they were held, even when solicitors for the women enquired.

Saturday morning, before the conference, the sisters from Ireland and from sympathetic organisations in Britain (like Women and Ireland, and Women against Imperialism) organised a picket and petition for that night. Through the day Ann and Maire received wide publicity and a collection was held for solicitors' fees, a writ of habeus corpus, etc., and a petition went round. The Irish women spoke, telling us of the hunger strike, conditions for women prisoners, and the daily fear of harassment of the Irish people in the North

Two women picketed 'on the blanket' outside Downing St. from early morning and some sympathisers stood with them. The police were constantly harassing and threatening them, so a group of women from the conference went down, as an act of solidarity, with most people to follow at 7.30 for a mass picket.

FREE OUR SISTERS-SMASH PTA!

At 7.30 about 300 people assembled outside Downing Street for the handing in of the petition shouting 'Free our sisters-smash PTA! 'No prison uniform-no prison work-free association-political status now!' and some carrying placards denouncing H-Block. From there we marched to Rochester Row police station where, it was believed Ann and Maire were being held. The march was militant and loud with slogans, wo-

men's songs, war whoops and whistles, to attract the notice of passers-by and, more importantly, so that, if they were inside, Ann and Maire would hear us. The police said that if the rest went away they would allow a delegation into the station! The Irish sisters would not accept that. They said that they had never before had trouble getting into a police station, they were usually dragged in! A police woman said that all the Irish were 'barbaric', presumably to provoke the demonstrators. The reply was that the demonstrators would return every night until the sisters were free so the police would see how 'barbaric' the Irish could be!

After marching down a side street by the cells, making as much noise as possible the demonstrators sat down in Rochester Row for ten minutes and then moved off. Throughout, the Irish sisters organised the demonstration and tactics.

INTIMIDATION BACKFIRES

The next day Maire was released and it was confirmed that Ann was in Rochester Row. Meanwhile the two women taking notes from the first day's discussions at the conference to the printer were followed by police, stopped and their car was searched by the Special Branch. Some items were taken away including lists of names and addresses of those attending the conference.

While many women felt confused in the conference, and there was much disagreement and discussion, one thread united many of them, from those who saw imperialism as an aspect of the oppression of all women by all men to those of us who see the class question as primary. We stood together on the picket and at the conference and could see and hear for ourselves just how British im-

Irish women brought a very clear line to the conference. Many had disagreements with aspects of Republican policy but said that the Republican movement was the only body fighting British imperialism in the six counties. The most important thing was to support the national liberation struggle. If changes had to be made in Sinn Fein's line on women, that was the job of women in Sinn Fein and not British feminists. Many women at the conference supported this view.

LIVERPOOL WOMEN ORGANISE

A group of Liverpool women, Irish and British, circulated a leaflet at the conference on the theme of whether or not to organise a support network for women coming from Ireland to England for abortions. Thousands come to Liverpool every year as abortion rights in both the 6 and 26 county states are far more restricted than even those in Britain. The women are now involved in thinking through the political implications of this work. Their leaflet explains,

"The network is for Irish women, coming from Ireland, and that is quite different from a service organised for women in England. It is not a question of distance but the specific relationship England has to Ireland, and we must have a clear consciousness of our role within that. We realise we have a responsibility to find out and understand the situation in Northern Ireland and the role of British imperialism."

The leaflet also stressed the need to discuss the question with people in the women's movement in both parts of Ireland.

perialism oppresses the Irish people. Our sisters risked prison to come and tell us of their struggle and two of them went to prison for it.

The police must have thought it a great act of intimidation to arrest the women coming to the conference but it simply exposed aspects of the British imperialist state to women who would not otherwise have understood. When a woman at the end of the conference said that the discussions showed that what we had to fight

was the Tory government, the response from the hall was clear cries of 'the British State'. This showed that the Labour Party couldn't fool us any more and the Irish sisters told us that whichever government was in power made no difference to them.

The state had 'lifted a rock to intimidate and dropped it on their own toes!'

Class Struggle welcomes articles and reports contributed by its readers. Why not become a regular correspondent?

REAGAN WINS IN USA —

WHAT'S NEXT?

(Contributed)

So Ronald Reagan is to be the next President of the United States.

Within the USA itself, there are unlikely to be any major changes. Only half the adult population voted at all, and those that did not are overwhelmingly factory workers and national minorities. It was with good reason that the American Marxist-Leninists condemned the policies of both candidates as anti-working class. Unemployment, racism and inflation are not going to change. Some policies will - but the main things won't.

But the workers and oppressed minorities of America will take up those struggles - what is more immediate for those of us in the rest of the world is what course will US foreign policy take now?

Some say that Reagan will force a war with the Soviet Union. Yet the USSR itself claims that Reagan won because of Carter's anti-Sovietism! In my view there is unlikely to be any major change in the USA's direct relations with the Soviet Union.

The Bomb

Letter from a London reader.

Watching Jonathan Dimpleby's programme "The Bomb" the other night everyone would have been deeply moved by the horror of Hiroshima. The poignant stories of two mothers who lost their children would have reminded older people particularly of the devastation and broken lives of the people of that city. Then Dimpleby graphically described the grotesque nuclear arsenal held by the superpowers and efforts by countries like Canada and Norway to try and protect their people by forbidding nuclear weapons on their soil.

Turning to the scenes of the recent tremendous CND demonstration, when 70,000 marchers showed their determined opposition I felt I was back in the earlier CND days of the 50s and early 60s - again mainly young people coming together to try and stop the evil of nuclear escalation and war.

But the programme failed to pose the real issue. Only the superpowers - the USSR and the USA - have the necessary armed power and nuclear arsenal to start a nuclear war. Second world and second rate imperialist powers can only try and protect themselves from these superpowers' hegemonistic aims by uniting with the rest of the world in determined resistance.

What Dimpleby should have been stressing was that unless the superpowers are forced to really undertake nuclear disarmament seriously and wholly, and that doesn't mean the wrangling and cover-up of the Salt Agreements, then everything else we try to do is peanuts. That is where the hammer blow of the world's peoples has to fall.

* * * * *

Editors' note: We have received other comments from readers about his programme, including one Page 6

Where there will probably be some change is in the USA's attitude to the third world. This is not because of a fundamental difference between Carter and Reagan - whatever the rhetoric - but due to changes within monopoly capital interest in the US.

Take the question of Taiwan for example. Carter recently gave diplomatic recognition to "unofficial" representatives of the pro US clique which presently rules Taiwan Province. Reagan may well take it further and go back to America's policy of openly trying to create two Chinas - an attack on the national integrity of China and its right to self-determination. It is likely that the US will more directly back Israeli Zionist aggression. We may well see greater US direct intervention in support of certain central American dictatorships, and so on. This depends on how much Reagan's public statements are just election rhetoric - and how much they represent a change within the US corporations.

If it is a real change, the result will be two-fold. On the one hand we may see more open aggression from the US, and on the other, its effect will be to divide forces opposed to the growing expansion of the Soviet imperialism, who will also seize on it as an excuse to step up their own aggression. In other words, the danger exists not just of more Chile's, but of more Afghanistans. That is how the threat of war may be made graver. We must respond by opposing all Superpower aggression, and by calling for unity on an equal basis against Soviet expansion.

letter which indignantly pointed to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, occupation of Kampuchea and threats towards Poland, all of which were proceeding even while Dimpleby made

his programme. The letter pointed to Dimpleby's known Trotskyite history, and said that many TV viewers must have felt that the KGB had taken over ITV for a subtle propaganda broadcast.

Our coverage of Ireland

- by the Editor of Class Struggle -

Regular readers of "Class Struggle" will probably have noticed a change in the paper's coverage of Ireland, both in its approach and in the prominence given to it this year.

"Class Struggle" is a paper which exists to serve the working class. It aims to assist it in its day-to-day struggles against attacks on living standards and democratic rights, and to be a strong weapon in the fight to build a genuine revolutionary party of the working class. It tries to put over communist policies and views in a clear and honest way, so that readers can grasp them well, and those who wish to support them can do so on the basis of really understanding them. For these reasons, if our stand on a major issue changes, we will not opportunistically slip and slide round to that position in CS (in the manner which Trotskyite and revisionist publications do) while pretending nothing has happened, but will try to explain to our readers why our stand has changed.

Why the change

The changes in our Irish coverage are products of the successful struggle for unity between the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain and the former Communist Workers' Movement and of the attendant struggles in both organisations, and of our better understanding of the foolishness of idealistically making up policies which are divorced from the concrete reality of the issue involved. We recognize that our understanding of the important and complex questions at issue will develop in the course of the RCL engaging in three fronts of work, namely, mass work in the Ireland solidarity movement, theoretical and programmatic work and developing our fraternal links with Irish Marxist-Leninists.

The RCL-CWM Unity conference held on May 31st and June 1st this year voted to amend the Manifesto of the WCL to delete the provision that the British revolutionary communist party should be built in Northern Ireland, as well as Britain. It correctly criticised its previous social-chauvinist error. The RCLB was also in error in not attaching sufficient importance to the work of campaigning for the withdrawal of British troops and of building support for the Irish people's national democratic revolution against British imperialism and for national independence and reunification. Naturally, this weakness was reflected in our paper. Worse than this, on a number of occasions we slandered the liberation fighters as terrorists devoid of real support from the people. That this is not the case was confirmed by those of our comrades who took part in the Troops Out Movement delegation to Belfast in August.

Support the struggle that exists

The Irish people will decide who best represents their hopes and aspirations. We now recognize that communists in Ireland have to organise on a 32 county basis in order to gradually come to play a vanguard role in the national democratic revolution. As the Irish people are fighting "our" bourgeoisie, we have a particular responsibility to support all those who genuinely fight British imperialism. In particular, we will specifically uphold what is correct and progressive in the national liberation movements, whilst not neglecting to give every possible support to the building of a proletarian revolutionary party in Ireland based on Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought, which alone can lead the struggle to final victory.

The RCLB made serious errors in its line on Ireland in the past, but we are determined to overcome them, continue to improve our work, and fulfil our proletarian internationalist duties - duties which are inseparable from developing our own revolutionary work in Britain.

The armed fighters of Democratic Kampuchea (Cambodia) are continuing to hold their own against the Soviet backed Vietnamese occupiers. During the rainy season which has just come to an end, the National Army of Kampuchea overfulfilled its plan to put out of action 50,000 Vietnamese troops, by killing or wounding 68,000. Moreover, the Vietnamese suffered further losses due to malaria, other diseases, mass desertions, mutinies and fighting amongst themselves.

Because it is the forces of Democratic Kampuchea that are leading the struggle against the Vietnamese, their diplomatic position abroad and political position at home have been strengthened. This is also because the leaders of Democratic Kampuchea have repeatedly made self criticism for some of the mistaken ultra 'left' policies they followed in the past as well as for the mistakes made in carrying out basically correct policies. An increasing number of independent organisations are rallying to the banner of the Patriotic and Democratic Front of Great National Union of Kampuchea, initiated by the government of Democratic Kampuchea. The Khmer Peoples' National Liberation Front, a resistance movement led by Sonn Sann, a former Prime Minister under Prince Sihanouk, has as yet refused to join the United Front but maintains a 'gentlemen's agreement' that they do not attack each other as the main enemy is the Vietnamese and some units co-operate at a local level.

UN VICTORY

On October 13, the peace and justice upholding countries in the world rallied to defeat a Soviet-Vietnamese attempt to unseat Democratic Kampuchea and voted 74 to 35 to maintain Democratic Kampuchea's seat. The vote last year had been 71 in favour and 35 against.

LAO PEOPLE UNITE

In a statement, the Lao People's Liberation United Front (LPNLF) welcomed the UN decision to maintain the seat of Democratic Kampuchea. The LPNLF was established on September 15 in the Southern Laotian province of Champassak. It groups four resistance movements embracing different political ideas and nationalities. The organisation demands the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, the disbanding of its colonial administration and UN supervised general elections. It declares its willingness to co-operate with all other resistance movements in Indochina.

STRUGGLE BUILDS IN VIETNAM

Opposition to the politics of fascism and war pursued by the Vietnamese leadership is also coming from the Vietnamese people themselves.

Truong Nhu Tang, a non communist patriot, and former Minister of Justice in the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Vietnam fled Vietnam by boat and found refuge in France. On a recent visit to China he called on Vietnamese at home and abroad to unite for national salvation. He said that after 30 years of war the Vietnamese people should have been able to enjoy peace and freedom in which to reconstruct the country but the Le Duan clique had instead brought, "nothing but war endless war, and starvation

INDOCHINA FIGHTS BACK!



The face of resistance

and oppression."

Truong denounced the Hanoi rulers for inflicting deprivation and cruel oppression against Laos and Kampuchea, hostility to China and for turning Vietnam into a Soviet colony and a catspaw for its aggression.

"They are willingly handing over our national independence to serve Soviet expansionism. Our country has become a sea filled with tears, a large prison, and a foreign military base as well... Soviet advisers and soldiers have now taken the place of the Americans in trampling on our territory... I earnestly appeal to my compatriots at home and abroad,

irrespective of their class backgrounds, political views and religious beliefs and putting aside their personal issues, to rise in unity to save our motherland and people."

Whilst in China, Truong had a meeting with the Vietnamese revolutionary communist leader, Comrade Hoang Van Hoan. Truong described Hoang Van Hoan as being like Ho Chi Minh, a communist of the older generation who loves his country.

Armed resistance

Armed resistance is spreading throughout the central and southern parts of Vietnam, particularly amongst the oppressed national minorities, such as those of Dega Fulro and Khmer Krom. In July and August (reports of their activities take a long time to reach the outside world), they killed or wounded over 100 Vietnamese troops, destroyed vehicles and captured arms and ammunition.

The growing crisis in Vietnam has led to increased opposition amongst Party and government cadres. According to reports, middle ranking cadres attempted to stage a coup to overthrow the government in October, but failed. Hundreds of people have been arrested and accused of involvement and more are still being rounded up.

SOLIDARITY

The Vietnamese leaders attempt to justify their aggression under the signboard of 'special' solidarity amongst the Indochinese peoples, playing on the fact that they fought in close unity against American aggression. But the growing struggle by the peoples of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea against the Soviet-Vietnamese warlords is building on real solidarity amongst them. On 29th October the French News Agency reported that a communique of the Lao Peoples' National Liberation United Front had said that a front grouping all forces in Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea opposed to the policies of the Vietnamese government is soon to be established.

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Seven men on hunger strike

BUILD SOLIDARITY!

Seven Republican prisoners, six from the Provisionals and one from the Irish National Liberation Army have been on hunger strike since October 27. In solidarity with the strikers, 142 prisoners who had come off the blanket protest for various reasons announced that they were going back on and another 30 announced that they were refusing to do prison work. The seven men are aged between 25 and 32. One is the father of three small children, one was convicted on a confession later shown to be a result of torture and another was kidnapped from the Irish Republic by the SAS.

THE DEMANDS

The men are demanding:

1. The right of prisoners to wear their own clothes instead of prison uniform
2. The right of free association with other prisoners
3. The right not to do prison work
4. The right to organise educational and recreational activities, and to send and receive a weekly letter, a weekly parcel and a weekly visit
5. Restoration of full remission of sentence.

THE SPIRIT OF MAC SWINEY

A smuggled statement from the hunger strikers said that they took their stand in the spirit of the Lord Mayor of Cork, and IRA leader, Terrence Mac Swiney who died on hunger strike in Brixton prison, 60 years ago.

"Our grave decision to hunger strike is entirely our own and owes influence to the perpetuation of four long years of British institutionalised torture and unprecedented barbarity here within H-Block and Armagh jail.

"While the Irish nation remains unfree, partitioned and at war with an alien government, torture in the prisons and oppression on the streets will always exist."

The hunger strikers are fully supported by their families. At a House of Commons Press conference, Mrs Maura McKearney said that she was proud of her son, Tommy.

"My son...is a victim of the desperate circumstances for 800 years and particularly for the last ten years in northern Ireland...My son was a well educated young man who would probab-

ly be walking through the streets of London with a briefcase if it were not for the fact that someone who has no right to our country drove him to where he is today."

A spokesman for Provisional Sinn Fein has said that if any of the men die, others will take their place. They have also called on the British government to, "realise that it is in their best interests to get this issue resolved."

SOLIDARITY

Activities to support the hunger strikers are building up in both parts of Ireland and a delegation from the National Smash H-Blocks Committee is touring Western Europe to rally support.

Throughout Britain, many left and progressive organisations are engaging in solidarity work and there is a welcome degree of co-operation amongst different tendencies. Blanket protests have been held in Downing Street and on the eve of the hunger strikes, Provisional Sinn Fein organised a march through Kilburn, in north west London

An H-Block Hunger Strike Action Group has been organised in Birmingham and the West Midlands. It has held a torchlight demonstration of 200 and is organising petitioning and leafletting in the shopping centres and outside the main Catholic church. Supporting the Action Group are eight Birmingham and West Midlands councillors, 18 trade union officials, five executive members of Birmingham Trades Council, the Chairwoman and Treasurer of the Sparkbrook Constituency Labour Party, the president of the Birmingham Polytechnic Students Union, the Indian Workers' Association and the Pakistani Workers' Association. This is a good example of the potential broad unity that exists in support of the hunger strikers and their five demands.

Committee member Pauline Rowe has said that whilst the campaign is on a specific issue, the questions of police harassment and unemployment would be important in building support in Britain and said that the campaign would take account of this, for instance when campaigning amongst black youth in Handsworth.

OUR COMMON STRUGGLE

It is very important that workers and progressive people in Britain support the hunger strikers. If the Tory government is allowed to, literally, get away with murder there is no doubt

that they will step up their already savage attacks on the living standards and democratic rights of the workers, oppressed nationalities and others here in Britain. The Irish prisoners are not only fighting a just struggle—they are fighting the same enemy as the British working class!

We call on our readers to support the solidarity activities, particularly the National Demonstration on November 15th (assemble 1 pm at the Embankment, London) for British withdrawal and Irish unity, where Nora Connolly O'Brien, daughter of James Connolly, will speak, and the National Demonstration, December 17th, in support of the prisoners' five demands (details to be announced).

DON'T LET THE PRISONERS DIE!
VICTORY TO THE BLANKETMEN!



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

VICTORY TO THE BLANKETMEN!

Protest activities are being organised throughout the country. Details from the Troops Out Movement, phone 01-267-2004.

Friday November 14th.

IRELAND MEETING.

Called by London Support Group of the Irish Republican Socialist Party. Addressed by Nora Connolly O'Brien. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., London.

Saturday, November 15th

FOR BRITISH WITHDRAWAL AND IRISH UNITY

Demonstration assembling 1 pm, Embankment, London, followed by rally addressed by Nora Connolly.

Saturday November 15th.

BRING ANWAR'S CHILDREN HOME!

National demonstration in support of Anwar Ditta. Assemble 12 p.m. Church Stile, Off Drake st., Rochdale. Speakers include Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi and Kashmiri Workers' Associations, and Mrs Desai, Grunwick's leader.

Saturday November 15th.

WOMEN IN CHINA

Conference organised by Society for Anglo-Chinese Understanding with speakers - Iris Murdoch, Delia Davin, Elisabeth Croll, Kathryn Cronin. 10-5, Camden Teachers Centre, 100 Stanhope St., London NW1. £2.50. OAPs £1.

Saturday November 29th.

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT
Liverpool. See page 4 for details.