

CLASS STRUGGLE

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'THE PEOPLE WON'

BLACK PEOPLE'S DAY OF ACTION
'COME WHAT MAY, WE'RE HERE
TO STAY'

By a "Class Struggle" correspondent

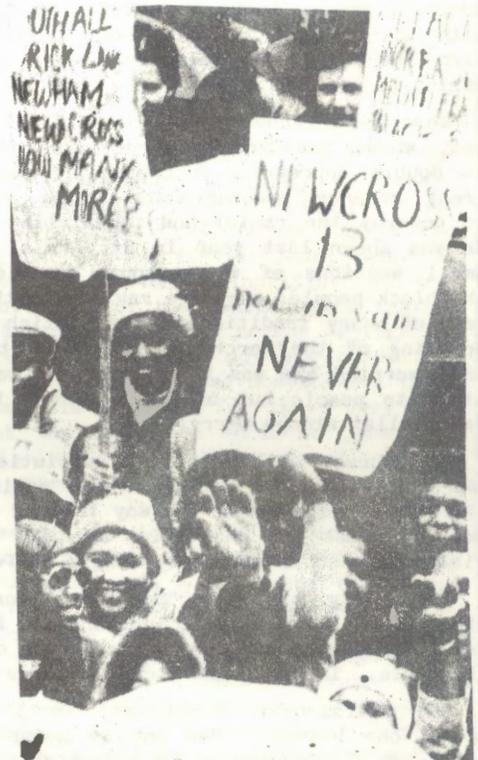
"...there will be no social peace while blacks are attacked, killed, injured and maimed with impunity on the streets or in our homes."
New Cross Declaration

On Monday, 2nd March central London was brought to a standstill by the largest and most militant demonstration of black people the capital has ever seen. From all over London, from Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Huddersfield, Nottingham and Leicester they gathered to show their anger and their grief. Grief for the 13 children murdered on January 18th at 439 New Cross Road, and anger at the inactivity of the police, the lies and distortions of the press and the indifference of parliament.

March 2nd was much more than a day of mourning. It was a day when black men and women stood up and fought back in unity against the racist state.

"No stopping us now we are on the move" read one of the slogans, and nothing could stop them - neither the batons and riot shields of the police, nor the hysterical lies of the newspapers. On March 2nd, London belonged to the oppressed, and the rich were right to tremble at the sound of their voices.

For whatever the parasites of the "Sun", the "Mirror" and the "Mail" say, the New Cross Massacre Action Committee which called the march is not made up of "Women's Lib groups and Left Wing organisations". In fact with honourable exceptions the organised 'left' was conspicuous by its absence from the march. No, the Action Committee is for black organisations only, and its call to march was answered by 15,000 ordinary black people - workers schoolchildren, the unemployed. They stood at the front of the march 'because for 400 years they have stood at the back'. They stood for dignity, justice and freedom; they took all that the police could throw at them and gave back double measure. This is the real significance of March 2nd.



For an eyewitness account of the march, see page 6.

HUNGER STRIKE

As this issue of "Class Struggle" goes to press, four Irish patriots are on hunger strike in Long Kesh concentration camp in order to defeat British imperialism's criminalisation policy.

Bobby Sands commenced his hunger strike on March 1st and was joined by Frankie Hughes on March 16th. Two more Republican prisoners began a hunger strike on Sunday March 22nd.

A statement announcing the start of the hunger strikes said, "We, the Republican POWs in H-Blocks of Long Kesh, and our comrades in Armagh prison, are entitled to and hereby demand political status...As further demonstration of our selflessness

and the justness of our cause a number of our comrades, beginning today with Bobby Sands, will hunger-strike to the death



BOBBY SANDS

unless the British government abandons its criminalisation policy and meets our demand for political status."

A public meeting in London on March 2nd featured Mary Tyler as one of the speakers. Mary spent five years in an Indian prison because of her support for the Naxalite (revolutionary communist) movement. Messages of support were sent from the London offices of ZANU and SWAPO, by the Indian Workers' Association and Azania Solidarity. Kevin Colfer spoke on behalf of Sinn Fein.

See further articles on Ireland:

CONNOLLYISM AND LENINISM. pp.10-11.
UNLOCK ARMAGH. Back page.

THE OPPRESSED TAKE THE STAGE

For a few hours on Monday March 2nd the streets of London were controlled by the black people! Turning their immense grief at the brutal racist murder of 13 children and young people in the New Cross fire into real material strength, 15,000 black people, supported by some progressive whites, marched through working class areas of South London and on through the citadels of power, the City, Fleet Street, Scotland Yard and the Houses of Parliament. Nothing and nobody could stand in their way. When the police tried to re-route the march or arrest people, the oppressed fought back and defeated them. Hack journalists who are rightly seen as siding with the racist British state got some rough justice and symbols of wealth such as a bank and jeweller's shop fell victim to volleys of stones and bricks. As a jeweller's shop was raided, a black youth said, "We're just reclaiming some of our gold!", showing the spontaneous identification of the awakened oppressed black youth with the revolutionary movement of the third world, with the national liberation movements in Southern Africa in particular.

This march showed that the national minority peoples, whose position in imperialist Britain is one of double oppression - class and national - are a great advance revolutionary force in the struggle to destroy the racist and imperialist British state. As was shown last year in St. Pauls, Bristol, where small sections of white youth came out to support the black people, they are rekindling the long dormant revolutionary tradition in the British working class. Speaking of the March 2nd march, Whitelaw said that what worried him was that the march was not directed at white people but at the police. Well might this imperialist stooge worry!

Of course, whilst genuine revolutionaries acclaim the fact that the oppressed are making history and that they are showing the way forward for the entire working class the chauvinist British 'left', the revisionists and trotskysts, sing a different tune.

The oddly misnamed "Socialist Worker" bleats, "There were a few violent incidents. BUT SO WHAT! Here was an occasion when they were entirely understandable. In fact, the incidents were trivial..."

The revisionist 'Communist' Party naturally has to go one better: "No one is going to excuse the outbreaks of violence which undoubtedly took place."

This is entirely consistent with the record of the CPGB which supports immigration controls, condemned the Bristol uprising as 'primitive', described the struggle of the people in Southall during the last election as "squalid little street fights with the police", thinks that British imperialist troops should stay in Ireland and that Gerry Tuite should be back in Brixton prison!

Such fundamentally reactionary views have often existed in the revolutionary movement. And genuine communists have a history of struggle against them.

In the 1920s a great peasant revolutionary movement grew up in China. This movement established a reign of terror over the landlords and gentry who had fed off their flesh for centuries. The then leadership of the Communist Party of China looked down on the peasant movement and echoed landlord propaganda that the movement was "terrible" or "going too far". In his 1927 "Report on an investigation of the peasant movement in Hunan", the great Marxist-Leninist leader, Comrade Mao Zedong, took issue with these viewpoints:

"From the middle social strata upwards..." wrote Mao, "there was not a single person who did not sum up the whole business in the phrase, 'It's terrible!' Under the impact of the views of the 'It's terrible!' school then flooding the city, even quite revolutionary minded people became down-hearted as they pictured

the events in the countryside ... and they were unable to deny the word "terrible" ... But ... the fact is that the great peasant masses have risen to fulfill their historic mission... This is a marvellous feat never before achieved, not just in forty, but in thousands of years. It's fine. It is not "terrible" at all... "It's terrible!" is obviously a theory for combatting the rise of the peasants... It is obviously a counter-revolutionary theory. No revolutionary comrade should echo this nonsense... What the peasants are doing is absolutely right; what they are doing is fine! "It's fine!" is the theory of the peasants and of all other revolutionaries... Every revolutionary comrade must support it, or he will be taking the stand of counter-revolution... Where there are two opposite approaches to things and people, two opposite views emerge. "It's terrible!" and "It's fine!", "riffraff" and "vanguards of the revolution".

This represents the voice and tradition of revolutionary communism! Unlike the CP and SWP, genuine communists rejoice that one section of the working class is picking up the revolutionary banner without illusions in the police, courts, parliament and the other institutions of phoney 'British democracy'.

The imperialist system is decaying and is in a deep crisis. The great struggles of the third world countries and peoples, in particular the armed national liberation movements and the struggle for the new international economic order, are hitting hard at imperialism. The imperialists must now seek to grind the bones of the metropolitan workers as well! The Black national minority people bear the brunt of this attack but it is an attempt to pauperise the entire working class, driving millions into unemployment and poverty. This process is already at an advanced stage in areas such as South Wales and Merseyside.

If the working class is to fight back, a revolutionary movement must be built that is free of the imperialist ideology of social chauvinism and of illusions in 'British democracy'. The only basis on which that movement can be built is by recognising that those most oppressed by British imperialism are already in the vanguard of the fight to destroy it. Genuine revolutionaries are totally on the side of the black people and their revolutionary struggle. They fully recognise the immense role that the black people will play in the British revolution. As Chairman Mao pointed out:

"The evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and thrived with the enslavement of negroes and the trade in negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the black people."



MAC ON THE PEASANT REVOLUTION

"Supreme in authority, the peasant association allows the landlord no say and sweeps away his prestige... They even loll for a minute or two on the ivory-inlaid beds belonging to the young ladies in the households of the local tyrants and evil gentry. At the slightest provocation they make arrests, crown the arrested with tail paper hats and parade them through the villages... It was necessary to overthrow the whole authority of the gentry, to strike them to the ground and keep them there. There is revolutionary significance in all the actions which were labelled as 'going too far' in this period. To put it bluntly, it is necessary to create terror for a while."

OF BOOZE

Ansells management started all the bother just after the New Year when they unilaterally discontinued the guaranteed week and put the brewery on a four day week. BUT they wanted five days' production from the workers. This was clearly an attempt to smash union organisation in the Brewery and reduce the workforce.

The workers went on strike on January 12th. On January 18th, management withdrew their decision on the 4-day week, so the union said the dispute was over and they would return to work. Then, management produced a 9-point document which had to be agreed before the return to work - all this completely irrelevant to the original dispute. This document included gems such as:

- * an initial further 96 redundancies;
- * a wage cut of about £30 per week;
- * new working practices - larger loads, more deliveries per load, complete mobility of labour;
- * Maintenance Department to accept more outside contractors, and further redundancies.

The workers rejected this and stayed on strike, since all the points amounted to nothing but a scheme to undermine the agreements workers had forced over the years on their conditions and wages.

MANAGEMENT UP THE STAKES

On February 3rd, management announced their intention to bring in unemployed workers off the dole to take the strikers' jobs. Office workers at Ansells all refused to do anything to bring these 'new recruits' into the brewery, and the strikers made it absolutely clear that the pickets would not let anybody through. So that little ploy died the death in the face of a determined and united workforce; but we can be sure that it is something that will be tried again and again in the next few months.

So, on February 9th, management announced the closure of the brewery with the loss of at least 600 jobs.

WHAT'S IT REALLY ALL ABOUT?

There are two big issues at stake in this dispute. One is the 'rationalisation' of the industry (for the uninitiated, rationalisation is management language for less money, less jobs, worse conditions, more profits). The other concerns the right - and the ability - of workers to defend themselves against systematic attacks upon them and their organisations.

The question of 'rationalisation' makes sense if you know that Ansells is owned by Allied Breweries, and that Allied Breweries own the biggest brewery in Europe, at Burton-on-Trent. This brewery is very modern, but it is producing far less than it is capable of, and therefore is not as profitable as it could be. But Ansells brewery in Birmingham was working at full capacity right up to the 4-day week. It seems very likely that Allied Breweries would like to close Ansells and transfer production to its larger more modern, more automated brewery at Burton. So, did it deliberately provoke the strike in order to have an excuse for carrying this plan through?

On the question of trade unions, the strikers themselves are quite clear about the issues. They say, "Since Ansells belongs to a highly profitable concern, i.e. Allied Breweries, this is clearly a further step in the process of breaking our union organisation. Our dispute is now a test case for the whole of the brewery industry, and the union movement"; and "Ansells management is clearly trying to be the Michael Edwardes of our industry, both in job reductions and the destruction of union organisation. Our fight to keep Ansells open is not just a question of saving our jobs. For us it is a matter of trying to stop our employers going through trade union organisation like a dose of salts. WHAT IS HAPPENING TO US CAN AND WILL HAPPEN TO ANYONE."

"IQ TESTS" were recently proposed by the management at Revlon Cosmetics, to decide which of their workers should be sacked. This was quite rightly opposed by the workforce. It's bad enough being thrown on the dole, without the bosses trying to grade you as inferior as well. I.Q. tests have long since been shown to be meaningless. The bosses have no right to go round trying to grade workers' brains.

THE ARMED FORCES are thinking about bringing the lessons learned from their experience in Northern Ireland over to this country in the event of civil disorder such as a 'race riot' or a large scale industrial disturbance. Speaking at a meeting at Liverpool University in February, on civil disorder and the role of the armed forces, Colonel Robin Eveleigh, who has served twice in Ireland, said that he was concerned to preserve Western democracy by ensuring that 'society can protect itself from internal terrorist or subversive minorities' and advocated bringing in the army if the police 'became discredited in the eyes of the population' (i.e. failed to keep order).

MACHINING DRESSES AT 35p TO 65p A DRESS (making £25 for a 60 hr week) or filling 4,000 tins of baby powder a week for £5 are examples of the pay of today's homeworkers. Besides this abysmal pay (average 75p per hour for manufacturing and 50p for service jobs) homeworkers, many of them from national minorities and most of them women, have none of the basic rights against unfair dismissal and redundancy and no way of fighting for better pay. Complaints about pay and conditions often lead to the sack, and for most homeworkers their pay, though minimal, is necessary for their very survival. Who except the desperate would do jobs such as these in the isolation of their own homes and paying all their own expenses?

WOMEN WORKERS have won two important victories during the last month - both after a determined fight through more than one court hearing. A waitress, Mrs Ursula Hurley won her claim in the Employment Appeal Tribunal against her employer for whom she worked a one night trial but was then told that he had a policy of not employing waitresses with children. The judge ruled that she was a victim of unlawful sex discrimination. And at the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg two former Lloyds Bank clerks won their claim that differing pension requirements for men and women under 25 yrs violated the Equal Pay Act. Men, and not women, were expected to contribute 5% of their salary to the scheme and to make their take home pay equal they were paid 5% extra. The ruling could result in Lloyds Bank having to pay 14,000 women employees more than £3 million.

FEELINGS ARE RUNNING HIGH IN THE HEBRIDES, where the local people are faced with the prospect of a major NATO airbase being set up at Stornoway on the island of Lewis. US imperialism is also reported to be casting envious eyes upon the area as an alternative to its base in Iceland. With Scotland's North East coast facing the vast naval activity of the Soviet Union's Arctic fleet, and the US trying to muscle in from the West, the realities of the international situation are confronting the outlying areas of Scotland in a more immediate and forceful way than the rest of the British Isles. The whole world is being progressively turned into one vast theatre of superpower strategic contention. A "Keep NATO Out Campaign" was recently set up in the Hebrides, and forced the RAF and Ministry of Defence to hold an inquiry into local opposition to their plans. Such actions which limit the ability of the two imperialist superpowers to contend for the world deserve the full support of all peace-loving people.

NHS SECOND RATE SERVICE

The NHS has this month been attacked on several new fronts in addition to the chronic lack of funds which already stunts it.

For example, it has just been announced that from next October overseas visitors are to be charged for all hospital treatment except emergency treatment in Casualty department. Citizens from Common Market countries and foreigners and their dependants who have "settled here" or have been here more than three years will be exempted from these fees. Mr Jenkin, Health and Social Services Secretary, has said, "it should be perfectly feasible for hospitals to determine by two or three simple questions and answers, supported by such evidence as may be necessary, whether a patient is or is not entitled to treatment free of charge". In other words, if you are black don't fall sick without your passport and identification on you

or you may painfully perforate your appendix while delayed in the casualty department. Racial harassment is moving into our NHS hospitals.

More encouragement to the private sector and slurs on our health service workers are contained in a report commissioned by the DHSS on waiting lists for orthopaedic surgery. 131,000 people are on such waiting lists and some have waited over eight years for operations. Not that the report blames the government cuts for such disgraceful figures - it prefers snide comments on the very people who keep the NHS going. It states that a major problem is the shortage of nurses caused by the 2½ hour cut in their working week and the ten bank holidays they enjoy each year. And some of the solutions offered are just as weak and slippery - like using private hospitals to cope with the backlog of patients. No

mention of a fight to restore and rebuild an adequate orthopaedic service under the NHS. Private medicine is one of the main reasons for the waiting lists - a long wait in crippling pain equals lots of lucrative private practice. Dr Vaughan, Health Minister, described the report as "excellent" and said it showed what could be done without spending extra money!

Private medicine is booming and grooming itself after the budget exempted most of the companies' private health insurance schemes from tax. Proposals are now being made to include in these company perks private general practice in no way linked to the present NHS doctors. The NHS then really will become a second rate health service for the workers - after all the bosses don't even need to keep us fit enough for employment at the moment.

OPPRESSED TAKE LEAD

By a "Class Struggle" correspondent.

The oppressed nationalities are leading the struggle against racism in Britain. This message comes over loud and clear from the mobilisation throughout the country for the April 5th CARL demonstration against the racist Nationality Bill.

At a meeting in Leeds, a representative of the Afro-Caribbean organisation, Harambee, said: "There is one very important point about this fight against the Nationality law. That is that it's black people who are going to lead the fight against it."

It's black people that are under attack and this campaign must be led and directed by black people themselves. We won't be taken over by other people. We want to build a broad campaign and we are against all left rhetoric and in-fighting."

A member of the Jamaica Society said at the same meeting: "It is time for black people to stand up and fight. Even if we've never stood up and fought for anything in our lives before, now is the time to stand up and fight. They came to our country and they milked us dry. They took everything and when there was nothing left they said now you can be independent. Then they came and begged us to come and work for them in UK. Now they say we must go, there's nothing left for you now, they say. There's only one conclusion for us - we must fight now."

The main organisation leading the fight in Leeds is the Scrap the Nationality Act campaign, consisting of groups like the Caribbean Association and the Barbados Association. They are going out into the community, including the churches, to mobilise against the racist law.

BANGLADESHI ORGANISE

In Birmingham the Bangladeshi Workers' Association drew an audience of 400, mainly Bangladeshi, to a meeting to mobilise against the Nationality law. The record of the Bangladeshi people's struggle against racist laws goes back to 1962. The president of the BWA, T. Huq, was chairman of the Pakistani Workers'

Association of the time (Bangladesh had not then won its liberation). At that time the PWA joined forces with the Indian Workers' Association(GB) to fight the first Commonwealth Immigrants Act.

At the BWA meeting, Avtar Jouhl, IWA(GB) General-Secretary, reported that one Sikh temple in Birmingham is financing 10 coaches for the demonstration, and another temple had given a similar promise.

MAKE TRADE UNIONS FIGHT RACISM

White anti-racists must persuade white workers to support the oppressed nationalities in the fight against racism. For all the grand resolutions about equality passed by the TUC, their record of supporting black people, even their own members, is dismal. White workers on the shop floor and in the branches have to correct the record. We must get rid of the sort of leaders who forced the Postal workers to stop boycotting deliveries to Grunwicks, and who led the white workers in Imperial Typewriters to scab on the Asian workers' strike. Black members are important to them when it comes to collecting their dues, but not when it comes to fighting for their rights.

Up to now the TUC have refused to give official support to the April 5th demonstration. Yet some members of the CARL Mobilising Committee proposed that, if the TUC could be persuaded to attend, they should be allowed to lead the march. The Committee rightly knocked back this boot-licking proposal. It agreed that the march should be led by those who have worked to organise it, the black people.

STOP PRESS.....Bristol Black fightback trial.

Clenched fist salutes, cheers and clapping greeted the jury's verdict of not guilty on two more defendants in the St Paul's "riot" trials in Bristol on March 20th. Of the 16 who were accused of "riotous assembly" - following a massive and provocative police raid in St Paul's last year - 12 have now been found not guilty. The jury failed to reach verdicts on the other 4 defendants, who may face a further trial.

Mr Rudy Narayan, a progressive defence lawyer in the case, requested the judge to refer suggestions of police perjury to the Public Prosecutor. Surprise, surprise - the Judge refused.

It is possible the state forces may want to avoid further exposure and not carry out a retrial on the remaining 4. But if they persevere with further trials and a new jury, mass support will remain a basic necessity to gain the releases of the rest of the defendants.

KWA statement

At a recent meeting of the Bangladesh Workers' Association, M. Younus of the Kashmiri Workers' Association stressed the importance of fighting the racist Nationality Bill, saying that it is an undisputed fact that blacks in Britain are treated as third rate citizens, and that this will

now have legal backing.

Comrade Younus said that the anti-racist struggle began when British imperialism started to colonise other countries.

In South Asia, the war started when the ruler of Bengal, Siraj-Ud-Daula, took up arms to fight British imperialism. Then the people from the whole of the sub-continent India, Pakistan, Bang-

ladesh and Kashmir - took up the fight. Their history is full of martyrs who laid down their lives in the struggle against British imperialism. To carry on the struggle against racism is therefore our historical duty, and we will continue to fight British imperialism for as long as it exists. The struggle of black people against racism is a natural part of the struggle of working people.

By a "Class Struggle" correspondent.

Who benefits? Not the working class. This was the clear conclusion in the book "State intervention in industry - a workers' inquiry", sponsored by Coventry, Liverpool, Newcastle and North Tyneside Trades Councils. The record of the 1974-1979 Labour Government was looked at by the workers on the receiving end of its policies. In every case it could be shown that they were ignored or sold out. The National Enterprise Board poured millions of pounds into the bosses' pockets. In the same factories thousands of workers were made redundant. All this went on while Tony Benn was Secretary of State for Industry (1974-1975) and Secretary of State for Energy (1975-1979).

In February 1981, Coventry Trades Council hosted a follow-up national conference attended by 150-200 delegates. This was to discuss how to develop a mass working class movement and to prevent a repeat of 1974-1979.

At this conference many delegates explained that their own experience had shown that we could not rely on the state to intervene on behalf of the working class or to help build socialism, even under a Labour Government. The state was not impartial. Nationalised industries did not mean people's industries.

It was no good trade unionists fighting on the economic issues and then passing the wider political issues on to the TUC, MPs or the Labour Government, or any other self-declared champions of the working class. This wrong attitude on the part of many good people, as well as even more not-so-good, is a recipe for the working class remaining powerless and incapable of acting as a unified force in defence of its own self interests. The opportunist 'leaders' of the working class today are able to hold on to their power and easy living by encouraging workers down the path of economic struggle while they keep the lid tightly on the political struggle. Decades of such training has left the working class movement in disarray and lacking confidence.

This is even more in evidence right now when Britain is going through a huge slump, and the traditional

State Intervention in Industry

WHO BENEFITS?

economic weapons are largely irrelevant. With certain honourable exceptions, such as the miners recently workers have been unable to defend themselves - let alone improve their living conditions - through strikes, sit-ins, etc. This is because the problem really does not lie in the boardroom of even the biggest company, it lies in the whole structure of society, the whole way industry is organised. But workers have been denied political education and the weapons of political struggle for so long, that many workers have as yet been unable to sort out how to take the struggle forward.

SO WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE?

At the Conference, there was much general discussion about the need to develop a real mass working class movement that linked the shop floor organisations with community groups, tenants' associations, women's groups, etc. Trades Councils were seen as a key link in this process. The need to build multi-union organisations in workplaces was stressed. This mass movement would link up with a 'left wing' Labour Government which would use the full potential of Parliament to vote capitalism out and socialism in.

All this might sound very militant but what does it really offer the working class? Not a lot!

There were three main weaknesses to the Conference:

1. There was confusion over who really is the main enemy of the working class. It is not just the Tories, who only took over where Labour left off. The main enemy is the capitalist ruling class (bosses, heads of nationalised industries, speculators, bankers, major shareholders and big landowners) and their system.
2. There were illusions about the nature of the state. Although one speaker correctly described the state as a 'coercive capitalist machine', Parliament was not clearly seen as part of that machine. The capitalist class will not just sit back and let Parliament vote out their profit-mad system (remember Chile?).
3. There were no practical policies put forward to build the trade union movement into a democratic fighting movement on a national scale. We were left with a vague co-ordinating role for Trades Councils with no practical suggestions on how to change them from being just paper-shuffling organisations. This was particularly ironic, considering the conference was held at the time when the miners were forcing the Tories to back down.

Underlying these weaknesses is the lack of understanding of the need to break the link between the trade union movement and the Labour Party. As the book says in its Conclusions, "However, the issue of the potential development of the Labour Party must be an essential part of the debate about socialist strategy."

One delegate correctly summed up the Conference: "It was like the working class swapping a battered old Mini for a Rolls Royce with all the trimmings - but no engine." When looked at closely, there was little in the Conference that would help the working class.

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Welsh socialists in Congress

60 delegates attended the first National Congress of the Welsh Socialist Republican Movement (WSRM) on February 28 and March 1. The Congress declared its support for a Welsh Socialist Republic and said,

"Historically, Wales has been regarded by the English ruling class as a cheap source of soldiery, mobile labour, industrial

raw materials, land and natural resources. Capital has been pumped in, and the profits, raw materials and resources siphoned out in enormous quantities."

It stated that much of the land is owned or controlled by outside interests - National Parkland, military camps and ranges, water reservoirs for English water authorities and landed estates.

It also exposed the attempts of the British state to stamp out the Welsh language.

"The WSRM declared itself a revolutionary movement - opposed to the British state and its legal, parliamentary and brainwashing systems. It would not become an electoral party, maintaining people's illusions about the English constitution or the prospects of peaceful change."

Black People defeat Police attacks

We arrived at New Cross Station at about 10.30am. Already thousands of people were gathered in Fordham Park under the driving rain. About 90% of them were black. We met three girls - aged 15 or 16 - from Tottenham who had skipped school for the day to come to the march. What will you say at school tomorrow?, we asked. They looked indignant, "It's our right to come."

Representatives of the New Cross Massacre Action Committee spoke from the back of an open lorry. Darcus Howe read out the names and birth and death days of the 13 children killed in the fire - even though the rain which was by now torrential you could see people's tears. The New Cross Declaration was read out:

"The New Cross Black people's day of action is another stage in the response of the black people, of our allies in the country to this savagery and this barbarism".

More speeches from John La Rose, and Wilfred Wood, the vicar of St Laurence's, Catford:-

"First and foremost this is an act of Witness. It is a fact that 13 young people died in a fire. In the past people have been murdered in this country for no other reason than that they were black..."

The crowd, which was growing all the time, was becoming a little restive. We were told that we were waiting for brothers and sisters from Manchester and Birmingham. "We have told the police not to stop them on the motorway. We will not move from here until our brothers and sisters arrive."

Towards midday the march - by now over 5000 strong - moved off. The organisers asked for black people at the front, and white friends behind 'because we have stood at the back for 400 years'. In fact there was a lot of mixing - and the main concern of the stewards was to stop white organisations from muscling in. At any rate an attempt by the



ANL to march into the front of the procession got very short shrift.

We marched slowly past the smoke-charred, burned-out remains of 439 New Cross Road, the scene of the terrible attack. We headed slowly towards Peckham and Camberwell behind the blown up picture placards of the dead.

"Come what may we are here to stay"

"Justice, justice. Freedom, freedom"

As we marched hundreds of people joined us. At Peckham Girls School girls climbed the railings to join the march. Some of them recognized a former teacher in our group (white). "Hello miss, nice to see you".

Some white people joined in too. Other waved their support. Some looked on in amazement.

Many miles on and the march was approaching Blackfriars Bridge to cross over into the city. Something was up. The march slowed down, then stopped. Someone said that the police had attacked the families of the dead at the front. We pushed to the front to see two lines of police with riot shields blocking the route. Young blacks were fighting the police to get through. The lead lorry moved forward and the police gave way. The march continued on its agreed route. We couldn't remember the last time when a march had forced the police to retreat.

Through Fleet Street and on to the West End. "What do we want? Justice. When do we want it? Now" Some bricks and stones were thrown at shops and a bank. A journalist, photographing marchers was attacked.

Near Oxford Street another police provocation. Side streets were blocked and mounted police attacked the marchers. "Take them back," yelled the crowd. Word spread that someone had been arrested. "Let him go," we chanted, and the march refused to move until he was released.

It was now getting late and as we moved through the paralysed West End the rain came back in torrents. In Hyde Park another rally cut short by the rain.

We heard one speaker say, "It is the first time in our history this has happened in this country. It was believed black people did not exist - we have shown they do".

Not only do they exist, but on March 2nd, they took on and defeated the forces of the state. Black people themselves decided where they would march, and they marched there, despite all the attacks of the police. Over 15,000 people had taken over London for a day - behind them were many thousands more in shops, schools, factories, homes who supported and were inspired by the great march. We knew that things would never be the same again.

VICTORY!

"People like Anwar Ditta are the bright star in the heart of our community. They show that black and Asian people in this country can fight their own battles and are capable of achieving their own victories." So said a member of the Anwar Ditta Defence Committee at a recent meeting of Working People Against Racism in London. How that speaker and the many thousands of others who have worked tirelessly in the campaign to get Anwar's children home must be rejoicing now that victory has been achieved! And for the hundreds of thousands who live in fear of such fascist treatment at the hands of the British state as Anwar has had, what a fine and inspiring symbol of indomitable determination and resistance has been set up!



SNIVELLING

The British state and its spokesmen are determined to try to wriggle off the hook and cover up the fact that they have received a humiliating and well deserved defeat. The Granada TV programme which portrayed the indisputable facts of Anwar's parentage of her three children in Pakistan gave the state the opportunity it desperately needed to try to save as much face as possible. "Oh, my goodness!", they were able to say, "So unfortunate that those facts had not come to our notice!"

What nonsense! Those facts for which Granada TV has in recent days been credited with 'discovering' have been well known to every Asian family in this country for many months or even years, and to many other oppressed and progressive people besides. Campaigning up and down the country Anwar has spread her message far and near, and marches and protests have been held in her town of Rochdale and elsewhere.

Anwar has never ceased to put over her message loud and clear - that her parentage of her children is perfectly well-attested by numerous people in many walks of life in Pakistan - medical and religious people, family, friends and neighbours - and that successive British governments, Tory and Labour, have brazenly refused to consider their testimony.

The question is thus not one of blood tests or any other discovery of modern science - blood tests could have been conducted at any time during the past few years. The question is: Why did the state brazenly refuse to take the evidence seriously for so long?

RACIST STATE

The answer is that the state is a racist institution. Its function is to preserve as much of the gains of the British Empire as it can in the new situation where British imperialism has been booted out of most of its colonies. The racist immigration controls and the proposed new racist Nationality Law are designed to try to ensure that British imperialism decides who comes and goes and when, and decides it not on the basis of the benefit of the working and oppressed people but on the basis of the economic and political interests of the British ruling class.

This dictates the fact that much of the immigration control system is known to be riddled

with open racist and Nazi sympathisers of the NF type, who are given a free hand to indulge their contemptible bureaucratic whims regarding the immigrants who arrive here - often tired, confused and even shaken by forgoing experiences that have caused them to leave their homes.

Presiding over such a set-up are the 'reasonable' faces of the Tory and Labour governments. What progressive person can fail to wince when Timothy Raison, current Tory spokesman on the matter, expresses the hope that Anwar's family will now be happy together? What a snivelling hypocrite! The very man who took over the job, begun by the Labour government, of bcking up Home Office racism come what may, now tries to get away with sounding 'benign'!

ASIAN WOMEN

Of all the working and oppressed sections of the people in this country, Asian women face perhaps the most comprehensive oppression - as women as national minorities and as members of the working class. The British ruling class and their state have consequently demonstrated a determination that they should be exploited as cruelly as possible. Nevertheless, great oppression has bred great resistance, and in such figures as Mrs Desai of Grunwick fame, and, besides Anwar, other women such as Nasira Begum, Jaswinder Kauer and Nasreen Aktar, have set a shining example of resistance that is rapidly changing the image of Asian women from being that of a symbol of extreme oppression into an example of determined resistance.

REKINDLING RESISTANCE

"You can see what injustice has been done to us by the Labour government and the Conservative government," commented Anwar on hearing the news of her success. This comment represents a consistent stand she has taken throughout recent years, that Labour and Tory play the same game.

So many people in the Labour movement and its associated political groups strut around calling themselves 'left', and yet when it comes to defending the rights of the most bitterly oppressed sections, they are shown to be nothing but supporters of the racist, imperialist system of exploitation. Had not Anwar taken it upon herself to lead her own community into action, then would anyone on the British 'left' ever have heard of her case, let alone showed a leg?



Anwar's victory shows once again what is increasingly being shown by the struggles of the black and Asian people in this country - that they are playing a vanguard role in rekindling the tradition of real struggle against the state - a tradition that has for so long been lost in the British labour movement. Such is the corrosive power of imperialist thinking that the British labour movement and its 'left' barely show a flicker of life. In rallying around the self-reliant struggles of the national minorities lies the surest route for all progressive people for reintroducing a real labour struggle into this country.

EURO-RACISTS SINK LOWER

The racists in the so-called 'Communist' Party of France (PCF) are becoming more and more disgusting. After destroying a hostel for African workers in the Paris suburb of Vitry over Christmas, they have gone on to victimise a Moroccan family who they falsely, and with no real evidence, accused of acting as drug peddlers. From this they tried to raise a spectre of immigrants as drug pushers and in a leaflet couched in the language of lynch law they called for a demonstration outside the home of the Moroccan family. Following the demonstration one of the family's daughters was attacked in the street and the mother had a severe epileptic attack. By now the 'evidence' produced by the 'Communist' Party had been shown to be false, but the revisionists had moved on to other activities.

Here are some of the other activities of revisionist-controlled councils in France:

* The Mayor of Saint-Denis refuses a petition from immigrant workers telling them to "go back to their own country."

* In Rennes the local council refuses permission for the building of an Islamic Centre.

In addition, the PCF have organised to prevent Spanish peasants from selling wine and fruit on the French market.

The latest target for the PCF are Asian workers. Revisionist boss Georges Marchais says that parts of Paris should be renamed 'Hong-kong-sur-Seine'. This is a racist attack on the Chinese, Vietnamese and Kampuchean communities. It is particularly familiar to those refugees who have fled from the social-fascist and racist Vietnamese regime. But, as one refugee remarked, "After what I've been through, Marchais doesn't scare me."

LONG HISTORY

Noxious as the activities of the French revisionists are, genuine revolutionaries have some reason to be grateful to them, in that they point out the logical end for those in the revolutionary movement in imperialist countries who fail to settle accounts with social chauvinism.

The racism of the French 'Communist' Party has developed out of its long history of failing to understand the effects of imperialism on the workers' movement, and of acting on that understanding.

In 1922, French communists in Algeria wrote to state that backward countries were not ready for self-determination. At the Fifth Congress of the Communist International, delegates from the Soviet Communist Party demanded to know whether or not these people had been expelled from the party.

At that Congress, the great revolutionary, Comrade Ho Chi Minh, spoke to expose the chauvinism of the European communist Parties. He said:

"It is not an exaggeration to say that so long as the French and British Communist Parties do not

PROLETAIRES
DE TOUS LES PAYS
UNISSEZ-VOUS



MAIS PAS
ICI



"WORKERS
OF ALL
COUNTRIES
UNITE"

"BUT NOT
HERE"

apply a really active policy with regard to the colonies, and do not come into contact with the colonial peoples, their vast programmes will remain ineffective, and this, because they go counter to Leninism... As for our Communist Parties in Great Britain, Holland, Belgium and other countries whose bourgeoisie have invaded the colonies, what have they done ... in the spirit of genuine proletarian internationalism and close contact with the toiling masses in the colonies? What our parties have done in this domain amounts to almost nothing. As for me, born in a French colony and a member of the French Communist Party I am sorry to say that our Party has done very little for the colonies."

Worse was to come! In the 1940s and 1950s, the French Communist Party actively opposed the revolutionary national liberation struggles in Algeria and Indochina. After the Second World War, Party members sat in the cabinet that sent air fighter bombers to attack the freedom fighters in the colonies. To this day, the revisionist client

Sham independence

The Black puppet 'state' of kwaNdebele lying to the north of Pretoria, in the Transvaal province in South Africa is to be granted its 'independence' within the next two years. Here we have a classical example of mini neo-colonialism as existing in so many parts of the Third World.

The SA Holiday Inns Group has reached an agreement with the "kwaNdebele Legislative Assembly" to build a multi-million pound casino and hotel complex and is to enjoy exclusive rights to develop the complex. It goes without saying that few Ndebeles will be able to afford to have a 'flutter' at the casino, or to stay in any of the hotels, which will be used almost exclusively for wealthy white South Africans. It can also be taken for granted that the profits will not remain in the so-called state of 'kwaNdebele' but will return to the South African

party in the French colony of Réunion, in the Indian Ocean, calls for autonomy rather than independence. As the Communist Party of China pointed out in 1963:

"The attitude of certain French comrades towards the revolutionary cause of the oppressed nations is indeed shocking."

ATTACK ON SOCIALIST KOREA

Meanwhile, "L'Humanité", paper of the PCF, has seen fit to criticise socialist Korea for hosting the recent meeting between Kampuchean patriots, Khieu Samphan and Samdech Norodom Sihanouk. In a commentary, the Korean comrades said that the criticisms were not worth argument, "but we feel constrained to say a few words about it.

"It is a question entirely pertaining to our sovereignty how we treat the Kampucheans. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a sovereign state... But why did "L'Humanité" express such surprise in face of an utterly natural and common fact? It would not have done so, if it saw the objective fact as it was and did not lose its independent thinking and judgement."

based share-holders.

Meanwhile, in another so-called 'independent Black homeland', Venda, situated on the Transvaal-Zimbabwe border, three Johannesburg-based businessmen have started a multi-million pound venture, which will include, (yes you've guessed it), a casino and a greyhound race track.

In 1838, the Ndebele nation, an off-shoot of the Zulus, lived in the Transvaal. They were attacked and defeated by the emigrant Boers who had trekked into that area from the British colony, the Cape. After their defeat, the majority of the Ndebeles, led by King Mzilikazi, fled north to what is now South-Eastern Zimbabwe. The minority who stayed behind, were placed in a number of tribal reservations, separated from each other by land set aside exclusively for white ownership.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES



KOREA

The socialist Democratic People's Republic of Korea has reacted angrily to the recent visit of Peter Blaker, British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, to South Korea where he declared that Britain would supply arms to the fascist regime and strengthen political and economic "cooperation" with it. A commentary by the Korean Central News Agency brands this as a provocative outburst by British imperialism to encourage the Chon Duhwan clique to launch a war of aggression against the socialist north. It states that Britain is running counter to the international demand for independent and peaceful reunification in Korea and that this is also opposed to the interests of the British people. Thatcher is seeking to follow the policies of US imperialism to try and extricate herself from a serious crisis, the Korean comrades point out.

"The remarks of the British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs make us recollect all sorts of crimes committed by the British imperialists against our people in the past. During the past Korean war in particular, they zealously supported the aggressive acts of the US imperialists and sent their mercenaries to Korean soil to commit indelible criminal atrocities against our people and forced a large number of British youths to die for no purpose as US imperialists' cannon fodder... Such acts of Britain clearly show that the aggressive nature of imperialism never changes even in its senile decay."

KAMPUCHEA

The first round of talks between former head of state Samdech Norodom Sihanouk and Premier of Democratic Kampuchea, Khieu Samphan on forming a united front of all patriots to resist Soviet-Vietnamese aggression have been successfully held in the Korean capital, Pyongyang. It is believed that future talks will include leaders of other resistance forces, such as former Premier, Son Sann. Khieu Samphan has returned to Kampuchea to consult with other leaders on his talks in preparation for a second round. Whilst in Pyongyang, he had a meeting with Korean leader, Comrade Kim Il Sung. He also made stopovers in Beijing and met Chinese Premier, Comrade Zhao Ziyang and Party Vice-Chairman, Comrade Li Xianian.

At a Beijing press conference on 12th March Khieu Samphan said that he and Sihanouk had agreed on the necessity of armed struggle to fight the Vietnamese, that the diplomatic status of Democratic Kampuchea should be preserved, that all resistance movements should have the right to independent armed forces and that there should be freedom to establish political parties. Some outstanding issues would be settled in future meetings. Khieu also said that relations with Son Sann were developing favourably, as was the military situation.

ZIMBABWE

In a recent interview with a Yugoslav newspaper, Zimbabwean Premier, Comrade Robert Mugabe, said that his country was a sovereign state that had won its independence and that Zimbabwe would continue its opposition to direct and indirect foreign interference. Zimbabwe's friends should not expect to be its masters.

"They should always remain our friends. That is why we deeply appreciate the assistance given us without any strings by Yugoslavia. This is also true of aid from China, Romania and other countries."

Mugabe said that Zimbabwe would expect the same from the United States and the Soviet Union. However certain countries wanted Zimbabwe to bow to their will in exchange for assistance. Zimbabwe was steadfastly opposed to this. "We maintain that no country has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of another."

EL SALVADOR

The anti-imperialist war led by the Democratic Revolutionary Front is continuing. In order to attempt to crush the people's struggle the fascist junta is resorting to more and more brutal means of torture, murder, massacre and rape. Last year 600 defenceless refugees were turned back at the border by Honduran troops and then massacred in cold blood. US imperialism fully backs the murderous regime, supplying it with military aid and continually adding to its more than 200 military 'advisers' in the country. The armed fighters, organised in the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, are not afraid of the prospect of all-out US intervention. "If the US intervenes in El Salvador, it will become ... the tomb of Yankee marines."

On her visit to Washington, Thatcher declared her full support for US imperialist activities in El Salvador and the other countries of Central America. In doing so she is defending the position of British imperialism in the area. Over 80 British multinationals and banks, including Barclays, Lloyds and Rio Tinto Zinc, operate there, drawing vast superprofits from the poverty and oppression propped up by US bayonets.

The US has launched a scare campaign against alleged Soviet-Cuban aid to the guerillas, trying to use this as an excuse for their own intervention. Firstly, whilst Soviet 'aid' to liberation movements is only given if it fits the global imperialist strategy of the Soviet Union and is fraught with dangers for the recipient, the El Salvador freedom fighters have a fundamental right to obtain aid from whatever source they are able. Secondly, the President of the Democratic Revolutionary Front recently declared, "We depend neither on the United States or the Soviet Union. We stick by the position of the third world and non-alignment."

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Strikes by over 30,000 workers and teachers have paralysed the sugar and petro-chemical industries as well as public transport and schools in this Caribbean nation. 14,000 teachers, 13,000 sugar industry workers and 450 staff members of a US-owned chemical company recently demonstrated outside the parliament buildings demanding replies to their demands for increased pay and trade union recognition.

MALAYA

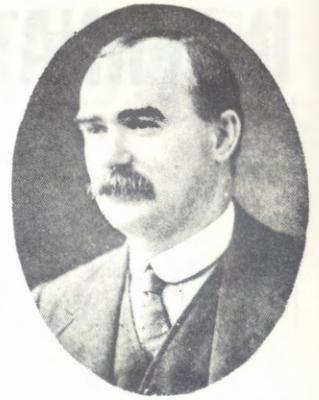
1st February saw the 32nd anniversary of the founding of the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA), which is led by the Communist Party of Malaya. In a broadcast commentary, "Voice of the Malayan Revolution" noted that aircraft, large guns, napalm bombs, chemical and other modern weapons, eviction of the masses in the countryside, hundreds of concentration camps, creation of waste land and the food denial policy had all failed to intimidate or defeat the revolutionary army or alienate its popular support. It pointed out that without the armed struggle waged by the MNLA, the British imperialists would not have been forced to grant independence in 1957. The radio affirmed that the victories scored by the MNLA were all the more outstanding compared with "the falsehood, evil and ugliness of the British imperialists."

USA

A rally of over 100 people, including a sizeable number of black youth, heard Comrade Dale Sampson, of the Communist Workers' Party USA tell of the massacre by fascists of five party members in Greensboro, North Carolina, with the complicity of the US racist state. Comrade Dale's husband was one of the murdered comrades. The meeting heard of the vigorous fightback against racism and national oppression in the USA. The international nature of the rally, which was organised by Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!, was underlined by the presence on the platform of Darcus Howe of the New Cross Massacre Action Committee and Solicitor Alastair Logan who represents Irish political prisoners in Britain. Messages of greetings came from Iranian revolutionaries.



CONNOLLYISM AND LENINISM



James Connolly, the greatest of all the proletarian revolutionaries to have been brought forth by the class struggle in the British Isles, was shot at dawn on May 12th, 1916. Seriously wounded in the fighting during the Easter uprising, he was unlikely to have survived long, as gangrene had set in to his wounds and was affecting his whole body. Nevertheless, even a few days were too long for British imperialism to wait for his death, and he was taken down from his hospital bed at Dublin Castle on a stretcher and across to Kilmainham Jail. There he was propped up in a chair, and shot by a firing squad.

LAST THOUGHTS

What were the last thoughts of this great class warrior as, fighting off the great pain of his wounds, he looked back over the eventful previous few days, made what arrangements he could for the future of his family, and prepared himself for his death?

We can catch a glimpse into his thoughts from a remark he made to his daughter, Nora, during her last visit to him, which was less than two hours before he was shot. "My socialist friends on the Continent," he said, "will never understand why I am in this position. They will forget I am an Irishman."

James Connolly was a socialist and a Marxist. He was not one to be satisfied with the ideal of national independence alone. He saw the national freedom for which he fought in Easter week not as a final goal in itself, but as a step towards social freedom for the working and oppressed classes. But at the same time, he had no illusions about the socialist movement as it then existed. He realised just how blind so many socialists were to the absolute necessity of national freedom as a step towards social freedom. Such were the final preoccupations of James Connolly before his execution.

LENIN UNDERSTOOD

While Connolly was building unity of his socialist forces with the independence movement in Ireland, an internationalist tendency had also arisen in the socialist movement on the Continent. Led by Lenin and other revolutionaries, these internationalists stood against the imperialist war and upheld the right of freedom for oppressed nations. They did not make contact with the socialist movement in Ireland, and Connolly did not live to build unity with Lenin and his comrades.

However, the Easter rising was a source of tremendous inspiration and encouragement to Lenin. For Lenin, it was proof of the correctness of his view that the national aspirations of oppressed peoples, both in the colonies and in Europe, were to play an important role in the struggle against imperialism. He turned with fury upon those 'pure' socialists who complained that the Easter uprising, as it was a national fight and not yet a social fight, was of limited significance to socialists.

For example, Karl Radek dismissed the uprising as a "putsch", while Trotsky grumbled about the "nationalist dreamers" who "ensured the preponderance, in the working class movement, of the

Green flag over the Red." "The basis for a national revolution has disappeared even in backward Ireland," said Trotsky.

Lenin rounded on such views as "monstrously doctrinaire and pedantic." Far from being the action of a circle of conspirators, said Lenin, the uprising "expressed itself in street fighting conducted by a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie and a section of the workers after a long period of mass agitation, demonstration, suppression of the press, etc. Whoever calls such an uprising a "putsch" is either a hardened reactionary, or a doctrinaire hopelessly incapable of picturing a social revolution as a living thing."

Lenin ridiculed those who waited for the workers of the world to line up on one side of a battlefield while the imperialist bourgeoisie lined up for the final conflict on the other. A 'socialist' who waited for this would be effectively "repudiating social revolution", said Lenin, for such a simple situation will never arise. Revolution will always present a complicated picture of various classes and aspirations. Only those are true socialists who, like Connolly, can grasp the hand of all oppressed and discontented social groups who are prepared to strike a blow for freedom against imperialism.

THE MOST MOBILE AND ENLIGHTENED SECTION

Everyone engaged in promoting solidarity with the Irish people's struggle is all-too-familiar with the 'pure' socialists who, in the case of Ireland, put forward just such views as those which Lenin ridiculed. There is always some fellow in any meeting who gets up and starts moaning on about the Protestants of the six counties and saying it is 'sectarian and counter-productive' to support the revolutionary republican struggle. First of all, he or she will say, unity of the two sections of the working class there must be secured through 'patient persuasion and discussion', or some such means, and only then should socialists give their support.

For Lenin, it was enough that "the most mobilised and enlightened section of certain classes in an oppressed nation" (our emphasis) had struck a blow against its oppressors. Such a blow should secure the immediate and unquestioning support of any true internationalist whose heart beats with the most oppressed classes and peoples. Particularly in the case of Britain, the oldest imperialist country, it is of the most vital importance for socialists to repudiate the 'ascendancy' ideology of Ulster Unionism, rooted as it is in the most reactionary, racist, colonialist thinking. Those British 'socialists' who perpetually quibble about the question of the politics of the Protestant section of the Irish working class can do incalculable damage to the promotion of Ireland solidarity in Britain and indeed to the cause of revolutionary organisation in Britain in general.

Bitter experience shows that, as Connolly feared in his last moments, such people will never understand the fight against imperialism. Armed with the ideology of Lenin, Stalin and Mao Zedong, revolutionary leaders who did understand, we must clear out such Ulster Unionist 'socialism' from

the revolutionary movement for once and for all.

As a British communist wrote in 1924 of Connolly's remark: "Could he have seen the succeeding years, welcomed the Russian revolution and felt the quaking foundations of capitalism, he would also have heard an answering cry - the revolutionary socialists do understand, and greet James Connolly as one of the valiant few who by their deeds rescued Marxism from sterility and led the way into the epoch of social revolution."

NATIONAL FREEDOM UNDER SOCIALISM

James Connolly did not entertain any illusion that nations would miraculously melt away after the victory of socialism in a number of countries or throughout the world. "Under a socialist system," he wrote, "every nation will be the supreme arbiter of its own destinies, national and international; it will be forced into no alliance against its will, but will have its independence guaranteed and its freedom respected by the enlightened self-interest of the social democracy of the world."

What a strong contrast this presents with those who, under the banner of socialism, oppose the oppression of Ireland and other countries by British imperialism, and yet nevertheless condone the ruthless aggression of the Soviet Union's rulers against the people of the world. Trampling over the national rights of the peoples of Eastern Europe and so many other countries, the Soviet Union's rulers have betrayed every principle that Connolly, Lenin and Stalin stood for.

It was Ruairi O'Bradaigh, President of Provisional Sinn Fein, who spoke the true voice of Connollyism when, at a Sinn Fein Ard Fheis last year, that stalwart fighter against British imperialism voiced "heartfelt support" for the struggle of the people of Afghanistan against the brutal occupation of their country by Soviet imperialism. How Connolly would have applauded his standpoint! As Connolly said, "The internationalism of the future will be based upon the free federation of free peoples and cannot be realised through the subjugation of the smaller by the larger political unit."

Thus did Connolly's thinking anticipate the stand taken by Mao Zedong, Kim Il Sung and the Chinese and Korean comrades in upholding the independence of socialist countries and in repudiating the dominationist activities of the Soviet Union.



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The Easter uprising of 1916 saw the seizure by revolutionary patriots of some strategic sectors of the centre of Dublin - the GPO building in O'Connell St., and other areas both North and South of the River Liffey. The uprising was planned and led by James Connolly in conjunction with the revolutionary wing of the national movement, represented by Padraig Pearse and others. Connolly's Irish Citizen Army, pictured above outside Liberty Hall, headquarters of the ITGWU, had during the preceding months been stepping up its cooperation with the nationalist forces throughout Ireland. This period of cooperation in preparation for the uprising, and the week of fighting during Easter week, led to the merger of the two revolutionary armies into the Irish Republican Army - the name under which the revolutionary armed forces of the Republican Movement still operate.

CONNOLLY AND OUR REVOLUTION

The politics of revolutionary socialism call to mind the pioneering work of Marx and Engels, the Bolshevik revolution in Russia; and the political struggles in far-off China. We must take the opportunity of Easter week to remember those armed detachments of workers who seized much of central Dublin in 1916, and thereby founded a movement which still lives on in the revolutionary republican movement of today. In its great leader, Connolly, Irish socialism anticipated much of the politics of Lenin and Mao, and showed itself a significant part of the world revolutionary socialist movement.

How proud we can feel that by building unity with Connolly's successors in Ireland's fight today we can be working in the direct tradition of Connollyism, which constitutes such a proud page in the record of revolutionary socialism.

Continued from back page.

All of us from outside Belfast were accommodated with local Republican families - itself an indication of the degree of support for the nationalist struggle! We were treated with warmth and friendliness, even to the extent of a couple of us being invited in off the street for a cup of tea with a family we have never met before! And this is against the background of a foreign occupation, with soldiers walking the streets, saracens driving around and people's homes being raided. Almost every family you talk to had some relation or friend who was 'on the blanket', had been previously interned, or had been lifted by the Brits at some time or other.

The nationalist population are certainly not giving up! Morale is very high, and that surely must be a lesson for all of us as we return to the safety of England. The people of Ireland are at war against British Imperialism and we must give them our support.

Women's day

UNLOCK ARMAGH!

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IN ARMAGH

The following article has been contributed by a member of the RCLB who took part in the recent delegation to Armagh for International Women's Day:

'Unlock Armagh!', 'Open up the Armagh gate!'

'No prison work, free association no prison clothes, political status now!'

These were some of the slogans raised by a 600 strong picket outside Armagh Jail in the North of Ireland on March 8th. We were picketing in support of the 29 Republican women prisoners who are campaigning for political status. Along with the men in the H-Blocks, these women have consistently resisted criminalisation. Their refusal to do prison work resulted in their being locked in their cells for 23 hours every day, and in February last year they were forced into a no-wash protest when washing and toilet facilities were withdrawn. This action by male warders was accompanied by violence against the women and the continued presence of male warders in the prison keeps alive that threat of violence. The women, and the men in the H-Blocks, have now come off the dirty protest in order to

focus attention on the hunger strike of Bobby Sands.

This is the 3rd year that the occasion of International Women's Day has been chosen to highlight the condition of the women political prisoners in Armagh. Since the first picket, which was broken up by the RUC, the issue has become more widely known, and women have travelled from England, Scotland, and Wales as well as from other parts of Europe to show their solidarity.

Many messages of support were received, from third world liberation and women's groups and from places as far afield as Canada, Australia and America. The picket was a militant, lively affair with spirited shouting of slogans and singing of Irish songs. Irish women talked of the long and often lonely struggle of the Armagh women, battling against harsh prison conditions, ill-health, harassment and violence, but to accept criminalisation would be to deny the legitimate right of the Irish people to fight for national liberation.

For the first time we were allowed to picket right outside the prison. Irish people present say that this was the direct result of the presence of large numbers of women from outside Ireland.



International solidarity

The March 8th demonstration in Armagh, and the seminars the previous day in Belfast and Dublin, were important occasions demonstrating the link not only between the struggles of women and the nationalist struggle, but also the international solidarity of the oppressed.

Messages of support came from, amongst others:

Organisation of Latin American Women in GB.
SWAPO Women's Council.
Association of Eritrean Women in Europe.
Somali Women's Association, London.
Indian Workers' Association, GB.
Chilean people in exile in Manchester.
London Armagh Committee.
Pan Africanist Congress of Azania.

On the previous day, we attended a conference in Belfast organised by Women Against Imperialism. To me, one of the most important aspects of the conference was the discussion of imperialism and the way that it affects women, showing clearly that women cannot simply struggle around feminist issues, but must fight against imperialism.

Continued on previous page.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday April 1

Planning meeting for anti-racist demonstration on April 5th. Organised by London Campaign Against Racism and Fascism.
7 pm. West Green Community Centre, Stanley Rd., London N 15.

Saturday April 4th.

Support the hunger strikers! March and rally in Coventry. Details from 01-267-2004.

Sunday April 5th.

Stop the Nationality Bill! Demonstration and rally organised by Campaign Against Racist Laws. Speakers from the black Community.
Assemble Hyde Park, 1pm. March to Trafalgar Square.

Saturday April 18th

International Day of Action to support the hunger strikers. Local activities, including hunger fasts, throughout Britain. Details from 01-267-2004.

Sunday April 19th.

Commemorate the Easter Rising! Organised by Provisional Sinn Fein. March from Speakers Corner to rally at Kilburn. Assemble 2pm.

Saturday April 25th.

National demonstration in Birmingham to support the hunger strikers. Details, including transport from different towns and cities, from 01-267-2004.

Friday May 1st.

Mayday social. Organised by the RCLB. Music. International guests. Tickets £1.50, including food and drink. Available from New Era Books, 01-272-5894.
8pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2.

Details of further Ireland solidarity activities from 01-272-5894.

El Salvador Solidarity Campaign.

Mary Tyler (former political prisoner in India).

ZANU (London representatives).

Welsh Republican Socialist Movement.

Bernadette McAliskey (still too ill to attend).

In Dublin, an Iranian woman spoke and two anti-imperialist films were shown - one on the revolutionary struggle in Tigray against Soviet-Cuban-backed Ethiopian colonialism and the emancipation of Tigrayan women in the course of struggle, and one on the liberation struggle in Oman against British imperialism and the Qabus regime, showing the achievements in agriculture and education in liberated areas.

In Belfast, a speaker from the London-based Organisation of Palestinian Women said that like Irish women, Palestinian women did not need foreign feminist groups to teach them how they are oppressed. "The priority for us is the armed struggle."