

CLASS STRUGGLE

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Incorporating

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Britain has reneged!

IRISH PATRIOTS ARE NOT CRIMINALS

British workers must support the Irish people!

By the International Editor

On March 1st, Irish patriotic political prisoners, hostages taken by British imperialism in its war against the Irish people will once again go on hunger strike. Once again Irish patriots will have to place their lives on the line and risk an agonising death to prevent the British government portraying the Irish people's war as simply the work of common criminals.

The prisoners ended their first hunger strike on December 18 as Sean McKenna lay only a few hours from death. Faced with the growing protests in Ireland and around the world Britain released the Atkins proposals which contained the essence of the prisoners five demands, namely

- 1) The right to wear their own clothes;
- 2) The right to refuse to do prison work;
- 3) The right to organise educational and recreational activities and to send and receive a weekly letter, parcel and visit;
- 4) Restoration of full remission of sentence;
- 5) The right of free association with other prisoners.

These are rights that existed when special category status was in force between 1972 and 1976 and are still enjoyed by those convicted in that period.

If the British government had really wanted to end the prison crisis in Northern Ireland they would have used the spirit of goodwill that was shown by the prisoners and honourably implemented the deal they signed.

Instead, once the hunger strike was over and the glare of unpleasant international publicity was removed they saw the chance to put the boot in. One obstacle after another was placed in the way of carrying out the agreement and the prisoners were subjected to one provocation after another until it became clear that the British imperialists had reneged on the agreement and were, in the words of the prisoners, "more intent upon humiliating us once again than in settling the prison crisis."

Elsewhere in this issue of "Class Struggle" we print the view of the prisoners and of the National H-Block/Armagh Committee setting out the full extent of the treachery and perfidy of the British imperialist government.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

This hunger strike will be even more bitterly fought than the first. It will end in a clear victory or defeat for each side. Internationally, there is huge support for the prisoners' struggle.

In Ireland, 600 delegates attended an H-Block/Armagh

Conference on January 25 that resolved to make Ireland ungovernable in the event of another hunger strike. Hundreds of Action Groups, Youth Groups, Womens Group and Trade Unionist Groups are organised throughout Ireland. The Republican movement has learned many valuable lessons in united front work and is confident that the support can be mobilised once again.

In addition, the IRA has shown that it is fully capable of continuing the war. Active Service Units hit commercial targets in five of Northern Ireland's six counties in a two-hour period one Monday morning and on January 21st an IRA unit executed two leading Orange Unionist aristocrat fascists from the Stronge family who have been engaged in anti-national activities in a big way since 1689. IRA units have also shown they have the capacity to strike at targets in the imperialist heartland of Britain itself.

The one real reason why the British government dares to renege on its deal is that it feels confident that no effective protest will be organised in Britain. On this issue of vital importance for workers and the oppressed, the Labour Party, the trade union leaders, Her Majesty's 'Communist' Party and various other forces known as the "British left" line up behind

Continued overleaf...

their "own" imperialist bourgeoisie. Labour MPs were if anything more anxious than their Ulster Unionist counterparts to be told that the prisoners had been given no concessions. It was the Labour Party who sent troops to Ireland in 1969, introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1974 and in 1976 withdrew special category status and created the H-Blocks.

During the hunger strike, the trade union leaders did and said nothing. Most trade unionists in Northern Ireland belong to British trade unions.

Her Majesty's Communist Party consistently calls on the IRA to dump its arms and bow down to imperialism and blames the IRA for British imperialist repression. When Republican freedom fighter, Gerard Tuite escaped from Brixton prison, 'The Morning Star' said "the best place for him is in jail." This is the same organisation that calls on white tenants in Brixton to spy for the police on their black neighbours, supports the racist attacks of the French 'Communist' Party on Arab and African workers and supports Vietnamese genocide in Kampuchea. This verminous rabble, that would see all revolutionary opponents of British imperialism put behind bars, without trial if necessary, has absolutely no right to describe itself as socialist or communist!

The major Trotskyist organisations refused to mobilise their several thousand members to take part in hunger strike support marches, voted against a proposal to organise a national demonstration in the event of any of the hunger strikers dying and voted against a proposal to picket the home of Tony Benn to demand he take a stand in support of the prisoners. With this glorious record the Trots proceed to attack the IRA, the hunger strikers and the Irish people. The SWP whine,

"Hunger striking has a long established and honoured place in Republican struggle. But like the armed campaign it is ultimately an elitist tactic."

Like the CP, these traitors want the IRA to dump its arms and go into a frenzy of rage if they dare to attack the imperialists in their head quarters, Britain. Their one 'refinement' is to attack the prisoners for 'compromising' and to tell these courageous men and women that they are making solidarity work more difficult! And this from people who refused to even mobilise themselves for a de-

monstration as men and women lay dying!

IMPERIALIST POISON

Why does so much of the British 'left' take the side of British imperialism against the Irish people? It is because they are fundamentally pro-imperialist. Imperialist ideology - social chauvinism - has corroded and destroyed the British labour movement.

Imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, the stage when it goes beyond a system existing in a number of individual countries to a system organised globally on the basis of the division of the world amongst a handful of great powers. Imperialism thus creates the fundamental distinction between oppressor and oppressed nations. By means of naked terror and the most brutal exploitation, the imperialists derive super profits from their colonial slaves, enabling them to bribe a small upper stratum of the workers in their own country into the service of imperialism by giving them a higher standard of living and certain democratic rights denied to the colonial slaves. The privileges of this stratum are bound up with continued imperialist exploitation. It is precisely this stratum whose interests are championed by the British 'left'. The British 'left' is not a movement of working class struggle - it is a movement to defend imperialist privilege. That is why they hate the Irish liberation fighters, support immigration controls, denounce the revolutionary upsurges of black youth, trample on the national aspirations of the Scottish and Welsh peoples and demand import controls and quotas to penalise the third world countries and peoples. The British 'left' has nothing but contempt to offer black, Irish and other national minority workers, the low paid or the unemployed. As communists and revolutionary nationalists, organised by the Communist International declared from Baku in December 1920,

"We heard that you had founded socialist parties, that you had formed an international workers' association, but these parties and this International had only words for us. We did not see its representatives come amongst us when the British shot us down in the streets of Indian cities, when the united forces of the European capitalists shot at us in Peking, when in the Philippines our demand for bread was answered by the American capitalists with lead. And those of us whose hearts

were athirst for the unity of the working people of the whole world stood on the threshold of your International and looked through the grille, and saw that although in words you accepted us as equals, in fact we were for you people of inferior race."

IMPERIALISM IN CRISIS

Today, British imperialism is in a state of crisis and decay. To save its own skin it must now intensify its exploitation at home and increasingly seek to pauperise the working class. Major industries, no longer considered sufficiently 'profitable', are to be allowed to go to the wall, irrespective of the social and economic consequences for millions of people. In doing this, the Tory government relies on a working class movement so compromised by its long and seivile support for British imperialism that it cannot organise effective resistance. With unemployment at 2½ million, and steadily rising, sections of the steel workers accept management plans to destroy 20,000 jobs and British Leyland workers allow their own shop stewards to be sacked. A working class movement that takes the stand of British imperialism against the Irish people will not be able to defend British workers from a ruthless and determined attack from those whose colonial super profits can no longer be guaranteed.

It is the Irish war that most directly puts forward to British workers the perspective of revolutionary struggle. The only movement that will be able to defend British workers in the coming period is one that stands full square behind the Irish people. As was stated at the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920,

"If British workers, instead of opposing bourgeois prejudices, support British imperialism or tolerate it passively then they are working for the suppression of every revolutionary movement in Britain itself."

The Irish war is a central political question for British workers. It is a war in which there are only two sides - the side of British imperialism and the side of the Irish people. Revolutionary Communists are on the side of the Irish people!

PRISONERS OF WAR ARE NOT CRIMINALS!

VICTORY TO THE BLANKETMEN AND THE ARMAGH WOMEN!

POLITICAL STATUS NOW!

VICTORY TO THE IRISH PEOPLE!

DAGENHAM DRIVERS' DISPUTE

By a car worker

440 drivers from the Dagenham truck fleet have now been on strike since Tuesday 27th January. Their normal job is to pick up components for the Dagenham plants from the Ford plants on the Continent. However, because Fords have reduced the levels of production due to falling demand for cars, the company have been looking for cheaper ways of handling the reduced volume of components. So, instead of these drivers doing their job, Ford have been transporting them by rail in containers. In addition to this, as the need for more components demands it, Fords have been using private transport firms.

The Dagenham drivers have struck because, in the short term, their earnings have been cut substantially, and in the longer term they can see a real threat to their jobs if Fords can hire private truck firms more cheaply than paying their wages.

FORDS AIM - SPLIT THE WORKERS

Fords have repented to this dispute in their normal fashion. They have dished out bulletins to workers in every Ford plant in Britain - putting their usual one-sided view. Further, they have made full use of the capitalist press' eagerness to give the full glare of publicity to any anti-worker statements that Ford (or any other company) care to make. There is nothing new in all this, of course. We know from our own experience, when we have had disputes, they react in exactly the same way. We must bear this in mind when we read both press reports and company bulletins. Fords sole aim in all this is to cause splits in the workers' unity. Between the strikers on the one hand, and all other Ford workers on the other. Starved of support, Fords hope to force the drivers back to work with their tails between their legs.

'BALANCED' PRESS REPORTS?

Finally, a closer look at some of the press reports proves an interesting exercise. The vast majority of coverage of the dispute is usual anti-working class garbage and isn't worth commenting on. But when one reporter for the 'Daily Telegraph' actually bothered to approach the strikers and get their side of the story, the resulting quotes proved quite an education.

We quote below, direct from the 'Telegraph' (3/2/81) "Many (drivers) claimed privately last night that 'cowboy' owner drivers were cutting their wages by nearly half."

A group of Ford drivers laughed uproariously at suggestions that they were striking because of loss of continental trips.

"Talk bloody sense", said a shop steward, "The reason we are on strike is because our work is being contracted out more and more by Ford to cowboys. This means that out of around £100 we lose perhaps £47 - and that is a lot of money when you've got a family to keep".

Drivers spoke angrily about the "blatant disregard contract firms were alleged to have for the law and for the basic rules governing long distance driving.

"They are certainly more economical to the Ford Motor Co. than we are because they break every rule in the book," said one 50-year old Dagenham-based driver.

"If we drive 12 hours for instance instead of 11 we would be disciplined and lose a day's pay. The contract owner driver gets away with murder - and everybody turns a blind eye."

It's worth mentioning that the above report was tucked away on the back page, while it was preceded by a piece on the front page stressing how many workers have been laid-off, the cost of lost production, etc., with lengthy quotes from 'a Ford spokesman'.

A WORKER'S NOTEBOOK

INDUSTRIAL MURDER is how the National Union of Seamen describes the high death rate among seamen: 170 seamen died in 1978 out of a seafaring population of 58,000. The death rate is 4 times that for coal miners and 9 times that for construction workers and is undoubtedly related to working conditions involving 18 hours per day. How can you work safely when you're that exhausted?

THE SEAMEN'S BLOCKADE was lifted 'on humanitarian grounds' after an appeal from the disaster-hit Windward Islands which urgently needed fertiliser shipments to save its banana crop. A representative of the Seamen's union pointed out that this was in accordance with the union's 'internationalist spirit'.

SUCH INTERNATIONALIST SPIRIT is evidently not shared by the 'socialist' Soviet Union, which took the seamen's strike as a golden opportunity for scabbing. The Russians "almost gave their services away" in their efforts to muscle in on the trade, said a prominent figure in Britain's shipping industry.

SNP LEADER Donald Stewart denounced the government's "gross disrespect" for the rights of Scotland's Gaelic-speakers in a heated exchange in Parliament recently. Tory MPs had, he said, shown the same disregard for Scotland "as the bully boys of Russia show for the ethnic minorities within the boundaries of the USSR."

A RECENT CAMPAIGN IN STRATHCLYDE publicising social security benefits resulted in an extra £1 million being paid out to claimants. The DHSS was not amused. In fact they wrote irate letters to both Strathclyde Council and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities including such quotes as "I should deplore similar action to that in Strathclyde being recommended to your member authorities."

PUPILS FACING THE END OF SCHOOL DINNERS are to be offered an alternative - a Salvation Army soup kitchen. It is to be opened in Crowland, Lincs. which is the first county to decide to scrap the school meals service entirely from next April.

DESPERATE TEENAGER Adrian Judd threw himself to his death because he hated life on the dole. Adrian, 18, leaped from the roof of a multi-storey car park after eight months tramping the streets looking for work.

ONLY 152,000 HOMES began to be built last year - the lowest figure in peacetime since the mid-1920's. It is estimated that 310,000 per year is needed to meet demand. There is a £14 million backlog of outstanding repairs and improvement work on local authority books. In Inner London no less than one in seven properties is reckoned to be unfit to live in. Nationally council waiting lists are going to rise from 1.2 million to 2 million over the next few years - this will mean a wait for the average family on the list of 21.4 years! This year 75% of the government's expenditure cuts will be directed against housing. Since 1974 (under both Labour and Tory governments) expenditure on housing has dropped steadily from more than £7 billion per year and is planned to be only £0.9 billion by 1983/4. There are now 300,000 building workers on the dole.

OF MOTHERS WITH CHILDREN UNDER 5 who are not working outside the home, 40% are receiving treatment for depression. By contrast, only 15% of working mothers with children under 5 are depressed. 41% of the women who stay at home to look after their children would return to work if adequate child care facilities were available. These have always been inadequate, except during the Second World War, when it suited the needs of capitalism to provide them.

Seven million anti-depressants are taken every day by women. Women form 70% of all users of anti-anxiety drugs. £35 million a year is spent by the drug companies on advertising. Wouldn't it be better spent providing child care facilities for working mothers?

HAS THE TUC AN ALTERNATIVE?

With Budget Day coming shortly, the TUC has put forward its own plan for dealing with the economic crisis. In the following article, our Political Economy Correspondent discusses this plan, and asks how far it provides a real alternative to Government policy.

Budget Day is coming round again specially early this year, Tuesday March 10th. As if we had not got enough troubles already, we might think!

Unemployment has gone over 2,400,000. There is no doubt it will reach 3 million soon. This already seems likely in 1982 and it is even possible the figure may be reached this year. Although as a percentage of the total work-force the unemployed are not as yet as large as in the great depression of the 1930's, 10% is a social crime, and would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

The collapse of British manufacturing however is already larger and more rapid than during the great depression. Between the summer of 1979 and the autumn of 1980 total manufacturing output fell by 14%, an unprecedented figure this century. Whole towns and communities are being wiped out as viable economic units.

The present government's first budget gave selective tax cuts which raised take-home pay for those earning over £50,000 by up to 50%. Meanwhile 1,000,000 people wait for council houses. Last year over 100,000 joined the waiting list in London alone.

THE BUDGET

We already know the future shape of the budget. One major decision has been taken: National Insurance contributions are being forced up by 15% in April. This is a tax increase, but the Tories who of course dislike tax increases, think they can get away with it because it is called something different. All told, this rise will take another £1 billion (£1,000 million) out of the pockets of working people. (To get that in perspective, there are only £200 billion of goods and services in the whole economy. A billion is the unit of account for the economy. A million pounds is roughly the cost of only a mile of motorway.)

But this increase is not the end of it. The government is quite unable to balance its books, even though this was its strongest promise on coming into office.

This year it was trying to overspend by only £8½ billion, but the current rate is almost 50% higher. It seems certain to overspend by almost £13 billion.

Why? In many ways because of the crisis itself. Dole payments cost something like £7 billion alone.

So the government will undoubtedly raise taxes massively still further on March 10th. Most likely on beer and tobacco (and, you can be sure, less on gin and tonic!)

Another front-line cut that the government has been contemplating, is cutting unemployment pay. This is one of the easiest ways of cutting its problems and would probably not lose it many more votes. Dole money was cut by 5% in real terms last budget. If it isn't cut again this budget we can be sure it will be in the next year or two. Indirectly this is an attack on the bargaining position of all workers.

TUC PLAN FOR GROWTH?

Against this economic and political picture, the TUC has put forward a bourgeois reformist "plan for growth". A strange title because the TUC admits that their aim in 1981 is merely to produce "no further decline" in output. This would be at the cost of increasing government overspending by a further £6½ billion.

It is clear they propose flushing this sum of money into the economy (total Gross Domestic Product £200 billion) simply by printing pound notes, in the hope that this will stimulate more economic activity. Perhaps it might eventually but meanwhile the value of everyone's money would have been cut proportionately by inflation still further. This plan is once again at the expense of the workers.

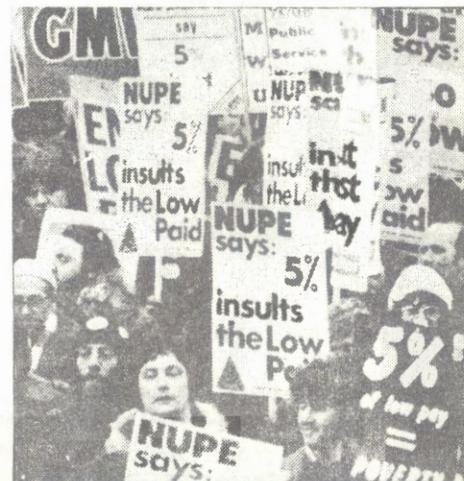
The TUC plan is a plan to reform British capitalism, more correctly, British imperialism, with massive state funds. It emphasises the bad position of the British economy internationally. It points out "the reality of international competition" and stresses that other imperialist countries "adopt interventionist policies in order to strengthen their trading sectors". The TUC aims to learn therefore from the capitalists of France and West Germany.

The centre piece of the TUC plan is a "National Investment Bank" to be set up with £2 billion money from the British National Oil Corporation and the pension and life assurance funds (those great socialist institutions) and no doubt drawing its direct-

ors from the state coffers. The class nature of this would be very similar to the "National Enterprise Board" (another socialist institution that British workers know all about).

No Solution with Capitalism

The TUC argument presents many useful statistics against the present government, but its overall analysis is a fairy story. Undoubtedly the present government is unusually ruthless but the TUC makes out the trouble is all due to Tory 'baddies'. It blandly says there is no evidence that government overspending causes inflation. It has the gall to say that the Tory government in 1979 "began" the cutting of essential public spending programmes. Are we really supposed to have forgotten the Labour government and International Monetary Fund cuts of 1976 onwards?



1979 - Winter of discontent as low-paid public sector workers fight Labour's 5% limit. The Tories' 6% limit must face the same mass action.

It ignores the fact that whichever government was in power there would have been a severe crisis of British capitalism in 1980. Instead of recognising this as a crisis of capitalist over-production coming up against the limited purchasing power of the people, the TUC claims the problem is only one of reduced purchasing power. The hard truth is that there has as yet been no overall reduction in consumer purchasing power. YET. All the rise in unemployment so far has been due to capitalist over-production. Still worse is to come when consumer purchasing power is cut back.

The TUC are right to demand an end to unemployment. But Budget Day, Tuesday March 10th, will show yet again that relying on financial fiddling and boards of 'progressive' finance capitalists is no substitute for unrelenting mass resistance. It is unrelenting mass resistance that is needed to beat back the effects of the latest capitalist crisis - and to end capitalist crises for ever.

Unemployment Benefit

TORIES PUT THE BOOT IN

Of all the forms of economic suffering which are inflicted by the bosses' crisis-ridden system upon the working class, the most savage and devastating is unemployment. The following article is the first of a series which we hope to publish on the facts and figures of unemployment, and on the tasks that confront the working class in fighting to save jobs and to secure adequate benefits for the unemployed.

The past few months have seen a big increase in the harassment of the unemployed. Earnings-related supplement is being phased out, and will end altogether next year. This will be a harsh blow to families where one partner is in work, or where there is no entitlement to Supplementary Benefit for some other reason. The annual increase in benefit rates now no longer maintains the real value of the standard of living of claimants.

The campaigns against so-called 'scroungers' are even more ominous. The late unlamented Reg Prentice, when Labour Minister of State for the DHSS, increased the number of Fraud Squad snoopers at a cost of £50 million. Recently instructions were sent to local offices explaining how to threaten claimants subtly that if they did not stop claiming, they would be prosecuted for 'fraud'. A special method called 'Specialist Claims Control' has been in use in Manchester and Merseyside, and is now to be extended to the rest of England and Wales. Under this scheme an 'anti-scrounger brigade' of special investigators regularly vet the files of the unemployed and mothers living alone to select cases for fraud investigation.

DHSS FORCES CLAIMANTS NOT TO CLAIM

Unemployed families are under suspicion, according to the DHSS, if they have:

- * a 'suspiciously high' standard of living;
- * a marketable skill or trade (e.g. motor mechanic or building trade);
- * a record of self-employment;
- * a money-earning occupation which could be followed on a spare-time basis (e.g. bar staff);
- * apparent good health or fitness.

Mothers living alone with children are under suspicion if:

- * a visiting officer has noticed signs of male presence;
- * a claimant refuses to take proceedings for maintenance;
- * a claim has been made on the grounds of desertion;
- * there is a current debt.

The DHSS says that neighbours, employers and third parties can be quizzed to provide evidence. Cases have been brought to light that investigators interviewed claimants in a locked room and demanded they use part of their dole to advertise for work.

The experience of welfare rights advisers and the masses of documented and oral evidence available, shows that these methods will force many claimants to stop claiming benefit out of fear, and reduce them to starvation, begging and crime.

Thousands of people already suffering from the injustice of a system which cannot provide them with a living wage are being attacked still further by the petty fascist methods of DHSS. Probably it is thought that if you haven't the basic right of a subsistence income, then deprivation of your civil rights can't hurt you much more.

What are the reasons behind these government attacks on the unemployed? The first is obvious - to save money. Money paid out in unemployment benefit and social security is one of the largest sources of government expenditure, and is playing havoc with the government's plans to cut down the money supply. Probably the savings will be slight, in comparison to the dole bill, but they will perhaps keep a few Tory backwoodsmen quiet. The second is more complex - to increase the gap between wages and benefit, with the effect of keeping wage settlements down and of increasing the 'incentive' for the unemployed to take lower paid jobs. The fact that there are no such jobs, or very few, demonstrates that this second effect is in the minds of the planners rather than in the real world.

FUELLING PREJUDICE AGAINST THE UNEMPLOYED

A third reason is more complex still. Prejudice against the unemployed is an important asset to the ruling class. It limits the militancy of workers and prevents united action between employed and unemployed. It would be simplistic slogan-mongering to say the bosses conspire to drive wedges between the employed and unemployed. The divisions are already there, and it is second nature for the government and the media to exploit them. They need no conscious conspiracy.

Prejudice by those in work against the unemployed is widespread and strong. Often it is more open than prejudice of whites against blacks or of men against women. But undoubtedly it declines as unemployment increases. More workers see 'there but for the grace of God go I', and even those who feel safe see their relatives and neighbours being chucked on the scrapheap. Attacks on the unemployed can do a lot to restore the level of prejudice. Rivalry for jobs, and willingness to work for a lower wage, or even scab on strikers, promotes anger. It is interesting that both BL and Ansell Breweries in Birmingham have recently threatened to take people off the dole to fill strikers' jobs. In the BL case, the workers have been defeated, and have accepted the sacking of the six shop-stewards. In the Ansell case, the company claimed to have received thousands of letters from unemployed workers offering to do the jobs of the strikers. Clearly this was bluff, because the company is now saying they will close the plant. But the time may soon come when pickets and unemployed scabs fight each other at factory gates, and the bosses will rub their hands with glee.

The "scrounger" myth is a constant theme of the media. There is usually someone sitting at any canteen table who claims to know people who are on the dole, earning £100 a week on the side, and spending all their time and lots of money in the pub every day and all day. The press only needs to blow up the occasional case of a family with ten kids getting £90 a week social security or of a claimant caught earning a few shillings to supplement his dole. At the same time, silence is maintained about the misery of families living on a pittance and the isolation and despair of the unemployed.

- * What are the facts about benefit? What percentage is it of average wages?
- * What is the particular position of women in relation to unemployment benefits?
- * What are the true figures for unemployment, and how do government figures distort them?

These and other questions will be discussed in coming issues of our paper.

FIGHTING THE NATIONALITY BILL

As the racist Nationality Bill comes up to its 3rd reading, the country-wide protest movement, led by the Campaign Against Racist Laws, has already begun to have an impact. But its full force is yet to be felt. Massive pressure must be put on the Government to withdraw the Bill. This requires a huge turnout for the national demonstration on April 5th, and painstaking work to educate, persuade and mobilise workers, trade unions and all progressive people, both before and after the demonstration.

The Nationality Bill is the immediate target, but even if we succeed in stopping it, the whole battery of racist immigration laws still remain to terrorise black and national minority people. The Nationality Bill is merely a codification of the existing immigration laws into the basic law of citizenship. The most important right of any citizen - the right to enter and settle in the country - has already been removed from most black and national minority British subjects by the 1962, 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts.

DEFUSING OPPOSITION

Whitelaw acknowledged the strength of the opposition to the proposed law when he announced the withdrawal of two clauses on February 6th. But this was an attempt to defuse the opposition, and certainly no concession. It is more than likely that these clauses were only inserted in the first place so that they could be withdrawn at this stage.

The first clause withdrawn concerned the nationality of children born here to parents who are technically "illegally" settled. Instead of saying that such children will get citizenship by birth, Whitelaw proposes to grant them citizenship after 10 years. All Whitelaw has done is to remove a clause which would meet universal condemnation, and impose stringent conditions in its place. The children will have ten years of virtual statelessness, during which they can be deported at will.

The second change was to allow children born abroad to obtain British citizenship even if their parents were

Crucial to anti-racist struggle

not born in Britain. Again this merely removes a ludicrous rule, under which parents could enter Britain, but without their children! And even then the law will require such children to register to obtain citizenship.

LABOUR'S HYPOCRISY CAN BE SEEN FROM ITS RECORD

Despite the bogus nature of these changes, Roy Hattersley claimed them as a victory for "the Labour Party and the ethnic minorities" who had opposed the Bill. This is a lie. They are no victory, but an attempt to split and defuse the opposition. And the Labour Party has not been leading the movement against the Bill. This has been done by CARL, which is a campaign of national minority organisations and of progressive and workers organisations. The Labour Party has come, very belatedly to jump on the bandwagon.

Hattersley has realised he must go further if he is to fool anyone. Now he has stated that he wants "the next Labour government" to repeal the Nationality Act and the 1971 Immigration Act. He even told the London Weekend TV interviewer magnanimously that it didn't matter if this meant "some additional immigration".

Hattersley's "conversion" is again a sign of the strength and importance of the resistance to racist laws. But instead of claiming another "victory", anti-racists should recall Labour's record on racist laws. It is well known that the last Labour government produced the Green Paper on which the Nationality Bill is based. Also that the Labour MPs on the Select Committee voted to introduce such a Bill, as well as strengthening immigration rules in ways which even the Tories didn't attempt. And at the last La-

bour Party Conference, no motion on the Nationality or Immigration laws was taken.

But could it be that Labour is really changing its tune? In 1962 the Tory Government passed the first Commonwealth Immigrants Act. The Labour Opposition attacked it strongly and called it racist. But in 1965, when Labour came to power, they strengthened the Act by cutting down the number of entry vouchers from 20,000 to 8,500! And in 1968 they rushed through the second Commonwealth Immigrants Act, to keep out British passport-holders from Kenya. That Act barred entry for British passport-holders unless they or their parents were born here. So the 1971 Act, which Hattersley now says he wants to repeal, was really only a repeat performance, slightly strengthened, of the Labour Government's own legislation!

When Labour came to power in 1974, they had ample opportunity to repeal the 1971 Act. But did they? No, they used it even more toughly than the Tories had. And anti-racists will not forget that it was under Labour that Anwar Ditta was refused the right to bring in her children, Nasira Begum was ordered to be deported, Abdul Azad was imprisoned, among all the other raids and deportations. And Kevin Gateley was killed by the police in Red Lion Square, and Blair Peach by the SPG in Southall, under a Labour Government.

So what trust can we put in Hattersley's promises? If the Labour Party supports CARL that is good. Let them come and demonstrate on April 5th with all the numbers they turned out in Liverpool at the unemployment demonstration. Let them bring those trade union branches under their wing, who were also so conspicuous by their absence at the last CARL demonstration in November 1979. Genuine anti-racists will unite with anyone who can be won to the fight. But we will not believe their pie-in-the-sky promises, because we've seen what they did in 1965 and 1974. All Hattersley is after is electoral support, to try and win black people's votes with false protestations of opposition to racist laws. People do not forget so easily.

New Cross massacre

ANGER GROWS

A growing movement among the Black community in Britain is rising out of the ashes of 439, New Cross Road, Deptford, London, where 12 West Indian schoolchildren were killed and 27 injured in a fascist arson attack.

This attack on a West Indian teenagers' birthday party is one of the greatest tragedies in this country in recent years. It has been compared to the Aberfan disaster for its impact on the local community.

At first, press coverage was muted. After a couple of days, only attempts to blame West Indian people for the attack were considered newsworthy.

Police made various baseless statements about the attack, and also exaggerated the number of guests and slanderously implied scenes of drunkenness. On the night of the fire there were two other fire attacks on cars belonging to Black people in the area - yet the police still saw "no evidence whatsoever" to suppose a racist element in the attack!

As for the local Labour MP, John Silkin, whose 'sur-



gery' is just a few doors away from the scene of the fire, he has not raised the atrocity in Parliament, and nor has anyone else, even the 'motherly' and supposedly benign Mrs. Thatcher.

ACTION COMMITTEE

A New Cross Massacre Action Committee has been set up and has already undertaken fact-finding work. It has called for a Day of Action on Monday March 2nd, when a march will

set out at 10.00am from 439, New Cross Road, and to on to Scotland Yard, Fleet Street, Parliament and Downing Street. All anti-racists are invited to join this march.

Inquiries to: New Cross Massacre Action Committee, c/o 74 Shakespeare Rd., London SE24. Phone 01-737-2268.

Donations for assistance for the bereaved families: New Cross Fire Fund, Account No. 91340565, Barclays Bank, 5A Marylebone High St., London W1.

Kashmiri Workers oppose racist laws

"Racist laws against immigration have been made by Labour and Tory governments since 1962. We should not fall into the trap of thinking Labour is better than the Tories. We must take part, actively and without fear, in demonstrations against all racist laws. Beware of people like Tony Benn coming to make political capital out of our fight." With these words, Qurban Ali, of the Kashmiri Workers' Association (UK) launched a 200-strong public meeting on February 1st in Alum Rock, Birmingham.

Though the right of Kashmir to self-determination has long been thwarted and is a contentious issue among the states of the Indian sub-continent, this meeting was an important internationalist occasion which saw unity between Kashmiri, Indian and Pakistani organisations.

For the Pakistani Workers' Association, Mohammed Galib said that racist laws divide black and white workers. Labour and Tory have been no different - racist raids and attacks and such vile practices as virginity tests were

carried out under Labour and Tory equally.

Avtar Jouhl, General Secretary of the Indian Workers' Association (GB), said: "We have been assured over and over again that changes in the law will not affect black people already here, yet we see our rights eroded all the time... Now they say you're all right if your father was born in Britain. Tomorrow they will say your grandfather must have been born here as well. The only guarantee to safeguard our right is our own struggle, and we will unite with all progressive elements in British society.

"In France, the so-called Communist Party led a demonstration which smashed black people's homes with bulldozers. Here its sister organisation, the CPGB, calls on us to collaborate and cooperate with the police. The only thing to do with the police is to surround the station when someone is arrested and get them out. We must distinguish between those organisations who want us to play ball with the police and genuine people's organisations."

The President of the Bangla-

desh Workers' Association, T. Huq, endorsed the importance of the fight against racist laws, and welcomed the KWA meeting. A speaker for the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain, referring to Labour calls for a bi-partisan policy on nationality, pointed out that "we have seen their bi-partisan policies - on racist immigration laws and on using the British army to kill and torture Irish people to prevent the Irish national liberation struggle winning victory. But the black and national minority people are the same people who drove British imperialist rule out of their countries in Asia, the Caribbean and Africa; they are not afraid... All workers and progressive people must support the black people, they cannot sit in the middle any longer."

The Chairman of KWA, Mohammed Younus, closed the meeting. He said opportunists came in different disguises to deceive black people and make political capital for themselves. Our real guarantee is our own fightback against all racist laws and attacks.

TATE & LYLE'S BITTER PILL

In Liverpool where 1 in 6 workers are on the dole, the announcement by Tate and Lyle of another 1,570 jobs to be lost when they close their Love Lane factory was just one more bitter blow.

In Vauxhall, the area of the factory, 19,000 out of a local work-force 32,000 are on the dole. Whole families stand to lose their jobs. In addition, two years ago the workers at Love Lane fought to stop redundancies and made several concessions on working conditions to keep the plant open. Small wonder that they were so angry at the surprise announcement and that they decided to fight from the instant they heard of the planned closure.

Glasgow and London representatives met quickly with representatives from Love Lane to plan support for their fellow workers. The bosses at Tate and Lyle want

to spread the illusion that the workers' only enemy is the Common Market and its quotas on sugar beet as opposed to sugar-cane. To take the heat off themselves they have whipped up a chauvinistic campaign, with the help of local MP's, the church and trade union leaders and officials, which portrays Tate and Lyle as hapless victims alongside the work-force.

That the workers at Tate and Lyle are currently pinning the hope of saving their jobs on unity with the bosses poses immense dangers for the success of their struggle.

The directors of Tate and Lyle represent the most revolting and reactionary sections of the British imperialist bourgeoisie. Their millions are soaked not only in the sweat of British workers, but particularly in the blood of millions of super-exploited third world work-

ers and peasants. They are by no means the innocent bystanders they pretend to be! In 1969, Lord Lyle was a director of Tate and Lyle and Rhodesia Sugar Refineries and, at the same time, a backer of the Society for Individual Freedom, forerunner of the reactionary Freedom Association, that backed Grunwick boss Ward. The Economic League, which spies on trade union militants for the bosses, receives funding from Tate and Lyle.

The workers at Tate and Lyle need to unite with real friends to oppose real enemies. Their allies in the struggle to save their jobs are the third world commonwealth sugar-producing countries who have expressed their concern at the threatened closure and restrictions on their exports to Britain.

(See article on this page on the new international economic order.)

For Your Reference...

THE STRUGGLE FOR A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER

Due to prolonged exploitation by imperialism, the countries of the third world are all affected to a greater or lesser degree by lop-sided economic development. In extreme cases, such countries have become 'single-product economies' which are almost totally dependent on the export of that product. (eg. from Cuba - sugar, from the Windward Islands - bananas etc.)

One of the most important aspects of the growing independence movement in the third world in recent decades has been the struggle for a 'New International Economic Order' - an order in which the third world countries can diversify their economies, increase their individual and collective self-reliance, and thus increase their ability to stand up to the economic pressures brought to bear on them by imperialism.

One aspect of this struggle has been the growing success of producers' organisations in building unity of Producer countries to ensure fair prices for raw materials. The most notable pioneer of this development was the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Only on the basis of a fair price for its main exports can a third world country finance the first difficult steps towards a diversified and self-reliant economy.

Only on the basis of such economic freedom can true political freedom be built. For if a third world country's economy is subject at any moment to catastrophe as a result of change in world demand for its product - or a natural disaster - its political independence can only be superficial - in reality it would be subject to neo-colonial enslavement by imperialism.

Lome Convention

The worst practitioners of such economic 'hegemonism' are the two imperialist superpowers - the United States and the Soviet Union. They have long bound to them their dependent neo-colonies by structuring their economies wholly to their own needs. The weaker imperialist powers, such as those of the EEC are no longer able to bully third world countries to the same degree, and as

a result have, in some cases, made agreements more favourable to the third world. One such agreement was the Lome Convention of 1976 under which the EEC attempted to undercut the superpowers by conceding some comparatively favourable trade terms to a number of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, without, of course, changing a fundamentally exploitative relationship.

Sugar

When Britain entered the EEC, it gave assurances to the Commonwealth sugar producers that they would have continued access for their sugar cane to the UK. Under the Lome Convention it was agreed that the UK would buy 1.3 million tonnes a year. This agreement was vital to the economies of many of the Commonwealth countries, for instance sugar-producing islands like Fiji, Barbados and St. Kitts-Nevis, who derive between 60 and 80% of their total export earnings from sugar. Over 90% of the sugar imported by EEC countries from Lome Convention signatories is imported by Britain, and Tate and Lyle refine 100% of it.

The Tate and Lyle decision will result in a reduction of sugar cane refining capacity in the UK to only 1.04 million tonnes a year, a clear indication that Britain intends to renege on its commitments to the former colonies it so ruthlessly exploited for so long, and kick what is for many of them their main industry in the teeth. This savage measure will hold back the attempts of these countries to finance more balanced development.

Beet boom

The ability of the EEC to cut back on imports from cane-producing countries in the third world derives from the expansion of sugar beet cultivation in the EEC countries in recent years. Those imperialist interests which have hitherto relied on the easy and massive profits derived from exploitation of third world sugar (notably, of course, Tate and Lyle) raise a hullabaloo and conduct demagogic anti-EEC agitation.

The third world sugar-producing countries will one day be in a position to refine their own sugar and will diversify their national economies. In the present situation it is in the interests of both the Tate and Lyle workers in Liverpool and the Commonwealth third world sugar producing countries that the Love Lane factory remains open and that British imperialism honours the Lome Convention.

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PRISON CRISIS — STATEMENTS

NATIONAL H-BLOCK, ARMAGH
COMMITTEE STATEMENT
February 5th, 1981.

The British have wasted every opportunity to settle the H-Block/Armagh prison issue by callously taunting the prisoners whom they wish to see begging for concessions at their feet and finally giving in to a total surrender. The Northern Ireland Office has carried on a continuing catalogue of psychological torture of the prisoners since Christmas.

The only reason the blanket protest continued after what was thought to be a settlement was that Britain reneged on her commitments. Atkins publicly stated that the families could provide clothes for the prisoners. But clothes brought to the prisoners by their families were withheld by the authorities and no food parcels were allowed even for Christmas. The prisoners must be seen to wear prison garb first, states Mr Atkins.

This attitude is totally reprehensible.

It is this bloody-mindedness on the part of Britain that has prolonged the prison protest into its fifth year. It was this which escalated the no wash protest last week when the prisoners were returned to the old excreta-covered cells kept readily unclean for them. Once again the prisoners were refused access to the toilets and even refused drinking water.

It comes as no surprise that the prisoners have decided that they have had enough, and that Britain must somehow be made to realise that it is not the kind or colour of clothes that matters but the whole process of criminalisation which must be ended. The prisoners have therefore stated that they will begin a hunger strike on March 1st - the

fifth anniversary of the withdrawal of special status for political prisoners.

PRISONERS' STATEMENT

THE FOLLOWING IS AN AGREED STATEMENT JOINTLY ISSUED BY THE P.R.O. OF THE BLANKETMEN IN THE H-BLOCKS OF LONG KESH, AND BY THE P.R.O. OF THE WOMEN PROTESTING PRISONERS IN ARMAGH JAIL:

"We the Republican political prisoners in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh and Armagh prison, having waited patiently for seven weeks for evidence that the British government was prepared to resolve the prison crisis, and having given them every available opportunity to do so, declare our intention of hunger-striking once more.

On December 18th and 19th 1980 the hunger strikes in the H-Blocks and Armagh were ended. When this happened we were expecting that within a few days all protests could begin to be de-escalated and that the first hurdle, the blanketmen receiving their own clothes, could be got over in the sequence described by Atkins in his December 19th statement. Obstacle after obstacle was placed in our way but we felt morally bound to explore every avenue before giving in to exasperation and anger. The pettiness of the British administration was well demonstrated on January 23rd when the prison governor acting under orders refused a number of men their own clothes. It is a fact that ordinary prisoners in conforming blocks are generally wearing their own clothes unchallenged and we were angered that the Brits were more intent upon humiliating us once again than in settling the prison crisis.

Thus last Tuesday 27th January over ninety prisoners in the H-Blocks locked up the cells as an expression of their anger. However, in turn the screws assaulted large numbers of men, moved them from the clean cells into fouled cells and overnight denied them blankets and mattresses, drinking water and access to toilets.

Our last hunger strikers were totally blackmailed by a number of people and politicians who called upon them to end the fast and allow the resolution of the protest. The hunger strikes ended seven weeks ago and in the absence of any movement from the British we have not seen or heard from the people since. It needs to be asked openly of the Irish Bishops, of Cardinal O'Rourke and of politicians like John Hume, who your recommending ending of the last hunger strike gain for us? And who but the Brits are responsible for our state which is far worse today than it ever was?

We the blanketmen and we the women political prisoners in Armagh have had enough of British deceit and of broken promises. Hunger strikes to the death if necessary will begin commencing from March 1st 1981 the fifth anniversary of the withdrawal of political status in the H-Blocks and in Armagh jail. We are demanding to be treated as political prisoners which everyone recognises we are. We call upon all those who supported us during the last hunger strike to again rally to our cause and we call upon those who sat on the fence to now see the intransigence of the British and the justness of our cause."

Signed,

P.R.O. H-Blocks 3,4,5 and 6, Long Kesh.

and

P.R.O. Women political prisoners, Armagh Jail

February 4th 1981.

WOMEN'S DAY IN ARMAGH

Women from Ireland, Britain and farther afield are planning to spend this March 8th, International Women's Day, in Armagh. March 8th was proclaimed International Women's Day by a congress in Copenhagen in 1910, in honour of a militant march by women garment workers that took place in New York in 1908.

In 1979, a group of women demonstrated outside Armagh Jail on March 8th in solidarity with the women political prisoners held there. The women were attacked by the police, eleven were arrested and two served prison sentences after having refused to pay fines. On International Women's Day in 1980 over 500 people, including 200 women from England, Scotland and Wales, rallied at the prison. This year it is hoped that even greater numbers will attend seminars in Belfast and Dublin on the 7th and a picket of the prison on the 8th.

1980 was a hard year for the Armagh prisoners. In December, three of them were on hunger strike for 18 days. Because of the continued intransigence of the British government, some of them may well be on hunger strike again when the picket takes place. It is known that this annual protest is a great encouragement to the struggling women inside.

The London Women's Co-ordinating Committee on Armagh is attaching great importance to organising for third world women to attend the picket, which would greatly encourage people in Ireland and show the community of interests between the Irish and other national liberation struggles. So far, Namibian, Chilean, Palestinian and Eritrean sisters have all shown an interest in taking part in the delegation. Women from Western Europe, including Basques and Bretons, are expected and women in Tigray, who are

fighting Soviet-Cuban backed Ethiopian colonialism are supporting their Irish sisters.

The Belfast and Dublin seminars are for women only and will look at the significance of the national question for Irish women, their historical role in the struggle for national liberation and international experience of women in liberation movements. The demonstration on Sunday will welcome both women and men.

Anybody interested in attending any of the events in Belfast, Dublin or Armagh should urgently contact the Co-ordinating Committee for International Women's Day at Armagh, c/o 374 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1, or phone Di on 01-691 8298.

Continued from page 11.
In particular, the Russian imperialists work overtime to infiltrate the Baluchi movement, particularly by buying over certain reactionary and feudal sectors, in an attempt to hijack the national movement and make it a pawn of its strategic interests.

NON-ALIGNED STAND BY PRINCIPLES

The Foreign Ministers conference of the non-aligned countries was recently held in the Indian capital of New Delhi. After five days of deliberations the conference succeeded in reaffirming the basic principles of the non-aligned movement and demanded that all foreign troops leave Afghanistan and Kampuchea, so as to allow the peoples of those countries to decide their own futures without outside interference. This was a major blow to the efforts of the Soviet Union to detract the non-aligned movement from its independent orientation and make it into a tool of Soviet foreign policy. It was accomplished in the teeth of firm opposition and disruptive tactics from a handful of Soviet puppets such as Cuba and Vietnam, and including the host, India, which refused to grant visas to the delegates of Democratic Kampuchea, a non-aligned country. This stand in support of Afghan and Kampuchean independence was fought for by delegates from Pakistan, Iran and the ASEAN countries who themselves face the threat of Soviet or Vietnamese aggression.

Vietnamese revolution ruined

Vietnamese leader Le Duan, and his followers, "have ruined the fruits of revolution won by the Vietnamese people with blood and sweat."

This is the conclusion drawn by Comrade Hoang Van Hoan, a veteran Vietnamese revolutionary communist leader and close comrade of Ho Chi Minh, in talks recently with some 300 Vietnamese residents and refugees in southern China.

Hoang accused the Hanoi leaders of hiring themselves out to a foreign power, controlling Laos, overrunning Kampuchea and viciously opposing China.

"As a result there is no peace in Vietnam... Food shortage reached two to three million tons each year. Industrial operations are stagnant and the people suffer from unearned of starvation and agony."

Hoang noted that Vietnam contains many nationalities but Le Duan pursues a policy of one nationality dominating all the others and has even abolished two autonomous national minority areas, accusing them of having links with China.

People living in the border areas are persecuted because they are suspected of "fraternising" with China. "In Lang Son province, they actually killed all the members of a family which had given shelter to President Ho Chi Minh during his early revolutionary activities."

DIEGO GARCIA

The political declaration denounced the great powers for intensifying military activities in the Indian Ocean. The delegate from Mauritius declared foreign occupation of Diego Garcia to be "immoral and illegal". Diego Garcia was detached from Mauritius by British imperialism in 1968 and is now being used as an American military base. The Mauritian government and people are determined to recover their sovereignty over the island.

The conference also denounced the French imperialists for their occupation of certain islands belonging to the Malagasy Republic and of the Comoro island of Mayotte. It denounced the South African aggression against Mozambique and supported the front-line states in Southern Africa. It condemned all foreign interference in El Salvador, supported the non-alignment and independence of Malta, and the sovereignty, independence, unity and non-aligned status of Cyprus. It expressed its regret over the continuing war between Iran and Iraq and called for measures to achieve a peaceful solution. It said that the conflict "causes damage not only to the two non-aligned countries and their peoples, but to the whole movement and the international community." Conference supported

Exposing Soviet control at all levels in Vietnam and its use of naval and air bases in Haiphong, Saigon and Cam Ranh Bay to threaten other South East Asian and Pacific countries, Comrade Hoang Van Hoan said, "Vietnam is no longer an independent country and is headed for ruin."

Le Duan and company had degenerated, "into a treasonable clique running counter to the aspirations of the Vietnamese people and having no care for the future of the nation."

Hoang called on overseas Vietnamese to unite with revolutionaries at home in the new revolutionary struggle to overthrow Le Duan and company, "and establish a peaceful, unified, independent, democratic and prosperous Vietnam as expected by President Ho."

On February 4, the eve of the Spring Festival - Chinese New Year - Comrade Hoang van Hoan had dinner together with Comrade Hua Guofeng, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, symbolising the continued revolutionary friendship between the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples.

United front emerging in Kampuchea

Prospects appear good for the formation of a united front of all patriotic forces in Kampuchea, to fight the Vietnamese aggressors. Such a front, embracing Democratic Kampuchea and forces led by Prince Sihanouk and former

premier Son Sann, has been consistently called for by the government of Democratic Kampuchea.

On February 10th, Sihanouk met the Ambassador of Democratic Kampuchea to Socialist Korea, where Sihanouk is staying. At this meeting Sihanouk expressed a hope to meet with representatives of Democratic Kampuchea to discuss setting up a national coalition government to drive out the Vietnamese.

On February 11, Premier Khieu Samphan welcomed Sihanouk's proposals and announced that he will personally lead a delegation to Pyongyang to talk to Sihanouk. He said that Democratic Kampuchea is "most delighted" with Sihanouk's proposals.

Meeting with the Kampuchean Ambassador again on February 12, Sihanouk approved the proposal of Khieu Samphan. It is expected that the talks will start very soon. Sihanouk has expressed his willingness to serve as head of a united front and coalition government of all patriotic forces that would have Khieu Samphan as Premier.

In a press communique, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front led by Son Sann has accepted the proposal of a united front embracing "all national resistance movements fighting against the North Vietnamese occupation troops in Kampuchean territory."

Available from New Era Books

Kampuchea Bulletin No 5. Includes an interview with a former Heng Samrin regime official, now a refugee in Britain. 25p. plus 15p postage.

the right of the Palestinian people to a homeland of their own.

FIVE PRINCIPLES OF SOCIALIST KOREA

The Foreign Minister of socialist Korea spoke of the problems and tasks of the non-aligned movement and gave a clear orientation to its work. He said, "The non-aligned movement is interested in preventing world war and in defending peace. It is the 'most powerful force having the potential to deter and frustrate the imperialists' policy of war... To our great regret, however, our movement is not in a position to give full scope to its great strength at this critical moment when the danger of a new world war is growing daily."

Saying that the movement must overcome this at all costs, the Minister put forward a five-point proposal,

"First, all the non-aligned countries should regard the task of preventing a new world war and of defending peace and security as their prime duty and struggle to this end. We should not beg for peace. Peace can only be preserved through the peoples' thoroughgoing struggle against imperialism and war... non-aligned countries should refrain from acts helpful to the imperialists' policies of aggression and war. They should not do such things as wage war by proxy for them.

"Second, non-aligned countries should push into the foreground the question of dismantling all military blocs, withdrawing all foreign troops

and military bases from other countries and establishing nuclear-free zones and peace zones in many areas of the world... The non-aligned nations should strongly demand that foreign troops and military bases in other countries be withdrawn unconditionally.

"Third, we should actively assist the liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples for national liberation and independence and sincerely support the struggle of peoples for the building of a new society...

"Fourth, all non-aligned countries should strictly abide by the fundamental principles of our movement... The non-aligned movement is an independent political force outside all blocs... In order to abide by this fundamental principle, the non-aligned countries must not dance to others' tunes and must categorically reject any attempt or pressure or temptation to change or violate the fundamental principle of the movement...

"Fifth, the non-aligned countries should observe the principle of complete equality and non-interference in each other's internal affairs in the relationships among member-nations, and make all efforts for unity..."

The five principles put forward by socialist Korea are a firm basis for consolidation and unity in the non-aligned movement and a banner raised against Cuban and Vietnamese attempts, at the behest of the Soviet imperialists, to wreck the movement.

IRAN-SOVIET TRANSIT AGREEMENT

A STEP TOWARDS DEPENDANCE ON RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM

The following article has been translated from Ranjbar, the organ of the Proletarian Party of Iran. Footnotes are by "Class Struggle".

On 7th December 1980 the Iranian Majlis (Parliament) hurriedly ratified a contract between Iran and "The Sazuz General Beneficiary Union of The USSR".

The approval of a contract of such importance with such urgency, rightly prompted protest on behalf of many members of the Iranian Parliament. Many of them called for deeper study and investigation of the matter and reasoned that contracts with other countries should be concluded more carefully.

The Power Monoplisers and Capitulationists(1), however, who were trying to secure approval as quickly as possible, opposed the idea of deeper investigation. Some other members opposed the inclusion of the Iranian 'Sistan and Baluchistan' province in the contract, others suggested placing a clause in the text to prevent the Russians from transporting weapons through Iranian territory.

The representative of Zabol (a town in Iran's Baluchistan province), Mr. Shahraki Zadeh, expressed his opposition to paragraph (a) of article (2) of the contract in which Baluchistan (2) is included in the terms, and called for its omission saying, "What can the USSR transport through Baluchistan, and where is its destination after Zahedan (the capital of Baluchistan province)?" He then added, "According to the contract, Iran has no right to inspect the transported goods, therefore it is not known to us what crosses Iran. Serious attention must be paid towards the problems of Afghanistan, Baluchistan and of Iran and Pakistan and, if possible, Baluchistan should be omitted from the terms of the contract."

Dr. Yazdi, the elected representative of Tehran also asked, "What will happen if the Russians want to send arms via Eshq Abad and Bajgiran or the Persian Gulf and Zahedan to the Afghan government to use against the Afghan Mujahedin who are fighting the Russians?" He added, "According to this contract, if we wish to buy arms from a third country, we may not transport them through Russia, but there is no mention in the terms that Russia will not be able to send arms to a third country. I propose that a condition be added, to the effect, that no arms may be transported by either of the countries to a third."

Unfortunately, all these proposals were opposed and finally rejected.

The defenders of the ratification of the contract were "reasoning" that: "we are in need of drug imports", and that "we must also be thinking of the people's need for medicine", or "this contract is to the benefit of Iran, and the Russians were not so enthusiastic about the transit." In their replies to the representatives who were bringing up the point that as a result of the contract the Russians would be able to carry arms freely through Iranian soil, sending them to their forces inside Afghanistan and Baluchistan, the defenders said "Russia has hundreds of kilometers of common border with Afghanistan, why should it want to send arms there via Zahedan?!"

The reality is that the use of the right to transport across Iranian roads provides extensive facilities for Russia to expand its influence in Iran and the Persian Gulf region, by being able to provide its agents in different parts of Iran with arms and ammunition.

Also, because roads in Afghanistan are difficult to pass, the Russians can use the border road of Eshq Abad - Bajgiran - Mashad to reach South Afghanistan without being confronted by the Mujahedin, and deliver military equipment to Herat via the road linking Torbatjam to Taybad in Iran.

By use of the terms in this contract, they can also reach Baluchistan of Pakistan, where Afghan refugees reside, from the Azhedan - Mir Javeh direction, providing their numerous agents there with help to increase their anti-Iranian, anti-Pakistani, and separatist activities.

It must also be added that by the conclusion of this contract, better conditions will be created for the control of the road leading to the Port of Guater, the largest sea base of the Iranian Navy - by the Russians.

(1) This refers to the Islamic Republican Party who control the majority of seats in the Majlis. They are attempting to suppress other political forces and are opposed to the policies of President Banisadr.

(2) The Baluchis constitute an oppressed national minority in Iran and Pakistan. Because of imperialist, particularly superpower, contention in the region they have to wage their just struggle for national and democratic rights under very complex conditions.

Miners' big success

But what's behind the U-turn?

On February 10th, miners heard that the Coal Board (NCB) was planning to shut down up to 50 pits and more than 20,000 jobs. By a few days later, this had been toned down considerably; 21 pits were to be closed and most of the miners who lost their jobs as a result would be re-deployed. Then, on 18th February, just over a week after the news of the closures first broke, miners' leaders were given verbal assurances that the government was going to inject enough money (possibly as much as £200 million) into the coal industry to avert any closures at the present time.

WHY THE CHANGE ROUND?

Why did the government and NCB back down so quickly before the miners? Why did a government which has said it wants to cut state intervention agree to pump in so much cash?

The Power of the Workers

The basic reason was the strength of the miners' resistance. The worst hit area, with a loss of 2,800 jobs, would have been South Wales, with 5 shut-downs planned. Miners there reacted with immediate action; they struck, put pickets on the mines and power stations and enlisted the support of other workers. Railwaymen pledged not to cross the picket lines, and dockers stopped the unloading of imported coal. South Wales had already been severely affected by closures and redundancies in the steel industry and others, so workers had to support each other and fight hard against any further cuts.

Action spread quickly. Kent mines struck, and pits in Durham and Scotland came out; Yorkshire was pledged to join them the following week.

In itself the strike would have presented serious problems for the government, but the measures already being taken to make it fully effective presented nothing less than a direct challenge to the government - a challenge which, if taken up then, could have had grave consequences for it.

The reason is straight-forward. Tory governments serve capitalism using different tactics than Labour. In the 70's, Labour has generally tried to rope in the miners' leaders to cooperate with it in holding back the struggles of workers against the consequences of the capitalist crisis, using state violence as a secondary means of control. Conservative governments, without trade union links or any kind of 'left wing' image, have tried to get the cooperation of trade union leaders to some extent, but wielding the big stick has played a bigger part in their policies. When one party isn't

delivering the goods for capitalism, the other is brought back, alternating like the figures in a weather-house.

The biggest sticks the Thatcher government has brandished are massive unemployment and the "Employment Act". The miners action challenged both; in South Wales prompt militant action in cooperation with other parts of the working class, showed what is needed more generally to fight the rising tide of redundancies and closures - a militant class response, not a sectional one. The use of many pickets as were needed at various places (over and above the 6 which the government has laid down as the maximum) and the picketing of power stations ("secondary picketing" - illegal under the Employment Act) threatened to make a farce of the law, which the government simply isn't in a position to enforce without an all-out confrontation with wide sections of the working class. They had to give in or run the risk of a serious defeat. So they gave way - for the present.

LESSONS OF '72 and '74

It would be a mistake to see the withdrawal by Thatcher as a panic move however. It was a calculated response.

After their defeat in 1974, the Tories set up a secret working party to look into its causes, and make proposals for avoiding similar disasters in the future. The group reported back and basically recommended that in future, Tory governments should stand firm when the odds were in their favour, but when confronted by powerful resistance from strong unions, they should beat a retreat, in as good an order as possible. They would then secure their survival and that of their policies for much longer. And now, 7 years later, Thatcher, seems to be following that advice through.

Nevertheless, a way forward in the fights against redundancies and for democratic rights has been shown. Resolute class action against the bosses' offensive can succeed where isolated resistance by a few will usually fail.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Sunday March 1

DOWN WITH RACIST LAWS! OPPOSE THE NEW NATIONALITY BILL!

Public meeting organised by Working People Against Racism.

Speakers: Anwar Ditta, Indian Workers' Association, Bangladesh Workers' Association, and others.

3 p.m., Stanley Rd. Community Centre, Stanley Rd., London, N 15.

Monday March 2

BLACK PEOPLES DAY OF ACTION

Demonstration assembling 10 a.m. at Fordham Park, by Moonshot Community Centre, Pagnell St., London SE 14. Marching to 439 New Cross Rd., to Fleet St., Scotland Yard, House of Commons, 10 Downing St., to Hyde Park.

Organised by the New Cross Massacre Action Committee.

Monday March 2

IRISH HUNGER STRIKE

Public meeting organised by Ad Hoc Hunger Strike Committee.

Speakers representing National H-Block/Armagh Committee and others.

7.30, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., London WC2. For information on other support activities in London and nationally phone the Troops Out Movement on 01-267-2004.

Saturday March 7

CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Film: "South Africa belongs to us". Chilean music by Kili Kuri. Speakers from Women and Ireland, and Jaswinder Kaur: an Indian woman fighting deportation.

8 p.m., Rialto Community Centre, Hampton St., off Upper Parliament St., Liverpool

Sunday March 8

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IN ARMAGH

International picket of Armagh Jail in solidarity with Republican women political prisoners. Seminars in Dublin and Belfast on March 7. For details of transport, etc., phone Di on 01-691-8298.

Monday March 9

AZANIA SOLIDARITY

Speakers from Azanian national liberation movements.

Polytechnic of Central London, Students Union Bolsover st., WC1.

First meeting of a week's speaking tour with meetings in Yeovil, Plymouth, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool. For details phone 01-986-1300.

Tuesday March 17

ST. PATRICK'S DAY SOCIAL

Organised by Provisional Sinn Fein. Music by New Era.

7.30. Heckney Trades Hall, Dalston Lane, London E8.

Saturday March 21

SHARPEVILLE COMMEMORATION

Speakers include Pan Africanist Congress and Black Consciousness Movement. Music from Azania and Britain.

7 p.m. Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre, Worpeth Terrace, near Victoria tube.

Saturday March 21

TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT SOCIAL

To support the prisoners. Film. Music by An Rince. Organised by Haringey TOM.

7.45 p.m. Brabant Rd. Community Centre, Wood Green, London N 22. Admission £1.50. Unemployed £1.

Tuesday March 31

DEMAND AN INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO THE DEATH OF RICHARD CAMPBELL

Demonstration organised by Friends of Richard Campbell Committee. Assemble Tooting Broadway, 1 p.m.

Sunday April 5

DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE NATIONALITY BILL

Organised by Campaign Against Racist Laws. Details in next issue.

Friday May 1

MAYDAY SOCIAL

Organised by RCLB. Music by New Era and others. Tickets £1.50 (includes wine and food) 8 p.m. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, London WC2.