

CLASS STRUGGLE

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Lawrence Scott Engineering

STRIKERS EVICTED BUT THE STRUGGLE GOES ON

At 3 am on August 18th 30 to 40 thugs armed with sledge hammers, axes and pickaxe handles smashed their way into Lawrence Scott and Electromotors. The 25 men and women inside were quickly evicted and the 17½ week occupation was over. The tactics used were so violent that one striker remarked afterwards that they caused more damage in 10 minutes than in the entire occupation. They clearly intended to intimidate the strikers. One said of the weapons "what's the use of carrying these things if you are not going to use them?"

The bosses may have won this battle. But they haven't won the war. The strikers had never pretended to be able to withstand a real attack and once the courts had given their expected permission to the bailiffs it was simply a matter of time. Now the strikers are intending a 24 hour picket of the site to stop any equipment or products being moved out.

Their determination to win is as strong as ever, and they need all possible support and encouragement at this most crucial time.

Union 'leaders' try to break strike

One battle the strikers were not prepared for was with their own union leadership.

It took these union 'leaders' long enough to give any strike pay at all. Many of the strikers have got badly into debt and have only survived at all through the voluntary donations which have been arriving at about £5,000 per week - enough to pay about £5 each after expenses. So strike pay is vital. But after paying for a few weeks Duffy and Company came to an agreement with

VISITING THE RISEN PEOPLE



On the weekend of 8, 9 and 10th August, over 300 people from England, Scotland and Wales received a profound education and derived great inspiration from a visit to the north of Ireland as members of a delegation organised by the Troops Out Movement (TOM), on the invitation of Sinn Fein.

The occasion was the anniversary of the introduction of internment without trial and of the sending of the British occupation Army to the North. A sombre air hung over the delegations visit, as within a short time of its arrival it became

known that volunteer Tom McElwee had become the ninth hunger striker to be murdered by the British State.

The TOM delegation picketed Army forts in both Belfast and Derry (the latter in defiance of intimidation and threats of mass arrest by the Army and RUC), marched with the annual demonstration in commemoration of internment, met with leaders of the political struggle, and with ordinary nationalist people. A number of us attended the funeral of volunteer Tom McElwee.

Despite the savagery committed in the name of the British people.

in the north of Ireland, despite the agonising Martyrdom of nine of their most beloved sons on hunger strike, the patriotic and internationalist risen people gave a most moving and warm welcome to their friends and comrades from England, Scotland and Wales. In Derry, the youth eagerly inquired about the uprisings in Brixton, Toxteth, Moss Side and elsewhere. Working class people insisted on sharing with members of the delegation the last food they had in their homes. Political leaders, children under 10 right through to old age pensioners showed concern for and attention to the safety and comfort of delegation members.

Several members of the delegation have sent articles into 'Class Struggle' and we are pleased to publish a number. They vividly describe their experiences in Ireland and their feelings after the delegation. We also include a report on the funeral of volunteer Tom McElwee submitted by another delegation member and extracts from the speech at the rally on the 9th of August, which was delivered by the TOM representative Lloyd Hayes, a black former British soldier in the North, now a friend of the Irish people.

VICTORY TO THE HUNGER STRIKERS!
VICTORY TO THE IRISH PEOPLE!

OWEN CARRON MP!

The election of Owen Carron, who accepted the seat, "on behalf of the political prisoners of war", by the people of Fermanagh and South Tyrone is a great victory in the Irish people's struggle against British imperialism. As Owen said, it shows that the nationalist people stand "shoulder to shoulder" with their prisoners.

Polling 31,278 votes, Owen had a majority of 2,230 over the Official Unionist candidate. This is actually an increase in the number of votes won by the late IRA volunteer, hunger striker and MP Bobby Sands, who polled 30,492 votes. Far from cowering the people, the murder of Bobby and nine of his comrades and the terror and intimidation by the Brits UDR and RUC has heightened the resolve of the Irish patriots and people to develop the struggle to rid Ireland of the hated British presence once and for all.

The wretched traitors, the so-called "Republican Clubs - The Workers' Party" polled a miserable 1,132 votes that destroyed their pretensions to represent the People and left in tatters their hope of electing a Unionist by confusing the voters by their theft of the word "Republican".

Whatever the final outcome of the hunger strike in terms of prison conditions, this struggle, which for sheer heroism can have few parallels, has been a great victory in affirming to the whole world the truth of James Connolly's statement to his tormentors, "The British government has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland, and never can have any right in Ireland...", as well as showing that so-called British democracy has always rested on, and can only rest on, the most ruthless grinding of the bones of the oppressed. The imperialist strategy of criminalisation - to isolate the freedom fighters from the people and present them as a Mafia - lies irrevocably in tatters.

On both sides of the artificial border imposed by the partition settlement, Irish men and women have elected IRA volunteers to be their parliamentary representatives. British imperialism murdered a member of its parliament, it blatantly changed the rules to try and prevent a repetition, it delayed calling the by-election again and still they lost. They have also murdered Kieran Doherty TD, the brave Irish martyr, chosen by the people of Cavan/Monaghan to be their representative. This is surely not only a grave crime against the Irish people but also a serious breach of international law and diplomacy.

The Irish people are fighting British imperialism on the streets, on the battlefield, in the prison cell, the prison hospital and through the ballot box. Their struggle is dealing heavy blows to imperialism and inspiring the oppressed throughout the world. In Britain, we must build a movement that stands resolutely alongside them.

OPPOSE ANTI-UNION LAWS

The Tory Government are now preparing for their next attack on trade union rights. As the crisis of imperialism continues to bite deep, the British bourgeoisie is preparing

for the struggles which will inevitably develop on a wider scale.

At the beginning of August a letter signed by, amongst others, the Institute of Directors, Aims of Industry and the Association of British Chambers of Commerce, was received by the (un)Employment Minister, James Prior. The letter demanded substantial increases in cash compensation for workers dismissed for refusing to join a closed shop, and the banning of contracts that demand that a supplier of goods also introduce a closed shop. (This last being one of the tactics used by the print Union SLADE, to spread its recruitment.) It also insisted that there should be a 'substantial restriction' on the immunity of union funds from civil action in the courts and that those immunities should be conditional on the observance of agreed procedure.

In other words workers who take action outside of 'agreed procedure' - often an absolute necessity in a struggle - would be liable to be sued in the courts for 'breach of contract', etc. And even after procedure has been followed they should still in many cases be liable to court actions.

This legislation is not likely to be brought in all at once. The Tories favour a 'step-by-step' approach, and bring a new act to each session of parliament. They may even have to replace Prior to finish it off. But it is coming; and we must be clear on the issues and ready to fight.

CLOSED SHOPS

The past Labour Government legislation on closed shops, far from being a support for militant struggle for 100% trade unionism, was in its effect (as we pointed out at the time) frequently a method of tying the workers' movement. When the legislation was introduced many small and medium firms signed deals with unions over the heads of the workers and extracted a levy directly from their pay. In a number of cases it was used to head off real trade union organisation. Large sections of big industry also have shown support for such 'closed shops', coupled with mountains of procedural agreements, in the interests of "efficient industrial relations".

However, the proposed legislation whilst it undermines this and has led to contradictions even within the Tory Party, is also aimed at attacking the struggle of the workers themselves. When the majority of workers in a factory demand a closed shop in order to protect themselves it must be supported and legislation aimed at expanding the cost of such a struggle must be resisted.

Even more important is the struggle to prevent the removal of trade union immunities. Motions to the coming TUC Congress include (from The Fire Brigades Union) one which calls for non-compliance with any future law which further restricts trade union rights; and others, such as that from the General and Municipal Workers Union calling for complete opposition to the Employment Act. It is likely that any legislation attacking trade union funds will be opposed by the TUC - as was the Industrial Relations Act. We must demand that such opposition be based on the mobilisation of the mass of trade union members, and that the trade union leadership should stop its sabotage of the actual struggles which are taking place - such as that at Lawrence Scott Engineering.

From our postbag



The Editor - CS,
New Era Books, 203
Seven Sisters Rd.
London N.4

The Police today

Dear Editor,

There has been a lot of talk recently about the re-introduction of community policing, and the difference this will make to public attitudes. This all sounds well and good until news leaks out about the £3 million bomb-proof nerve centre which is to be built for the Greater Manchester police by 1985. The building will have 18" thick walls, an anti bomb 'skirt' at the base, a vehicle barrier, an independent power supply, security fencing and only one entrance - over a footbridge!

The architect has said 'it will be almost impenetrable except perhaps by a concerted rocket attack'. The Deputy Chief Constable says 'the control room will be like Fort

Knox'.

If this is community policing then I'm not impressed. It's certainly not going to change my attitude of complete distrust.

Dear Editor,

After the recent confrontations in Manchester's Moss Side when several hundred black kids laid siege to the local police station then burnt down dozens of buildings and staged a running battle with the police, some bright spark running a Manpower Services Commission community workshop decided to 'improve' relations between the police and the local black youth.

The idea was to invite more than 12 policemen to give weekly lectures to a captive audience of kids on a course at the workshop. Subject to be covered included 'responsibilities to the public', 'interrogation procedures', 'charge office procedures',

'prisoners rights' etc. Unfortunately for the organisers some of them have first hand experience of police attitudes and activities. They should be forgiven if they thought that the lectures should be given TO the police, not BY them.

A vote was held. Out of 56 people, only 3 voted for the lectures! The general view was that instead of the lectures they would rather have 2 young policemen (the kind who go around in panda cars, picking up black kids) to be left alone with them for an afternoon. The police refused. What a surprise!

Keeping a watch on the USSR

Dear Editor,

I recently bought a Sekonda watch. I'm sure your readers will know of this Russian Company through its extensive TV advertising for its products. What they probably don't

A WORKER'S NOTEBOOK

★ Leroy Cooper, 21, was arrested during the Toxteth riots and charged with wounding two police officers and assaulting a third. This is just another incident in a succession of police attacks and harassment of the Cooper family. His father Lester has been stopped and searched on the street and had his car and home searched more than eight times since May 1979. His brother Paul has been arrested more than 14 times since May 1979 and has attended more than 12 identification parades. In all but three cases no further action was taken. He has been acquitted on two of the charges, and one is pending.

★ For many years the Liverpool black community has complained of repeated racial abuse from young police officers. One black youth who took part in the riots said he had frequently been called "nigger, Zulu, or Chicken George" by policemen patrolling the Toxteth area.

★ Under a banner headline "IT'S NOT RACIALISM", the Coventry Advertiser writes,

"Racialism is a problem that is on the increase everywhere, but nowhere more so than in Coventry. Within the past six months, two people have been murdered and countless numbers of black youths have been attacked.

"IN April, 20 year old Satnam Singh Gill was murdered in front of a crowd of terrified shoppers.

"Almost three months ago Dr Amal Dharry was stabbed outside a fast-food shop in Earlsdon.

"Countless numbers of coloured youths have been attacked in the city. And the attacks were purely unprovoked."

Why does the paper print such a clear report on racist violence under such a headline? The answer lies in the interview which follows with Chief Superintendent Cubby of Coventry Police. He says,

"I don't think the attacks are racially motivated. The majority of people picked up for incidents involving violence are of both races. (!) ... Most of them don't have jobs because they are unemployable."

The abominable and moronic Superintendent Cubby is just another example of the police seeking to conceal, cover up and apologise for racism.

★ The M.P. for Blackburn has protested to the Education Secretary that Blackburn children are being served school dinners worse than those provided 50 years ago in the local work house.

★ The bosses must really love the cheap labour Youth Opportunity Programme. For a 35 hour week Y.O.P. pays 67p per hour; for a 39 hour week a mere 60p per hour. What's more it's the State (at tax payers expense) that organises the scheme for them.

★ By the end of this month the Kilroot (northern Ireland) and Ardeer (Scotland) plants of I.C.I.'s Fibres Division will be closed down completely. 2,900 employees will lose their jobs, bringing to 10,000 the total number of jobs lost in I.C.I. last year and this. Dr. Brian Smith is the I.C.I. main board director with responsibility for Fibres. In September he takes over as head of I.C.I.'s American operation, a move which involves an increase in salary from £90,000 to £270,000 per year.

★ Despite the recession the banks still make massive profits. Between them the big 4 (Barclays, National Westminster, Midlands and Lloyds) made a total profit of £1,455 million at the end of 1980. They employ a total of 265,824 people at an average salary of approximately £6,000 per annum. The wage bill for just the 4 highest paid directors of the banks came to one third of a million pounds in 1980.

★ "Within the next couple of years we will arrive at a position of simply catering for people at the top end of the need scale, and maybe only a few of them. The rest will have to look to other means of support or go to the wall". Robin Dequeira, deputy director, Wirral Social Services.

★ Big business continues to back some political organisations. In 1980 492 companies donated a total of £2,199,984. 62% of this went straight to the Conservative Central Office (the Tory Party). The rest went to organisations such as the British United Industrialists, The Economic League and Aims. All these organisations spend their time promoting the interests of Free Enterprise and attacking the Trade Unions. The Economic League in particular has been criticized for working with the Special Branch in providing information about individual workers.

★ In Birmingham £3 million has been cut from the education budget. This means the loss of 500 teaching jobs. The book expenditure allowance has not been increased in line with inflation.

Strikers evicted (cont.)

the managing director Snipe, without even consulting the workers themselves.

This agreement flew in the face of the strikers demands because all it offered was a 3 month trial period of 2 days working a week during which time the management would review the position. It may have escaped Duffy's notice that there were no guarantees whatsoever. But the strikers read the agreement much more critically. After all it was their livelihood which was being decided and they had had enough experience of their management to know that verbal agreements are just so much hot air.

Two mass meetings rejected the agreement (only 21 and 15 voted in favour). They knew that to accept now just meant the same struggle in 3 months time. What right did the union leaders have to withdraw support?

→ know is how the company works. On the back of my watch it reads: 'Assembled for Sekonda in Hong Kong'. So Sekonda use oppressed third-world labour to produce goods for sale on the world market - obviously production purely for profit not for use; what's more it's profit from the superexploitation of the third world. Now is that a socialist principle? - or an imperialist one?

From a reader in London.

UNION LEADERS TAKEN HOSTAGE WIDE SUPPORT NEEDED

3 coach loads of LSE workers who had gone down to lobby the AUEW executive were so angry when they heard the decision that they took over the union council chamber for an hour and held Duffy and Boyd hostage. But it did no good. It will take more pressure from all engineering workers to make these collaborators change their tune - or to be kicked out.

They have had tremendous support from factories and so on all over Britain but this must increase. We cannot let their struggle fail through lack of money. So we ask all readers whether they can organize a collection at work, and any members of union branches (particularly the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions) should get them to put pressure on the union leaders to make the strike official again.

DETERMINED TO STRUGGLE FOR THEIR OWN DEMANDS

The LSE workers are determined to win. Their factory has always made a profit and has £2½ million worth of orders. The only 'justification' for its closure is that the parent company thinks it can make even more profits by increasing the workload of their workforce in the Norwich plant.

When they do win it will be on the basis of an agreement between themselves and the management

- * no forced redundancies
- * reopening with no time limit
- * no repayment of redundancy money

(they were paid this as an attempt to buy them off from taking action against the closure, but many were forced into spending it through lack of strike pay etc).

They have demanded a meeting with the management, but this time they will make the agreement. Never again will these workers trust the likes of Duffy.

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LEE JEANS VICTORY

(Contributed)

The 120 women and 20 men of the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock are back in work.

Through their six month sit-in they showed their determination to defend their jobs and community and set a militant example for other workers facing closures and redundancies. Many of the young women threatened with the sack were already the sole bread winners of their families.

BIGGER PROFITS IN THE NORTH OF IRELAND

Vanity Fair, the US owners of the factory, were blaming "the high interest rate" and "the strength of the pound" for the closure. But their essential aim, as with all capitalists was to make maximum profit; so in fact production was being switched to the north of Ireland. There they get a reduction in rates for being in a "depressed area". (Who made it deprived?) Thus British Imperialism increases the profits of the capitalists.

SUPPORT

The struggle of the Lee Jeans

workers won support from workers through trade union organisations and political parties. Over £100,000 was contributed to finance meetings, demonstrations and to help the fighting militants subsist - a necessity because the leadership of the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers (who make many public protestations against unemployment) flatly refused to give them strike pay.

NEW OWNER

In the end the factory was bought by up-and-coming entrepreneur, Nigel Wright of Dickie Dirt, who already sells Levis and Wranglers. Now he wants his own brand of Jeans.

After negotiations with Ellen Monegham, the shop steward, it was agreed that all the workers involved in the occupation would keep their jobs, at a rate £6 above the Vanity Fair wage level.

For the present the workers of Lee Jeans have won the defence of their jobs. Such defensive struggles are absolutely essential, but it can not be forgotten that at this stage

victory in such struggles inevitably means a new capitalist boss - a boss who is as much part of the system as the last. That system remains in crisis, and the struggle to defend jobs is not necessarily over.

When the Fisher Bendix workers, a decade ago, won their struggle in the same way, it soon became apparent that the new boss was planning closure, and 18 months later the workers were in occupation again. Today the Lee Jeans workers must also be ready to fight new struggles. Undoubtedly they will be.

The Lee Jeans workers have kept their jobs - through militant struggle. A fight back movement can only be built through such struggles. The attempts of the Labour Party to present themselves as "saviours from on high" and to confine the movement to building a Vote Labour Bandwagon, must be shrugged aside. The issue is not who manages imperialism's crisis, but whether we will allow the imperialists to push the burden of the crisis onto our backs. We must say "we will not pay for their crisis", spread rank and file struggle, and build a real communist movement in the midst of a movement of mass struggle.

CYNTHIA GORDON STAYS

From a Class Struggle Correspondent.

Jamaican born Cynthia Gordon has finally forced the Home Office to let her stay in Britain. Following hard on the victories for Jaswinder Kaur and Nasira Begum, there can be no doubt that campaigns do work. It is virtually certain that without the campaigns all these women would have been deported.

Cynthia had lived in Manchester's Moss Side from 1960 to 1972 and is the mother of 2 girls born during that time. Unfortunately in 1972 Cynthia had to return to Jamaica to care for her invalid mother. But neither the Home Office nor the consulate in Jamaica bothered to tell her when she left that she had to return within 2 years or lose her right to live here. So, when her mother died, Cynthia decided to return with her 2 children but was told that she had lost her residency right and could only return as a visitor. Then, when she got here, she was told that she could only stay a limited time and could not even apply to stay here permanently. On top of this she was accused of telling lies to the British consulate, when in reality they were the ones telling the lies.

The decision of the immigration officials was taken in callous disregard for Cynthia and her 2 teenage daughters especially as it meant either splitting up the family or in effect deporting the 2 British born girls. Either result was unacceptable to Cynthia and her supporters and it was the size of this support, especially in Moss Side amongst the Afro-Caribbean community, that forced the Home Office to reconsider. The Cynthia Gordon Action Group publicly warned Timothy Raison "the Moss Side community will not sit back and allow Cynthia to be snatched from amongst us".

So, as in the other cases mentioned, they chickened out, and said she could stay "on compassionate grounds" - the formula they use to make sure that even identical cases do not get the same verdict without a struggle.

SOLIDARITY BETWEEN CAMPAIGNS

What makes these 3 victories especially heartening is that Cynthia, Nasira and Jaswinder had all met on many occasions and had given each other a lot of support. On many occasions their campaigns had joined together to organise joint activities

and each of the women had spoken publicly in support of the others.

They did this because they all know that theirs is not an individual struggle. It is just one aspect of the wider struggle of black people for the right to live where they choose and in the manner they choose. A struggle not to be pushed around by a racist state which sees them as useful labour when labour is needed, and expendable when unemployment rises. Or as a section of the working class to be super-exploited by being forced into the worst jobs, underpaid and often dangerous, kept there by racist attitudes and racist laws. Or even the current strategy of blaming immigration for the problems of the capitalist crisis - unemployment, lack of housing etc.

It is not a matter of whether any of these people have a 'legal' right to stay. From the start it was obvious that Cynthia and Jaswinder did not. What they did have was a determination that this is where they wanted to live and they challenged anyone's right to say they could not.

We also challenge the right of this or any government to make black people a scapegoat for the crisis of capitalism.

The struggle of these women demands that we state clearly

BLACK PEOPLE SETTLED HERE HAVE THE RIGHT TO STAY WITHOUT CONDITIONS

Nasreen Akhtar from Rochdale who has been fighting deportation since 1974 will be facing a tribunal in London on 19th October. She has already lost one appeal to an adjudicator* that even Liberal MP Cyril has attacked as a racist. Only a strong show of support on this day will keep her and her 3 children in this country.

THE NEW TECHNOLOGY

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CHINA'S TRADE UNIONS

In our July issue we began an interview with our International Editor on his recent visit to the People's Republic of China.

In this issue we publish the second instalment which deals with the question of China's trade unions: how they combine serving the working class with following and upholding the leadership of the Communist Party. It is based on visits to a number of factories around China as well as a detailed discussion with the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU):



Workers' colleges like this are commonplace throughout socialist China.

"Compared to the working class movement in the West, the movement in China developed rather late, in the same way as did modern industry. So from the beginning, the Chinese working class movement developed under the leadership of the Communist Party. This has been the case now for 60 years. The very first political resolution adopted by China's trade unions was to support the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal programme of the party.

"Before the liberation of 1949, the task of China's trade unions was to struggle for national liberation in unity with the rest of the population. After the founding of the People's Republic, the status of trade unions and of the working class underwent a fundamental change. From being the most oppressed, the workers became masters of society, and the trade unions their basic representatives.

"So in the period of socialism, the trade unions have two tasks: to uphold the interests of the workers and to work for the collective interests of the state. And in fact these two tasks are fundamentally the same.

"In addition, the trade unions have the task of looking after the immediate interests and daily necessities of the workers. Further, they have the task of struggling against those bureaucrats who show no concern for workers' welfare.

"In China, any issue that concerns the interests of the workers can only be acted upon with the consent of the trade unions.

"Great damage was done to the trade unions during the so-called 'Cultural Revolution', when the All-China Federation was forced to suspend its activities.

"The Ninth Congress of the trade unions was held in 1978 when the main task facing China had become to turn the country into a modernised and democratic socialist one. This will benefit the whole Chinese people and so it is also a central question for the trade union movement. Based on this perspective the ACFTU currently has five major tasks:

"The first is to maintain the democratic rights of the working class. China's constitution stipulates that the working class has the right to manage the state, enterprises, economy and culture. The trade unions must guarantee the right of workers to realise these aims. This is why China is paying great attention to perfecting the system of Workers' Congresses. This system was originally used in the old revolutionary base areas. Workers elect their representatives in each factory on an average of one representative for each 20-30 workers. In small factories, general meetings of all the workers are held. These Congresses are gradually taking over all the management tasks of the factories, and the Chinese government has now decided that they must be established and perfected everywhere in China. The trade union undertakes the tasks of the Workers' Congress when it is not in session. The development of this system will help to fully mobilise the enthusiasm of the working class for building socialism.

"The second task is to defend the workers' interests and material well-being. China is still a poor country and the people's standard of living can only rise gradually in conjunction with the development of the productive forces. Nevertheless, the trade unions do all they can to make improvements now. In the last three years wages have increased by an average of one third. The trade unions also take up the issue of safety at work. Where serious accidents have occurred as a result of bad management

or bureaucracy, the trade unions have exposed and investigated them and supervised the trial and punishment of those responsible. The trade unions also run dining halls, nurseries, kindergartens, hospitals and sanatoria. They organise recreational and sports activities and run cultural palaces.

"The third task is to educate workers in politics and technology so that they are really equipped to govern a modern socialist country. Many workers are given time off on full pay to enrol in workers' colleges.

"A fourth task is to encourage labour emulation so that existing enterprises can be more efficiently used, model workers can have their experience learned from and more backward workers encouraged to catch up.

"Finally, the ACFTU has to do a good job in building and consolidating itself. The key aspect of this is to make it a truly democratic mass organisation where the workers themselves are able to decide on key issues. The ACFTU mainly relies on working class activists, rather than on full time officials.

"In summary, therefore, China's trade unions are independent organisations that accept leadership by the Communist Party. This arises from China's particular historical traditions. The Party exercises leadership in policy through worker activists who are Communist Party members. The Party does not interfere in organisational matters. During the ten years of the 'Cultural Revolution' excessive interference by the Party reduced the ability of the unions to represent their members - a situation that is now being corrected. Of course there are still many problems, and the unions are far from perfect. In particular there is a lack of really experienced and competent cadres that can mobilise the working class to give effective leadership to their factories and society in an all round way.

"China is keen for its trade unions to broaden their international contacts. They are prepared to strengthen friendship with a wide range of overseas trade unions irrespective of their political affiliations. Basing themselves on proletarian internationalism, they support the just struggles taking place around the world. They support international trade union unity, the defence of world peace, the struggle against hegemonism and the fight for the liberation of the working class. In particular they stressed that international forces must defend Poland from the danger of outside interference so that the Polish people can develop their struggles and solve their own problems.

"The comrades were keen to develop more contacts with the British working class and the British trade unions. They have already built friendly links with the miners, engineering, railwaymen's, electricians', and other unions. Last year, China's coalminers sent a delegation to the NUM conference. In the offices of the ACFTU's International Department, the comrades proudly showed me a highly polished Davy lamp in a showcase of international souvenirs. They had been presented it by a delegation from Britain's National Union of Mineworkers.

MARCH TARGETS POLICE

BRUTALITY

"Class Struggle"
correspondent.

On August 15th an estimated 2000 people assembled in Sefton Park, Liverpool, for a march through Toxteth to the Pier Head. By the time the demonstration reached its rallying-point the numbers had swelled to over 6000. The demonstration was organised and led by the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee. At the front a contingent of enthusiastic black and white youth marched behind a white coffin with a pig's head mounted on top. On the head of the pig was a police helmet with the slogan "Merseyside police".

Other banners included those of the Afro-Caribbean Defence Committee whose main slogan is "Self-defence is the only way", the Brixton Defence Committee, the Liverpool Black Organisation, and one reading "Remember Jimmy Kelly". The Manchester (Moss Side) Defence Committee had sent three coaches which were stopped by the police on the way to Liverpool. Some trade union banners were there including that of the Liverpool Trades Council. The empty and tired slogans of the respectable British 'left' i.e. "Tories out!" and "Maggie out!" had a lot of influence, but not enough to drown out the anti-police slogans coming from militant Toxteth youth.

CLIMATE OF FEAR

The local press and radio carried regular bulletins on the days leading up to the demonstration. Garston Tory MP Thornton demanded

OP
ICE
ASSMENT
ROP
ALL
HARGES
SIDE OF DEFENCE

Mr David Moore, 22, died on the 28th July 1981. He was a young white man. Moore was disabled and was unable to walk properly. He was on his way to visit his sister who lives in the area. He was struck at about 10.15 p.m. by a police van which had driven straight at a group of people, mounting the pavement and driving at them with full speed without giving any warning. There were no sirens or horns used. The van rammed the young man and then drove straight over him, dragging him until his body fell away from the van. The van did not stop but kept on going. This same tactic was used when another youth had his back broken. A young woman of 25 years old was struck on waste-land. She had her legs and shoulder broken. This woman was left for half an hour before an ambulance arrived.

REMEMBER
JIMMY
KELLY

The Liverpool 8 Defence Committee called for a peaceful demonstration and a policy of strict stewarding was carried out. Sticks without placards were taken from some youth. But the people's hatred for the police after years of harassment and the callous murder of David Moore is not an academic matter for Toxteth youth. Police lining the route were spat on and some youths attacked individual police. Two were stabbed.

But given the prejudice of the press, Oxford knew he could justify further police violence in Toxteth if violence flared on the demonstration or claim the credit if it went off peacefully. However, the police were powerless to ban the march. Along with liberal/bourgeois opinion they hoped a march would diffuse the anger of Toxteth youth. But they are not so easily fobbed off and they were encouraged by the unity of the different parts of Britain against police repression. After the demo and incidents involving police coaches speeding through Toxteth, over 100 youth surrounded Wavertree Rd police station terrorising police officers who had to barricade themselves inside while windows were being smashed.

RALLY SPEAKERS PILLORY POLICE REPRESSION

A spokesman for the Liverpool Black Organisation won thunderous applause when explaining why "we must get rid of Kenneth Oxford". -He is the one guilty of the murder of David Moore; He gave the order to kill. Getting rid of Oxford won't end racist repression," he said, "but it will get rid of a madman."

A speaker for the Bradford Black Peoples Organisation exposed the use of conspiracy laws against youths aged 18-25 arrested in police raids searching for petrol bombs. The conspiracy laws carry penalties of up to life imprisonment and they are being used against political activists who do nothing more than advocate self-defence.

Tommy Banks speaking for the Jimmy Kelly Action Committee stated that the police investigating the police is no good to anyone. The



the Home Secretary ban the march. Toxteth residents who face rate increases to pay for the so-called 'positive policing' of police chief Kenneth Oxford were quoted as wanting the march banned. On the day of the march, Radio City carried reg-

ular bulletins that 'law and order campaigners' were sending messages of support to Kenneth Oxford whose resignation was demanded by the demonstration. The police kept quiet while the media sought to frighten away potential support.

police claim privilege on their evidence and the results are locked away for 30 years as an official secret.

The Manchester Defence Committee exposed the fraud of the "independent inquiry" into the Moss Side riots. "It includes an ex-copper", they said. The inquiry has called on people to give evidence. This will be used to spy on the community. Some points were also made about the reactionary content of community policing. In Manchester the police are running courses to tell people their rights! As if this isn't bad enough. If you work for Manpower Services you are banned from attending these dubious classes.

Anwar Ditta spoke and thanked the people of Liverpool for the support given to her. She raised the whole question of racist and state repression of national minorities. "What is the law?" she asked. "The

courts are rubbish". "I'd like to see Whitelaw and Timothy Raison prove their parentage" she said. "There is no law; loads of people are suffering because of Sus laws, Immigration laws and the Nationality Bill" she added.

Speeches by a Labour Councillor and newly elected Warrington Labour MP Douglas Hoyle were greeted by heckling or a deathly silence as they made promises about what they would do or say.

A spokesman for the Brixton Defence Campaign disassociated himself from Hoyle and the Labour Party who he said are directly responsible for the uprisings. "We can decide our future without liars and bullshitters". He got right to the nub of the issue when he concluded his contribution with: "The state will not rest while we are fighting and we can't rest until the state stops oppressing us".

Margaret Simey hysterically condemned

Margaret Simey is a labour councillor in the Toxteth area and chairman of the Police Committee. A fig leaf body which is aimed at creating a facade of democratic control of the police. Margaret Simey has consistently called for increasing the powers of the police committee to affect police policy. She is a bourgeois democrat and has no pretensions of being 'left' wing. Simey is also a very rich but ageing woman.

However, following the Toxteth riots, she said in an interview with the local press that she didn't blame the toxteth youth for rioting and that they would be apathetic if they didn't do so. The howl of opposition from all quarters was deafening. Thatcher condemned her as irresponsible in Parliament. And did the 'left' wing rally to defend a courageous speaker? No. They left her out in the cold. In response to Thatcher's attack, the notorious 'lefty' Eric Heffer merely complained that it was wrong to criticise Margaret Simey in her absence when she could not defend herself.

The state is becoming more fascist and this involves isolation and repression of not only communists but courageous bourgeois democrats like Margaret Simey. It is significant that Margaret Simey shows more courage than the so-called 'left' wing of the Labour Party. However, the reformism of Simey is no answer to the powers the state is demanding and getting to crush the uprisings and revolt of the oppressed. At present she is being pushed out of the position she holds as Chairman of the Police Committee by the tory Vice-Chairman, who is demanding loyalty to the police. People are being called on to take a stand of either for or against the police.

The only answer to such a fascist call is to firmly take the stand of the oppressed and support the direct attacks on the increasingly repressive state machine.



Self defence is no offence FREE THE BRADFORD 12

(CONTRIBUTED)

At the beginning of August, 12 militant young Asians were arrested for conspiring to cause damage with intent to endanger life, and 'conspiring to cause grievous bodily harm'. These charges result from the discovery of a number of petrol bombs soon after the Bradford riots of July 11th.

Whether any of them are guilty or not does not matter. When black communities are being attacked daily, homes, mosques and temples are burned, whole families are murdered, those communities must have the right to defend themselves.

It is well known that the police make little or no effort to stop these attacks or to find those guilty and bring them to justice. All too often the police themselves are seen protecting the racists and fascists, like when skinheads invaded Southall recently, or when the NF try marching in black areas.

Now they are trying to scare the national minority youth who are prepared to fight back by these conspiracy charges and the threat of long prison sentences. These 12, mostly members of the newly formed United Black Youth League, have a fine record of struggle, in stopping Said Rahman's deportation, getting Anwar Ditta's children here, helping Jaswinder Kaur and others. This has made them a target for the state. We must not let it succeed in silencing them.

Already there has been a 250 strong picket court and a huge public meeting. But they will need much more massive support to free them. So far they have repeatedly been remanded in custody and all attempts to bail them have been resisted.

It will be some time before the hearings really start. We must use that time to begin building support in all areas to get the charges dismissed and our comrades freed.

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DIRTY WORK IN OMAN

A convenient retirement?

The retirement of General Sir Timothy Creasey was announced officially as from the 6th April 1981, after he had held the appointment of Commander-in-Chief of the United Kingdom Land Forces for little over a year. (Previous Commanders had held this post for 2-year stints).

Then "out of the blue" comes another official announcement that Creasey has in fact not retired, but has become the Chief of Defence Staff (C.D.S.) of the Sultan of Oman's Armed Forces from the 5th August 1981. This is an entirely new position in Oman, which has not previously had a C.D.S. - an overall commander of the Army, Navy and Air Force - and it follows the pattern of Britain. (The individual commanders of the Sultan's Army, Navy and Air Force are also British).

It appears that Sultan Qaboos decided some time ago that he wanted to make this new appointment in his military set-up, and he had also made up his mind that the man he wanted was Creasey. So the farce of Creasey's "retirement" was acted out, enabling Gen. Sir John Stanier to take over as G.O.C. U.K. Land Forces, and for Creasey to be actively re-incarnated in his new Oman role: Creasey had previously been the Commander of Oman's army from 1972 to 1975, and employed the most vicious methods to suppress the struggle of the Omani people for genuine national independence and freedom, led by the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman (P.F.L.O.). His "robust methods" (as the "Guardian" put it!) gained the admiration of the Sultan.

OMAN/NORTHERN IRELAND SHUTTLE

Subsequently Creasey became Director of Infantry at Warminster (1975-77), and General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland (1977-79). The Oman/Northern Ireland shuttle, with a high proportion of S.A.S. personnel involved, has become notorious.

Oman has for very many years been a virtual British colony, and became the main Middle East base of British imperialism after it has been kicked out of neighbouring Aden (Yemen). Although U.S. imperialism has been playing an increasing role in Oman, Britain remains the effective controlling power.

OMAN - THE PEOPLE'S FIGHT

For 16 years, under the leadership of the P.F.L.O. the people of Oman have conducted armed struggle against their corrupt and puppet rulers. The latest bulletin of the P.F.L.O. pays tribute to the "heroism and sacrifice of hundreds of martyrs from the best sons of the people, and the thousands injured or forced into exile" (Saut Al-Thaura, - Voice of the Revolution, - July 1981). The bulletin goes on to expose the aim of the imperialist powers, - "to loot our national wealth and to turn the area into a marked

and to turn the area into a market for the products of their multinational monopoly companies".

Our Omani comrades make many vital points in their bulletin, and we can summarise the position in Oman with one or two brief quotes:-

"Up to this moment the British are the real rulers of Oman"

"The situation in our country depends in fact upon repression and terrorism"

"There does not exist in our country up to now any form, even primitive, of the forms of legislative or constitutional institutions"

"Fictitious trials and physical and psychological torture take place against those who are arrested" (the police and intelligence commands are also in British hands).

No wonder the Oman/Northern Ireland shuttle continues! We wish our Omani comrades success in eliminating Creasey and all other imperialist and puppet chains on their land, and their gaining of true national liberation.

Greetings from Malayan Comrades

The Revolutionary Communist League of Britain has received a letter from the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Malaya dated July 15th 1981, in reply to the message sent on April 9th, by the RCLB greeting the Malayan Party's 51st anniversary. We are proud to print extracts below:

Thank you very much for your congratulatory letter of April 9th hailing the 51st anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of Malaya.

Your letter highly evaluates our Party's work and achievements in our protracted struggle for liberation. It will doubtless give a fillip to the endeavours of our whole Party and Army as well as to the entire revolutionary people of our country for the cause of national liberation and for contributing to the common cause of the world proletarian socialist movement.

We are delighted to inform you that your congratulatory letter was broadcast by the Voice of the Malayan Revolution in its English programme from May 30th to June 2nd. It was also translated in full into the languages of our people of various nationalities and broadcast in the Malay, Chinese and Tamil programmes at about the same time.

We are in agreement with your analysis of the evil and treachery that have been perpetrated by the British imperialists on the Malayan people's struggle for national independence and on the relations between the people of Malaya and Britain. Likewise, we are in agreement with your analysis of the danger of a world war posed by the two superpowers, particularly the Soviet social-imperialists, in the present era. We fully appreciate your correct stand on the struggle of the people of Ireland against British imperialism.

It is a matter of regret that the relations between the communists of Britain and Malaya suffered a setback owing to the ravages of revisionism. But that was only a bad afternoon in the long history of the struggle of our two countries. The struggle of our two countries which are in mutual support must be stepped up to guarantee that we attain real freedom and independence as well as to further the cause of world revolution.

We whole-heartedly reciprocate the sincere hope of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain that the friendship and unity between the genuine communists of Malaya and Britain be restored and developed. Let us, therefore,

fight shoulder-to-shoulder against our common enemies...

Finance your own destruction

The agreement by monopoly capitalists in western Europe to finance the construction of a natural gas pipeline from Siberia to western Europe is the latest example of economic appeasement of Soviet social imperialism, the most dangerous enemy of the people of the world. This pipeline promises to help western Europe cut energy costs and diversify its sources of supply. But it will dangerously increase western dependence on the Soviet Union and leave it open to energy starvation and blackmail by the Soviet aggressors. Far from helping to tame Soviet aggressiveness, it gives it direct help and shows how, in their short sighted quest for maximum profits. Sections of the western imperialists are prepared not just to exploit the workers and oppressed peoples to the nth degree but also to help strengthen their main imperialist rival.

Since the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, west Europe's trade with the Soviet Union has gone up by a big margin. According to official Soviet figures, last year, West Germany's trade with the Soviet Union increased by 36 per cent, France by 43 per cent and Italy by 41 per cent.

Now, the 10 billion U.S. dollar, 5,000 kilometre Siberian natural gas pipeline is proving a tremendous attraction to the west European imperialists who think that it would provide an outlet for surplus capital and commodities thus spurring domestic production as well as easing the energy crisis by introducing new sources and so reducing dependence on the turbulent Middle East. All told, they see it is a way to lift their economies out of the slump, out of imperialist crisis.

The American imperialists - who themselves increased their trade with the Soviet Union by 58 per cent in the first four months of this year alone - are unhappy with the proposed deal which was agreed in principle on July 24, breaking a long deadlock in negotiations. The Americans say that it goes against the agreement reached at the Ottawa summit for the western countries to co-ordinate their political, economic and strategic policies vis a vis the Soviet Union.

Because each proceeds from its narrow imperialist interests, the United States and the west European powers are unable to effectively co-ordinate their approach to the Soviet Union. The Soviets, who are today the rising and aggressive imperialist superpower, are using these divisions amongst the western countries to further their march towards attempted world domination.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY WITH THE HUNGER STRIKERS

Political detainees in THE PHILIPPINES smuggled out a letter of solidarity with the hunger strikers, dated May 16th, 1981.

"We, political detainees in the Philippines, ... deplore the heartlessness with which the Thatcher government views the loss of human life... Besides deploring this outrage, we are concerned that Margaret Thatcher's example may inspire emulation in our country. We already see the omen."

The letter notes that members of the New People's Army, Bangsa Ploro Army and the Moro National Liberation Front who were formerly termed "dissidents" or "rebels" are now termed "terrorists".

"In commonly branding as 'terrorists' both the revolutionary fighters and the traditional political opponents, the Marcos regime seeks to justify the use of overwhelming violence against those who oppose it."

The prisoners say that the struggle of Bobby Sands and others is their struggle. "It is just and proper that we express our support for the IRA militants..."

In supporting the hunger strikers the Popular Front for the Liberation of PALESTINE states,

"The connection between the Palestinian and Irish struggle is obvious. Both have their origin in British colonial policy. This was clearly expressed by Sir Ronald Stofrs, a British colonial governor in Palestine: 'A Jewish state ... could be for England "a little loyal Jewish Ulster" in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism.'

In TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO the newspaper of the Oilfield Workers' Trade Union, the leading working class organisation in the country, carried an article entitled "Bobby Sands lives!" Over 4000 Trinidadian workers took part in a demonstration.

In IRAN, the Unity of Communist Militants circulated a leaflet entitled "Ireland, the British Kurdistan", supporting these two revolutionary national struggles.

In QUEBEC, all three national Trade Union Federations, together representing over 600,000 workers, support the hunger strikers. The national executive of the Parti Quebecois has pledged its support for the five demands in a motion proposed by provincial Premier Rene Levesque. Paul Rose, a political prisoner from the former Quebec Liberation Front (FLQ) did a 24 hour sympathy hunger strike.

In NEW ZEALAND, the Maori People's Liberation Movement of Aotearoa stated,

"The histories ... of the Maori, the Irish the American Indian, the blacks of Africa, the Aborigines and all other indigenous peoples by the British, bear striking similarities in their development."

Wally Feather, a SIOUX member of the American Indian Treaty Council, and a veteran of the Wounded Knee Occupation, said that his organisation's 1½ million members supported the Irish people's struggle against British colonialism. He has revealed that the Indian council, which has United Nations status as a non-governmental agency will be bringing the question of the H-Blocks to a UN Conference in Geneva in September to be attended by representatives of 40 governments and over 200 non-governmental agencies.

In YUGOSLAVIA, a leading newspaper, Vjesnik, has published an 18 part serial on the history of the Irish struggle. It has also published letters smuggled out to them from the H-Blocks.

In NORWAY, the youth group of the Workers' Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) staged a protest outside the British Embassy to coincide with the Royal Wedding.

In BRITANNY, hunger strike protestors have drawn present day comparisons at a memorial to communists who were martyred by the Nazi occupiers in the second world war.

Repression and Resistance

(Contributed).

I've just returned from a worthwhile and unforgettable visit to West Belfast with the delegation organised by the Troops Out Movement (TOM). Having lived in a country where there has been "relative peace" for years, Nothing could have prepared me for what I was to see.

In West Belfast the entire people are engaged in a bitter struggle against the British Army. A war is being fought and it affects the lives of all the Nationalist people. The Brits appeared to me to be propping up the RUC, and from what I was told, they are more vindictive than effective and are regarded by the Republican people as beneath contempt.

The wreckage of burnt out and smoldering vehicles lie here and there on the roads, often strategically placed. These obstructions ensure that jeeps will slow down and perhaps be identifiable should the RUC or Army attack. This is a small example of a fact which becomes more apparent the longer you stay; the war is waged consciously. Most things are done for a reason. Rarely were the RUC allowed to pass through the ghetto streets without being soundly attacked with bricks or petrol bombs.

"WEEK OF PEACE"

The street activity can be very useful to those engaged in the difficult military struggle against the Brits and the RUC. The kids are in a constant state of readiness to harry the Brits and thwart their tactics. We were told that the British police who visited the north in the wake of the uprisings in English cities, to "see how it's done", were met with a "week of peace" by the nationalist youth, thereby limiting the effectiveness of the exercise. Even the young people are therefore linking their struggles to those of the oppressed around the world, thanks to the political education work of the Republican Movement.

Puncture repairs must do a brisk

trade as broken glass lies everywhere. In fact West Belfast's only industry appeared to be the repair and maintenance of the faithful black cab, the only means of public transport.



Impressive murals, beautifully drawn and painted, cover the entire side walls of end-terrace houses. Such slogans as "They may kill the revolutionary but never the revolution" and many others mourning and paying respect to the dead hunger strikers are visible. The Brit vandals throw paint over many of them. Black flags mourning the deaths of the hunger strikers, and pictures of them, were displayed in virtually every house in West Belfast. Brit helicopters fly overhead morning, noon and night. The Republican people cherish their martyrs. A magnificent mural in Ballymurphy bore the legend "A man

can have no greater love than to die for his friends".

A revolutionary organisation with deep roots amongst its people must try to see that the people's highest and most vital interests are protected. In West Belfast army intimidation and terror is a permanent feature and requires constant vigilance and attention. We on the delegation were told not to get involved in any rioting and to leave it to those who know what to do.

The use of plastic bullets ('plastics' to the kids and I met a number who had been hit more than once by them) is widespread and indiscriminate. Fired at point blank or close range they can, and do, both kill and maim. A recent issue of the "New Statesman" points out that many more people would die were it not for the advanced surgical techniques of the Belfast hospitals.

An international scientific commission which included Dr. Tim Shallice, a senior scientist at a British research unit, extensively inquired into the effects and use of plastic bullets. This work, which has gone "constantly unremarked on the UK mainland, came to the "inescapable conclusion" (that) the Northern Ireland authorities were knowingly allowing widespread, indiscriminate and illegal use of a weapon whose lethal potential was well known. In addition to recommending that the plastic bullet be banned from use in Northern Ireland, we urge that inquiries be carried out into the causes of death and serious injury that have occurred in the use of plastic bullets."

A MEMORABLE THREE DAYS

So a most memorable three days. I should like to thank all the people of West Belfast for their warmth, kindness and hospitality which have to be experienced to be fully appreciated. It was a most emotional experience. I made many new friends; I fear for their lives and urge them on in their struggle against an enemy they cannot and will not tolerate in their country. It was an honour and a privilege to experience a little of life in the land of a "risen people".

"Aunited people.."

The second annual Troops Out Movement delegation to commemorate the 1971 introduction of internment in N. Ireland visited Belfast and Derry on the 8th, 9th and 10th of August. Although in theory internment may have been suspended several years ago, the summary arrest of hundreds of Belfast people during those three days and nights alone provided a clear demonstration that it still continues in current practice.

Thanks to solid planning and organisation by the TOM steering committee as well as by the local Republican organisations, some 350 members of this year's delegation were able both to deepen their understanding of, and demonstrate their opposition to, the continued British military presence in Ireland.

Going over for even a very brief visit to the six occupied counties is certainly a moving experience. However much one may have heard or read about it, one can only be shocked when confronted by the scale of State violence, ranging from petty harassment and information-gathering, through the speeding armoured vehicles firing plastic bullets at individuals and crowds, down to the snatch squads and assassination teams. Although the local people, and others who knew the visited areas, noted repeatedly what a low profile the army and RUC were keeping as compared to normal, the repressive forces by no means let their presence be forgotten, and three soldiers armed both with rifles and plastic-bullet launchers even graced the delegation with a short inspection of the community centre where we were staying in West Belfast.



In the face of such intimidation day in and day out, one cannot but be impressed by the militancy and courage of the Nationalist population. This is especially true in the working class neighbourhoods, where support for the hunger-strikers and for the armed partisan struggle is massive, and where the streets are regularly in a semi-insurrectional state. One can also not help being struck by the consciousness and dedication of these people who have stood in the forefront of the struggle for so long, who have

been subjected to the most vicious forms of repression for the last twelve years in particular, who have now in the present hunger-strike already given 10 young men from their ranks, and who nevertheless still have the generosity to come out and applaud a foreign support-group that can at best be described as of moderate size.

Yet the delegation this year was over twice the size of last year's, and it can be argued that this growth in numbers was due not only to increased experience within TOM, but also to increased sympathy in England, Scotland and Wales for the struggles of the Irish people and for TOM's dual demands of troops out now and self-determination for Ireland. And it's clear that the Irish Republican organisations are not under-estimating the possibility of there developing within Britain itself a significant opposition to the British military presence and general domination of their country.



On the afternoon of the 9th, the TOM delegation joined some 5000 people who managed to pack themselves into a rather smallish car park in Andersonstown, West Belfast, in order to attend the main rally commemorating the tenth anniversary of the introduction of internment. The TOM group had already picketed a number of British army forts in Belfast and would do the same the following day in Derry; the spokesman for the group at the rally was an ex-member of her majesty's forces who had served in the six counties over a decade ago. This young man movingly apologised for any wrongs he may have committed against the Irish people while stationed in their country, and he linked the struggles in Ireland to those of working people in this country. Provisional Sinn Fein organiser Tom Hartley spoke on behalf of the local community and urged the delegation to return again next year, in ten-fold strength.

That may seem like a tall order. But the more working class people and other progressive forces here can be shown (and even the British State itself now seems intent on showing them!) that weapons developed to crush

the struggle for a unified, independent Ireland can and will be used to quash all popular strivings here as well - to that extent there is potential for a groundswell of solidarity with the Irish people. Moreover, it is in the direct interest of ordinary people in England, Scotland and Wales to develop such solidarity, not only as a defensive measure, but also as a necessary condition for any revolutionary transformation within Britain.

As Marx and Engels observed over a century ago, no nation that oppresses another can ever itself be free. This is because, in fighting the British State and the general imperialist system which keeps it afloat, the working class here cannot hope for victory without a common revolutionary front with allies in the oppressed countries and against our common enemy. More than a century of experience has shown that whoever ignores or betrays such allies is either abandoning or selling out all possibility of a revolutionary victory here.

Having made this general point, it must also be pointed out that the Irish Republican Movement today is in fact a socialist movement. Following in the footsteps of James Connolly the Movement places primary emphasis on the link between national liberation and working class emancipation. According to Sinn Fein spokesman Paddy Bolger, who met with the TOM delegation twice, the current struggle in Ireland is an anti-imperialist struggle for the completion of the national-democratic revolution. It is the imperialist system which sustains capitalist relations in Ireland, and the main social forces carrying on the struggle against this system are the working class and the small farmers. The Irish petty bourgeoisie tends to be a vacillating force, and the big bourgeoisie is in the main tied to the interests of foreign imperialism. The struggle is being waged on several fronts simultaneously, and of these the armed struggle is seen as the decisive one. The strategic goal is the creation of a unified, non-aligned socialist Ireland - i.e. the creation of a thirty-two county republic independent of both major power-blocs and with the means of production and distribution, including the major financial institutions, under the control of the working classes.

After hearing Paddy Bolger speak on Sunday evening, several of us from the delegation walked up to the Creggan in Derry with a comrade who described himself as a firm supporter of the IRSP. He stressed to us that between the different organisations within the Republican movement (i.e. between the IRA and Sinn Fein on the one hand and the INLA and IRSP on the other) there are no fundamental differences on questions of strategy or line. There are of course organisational differences concerning tactics and the appreciation of phases within the present stage of the struggle. But there is fundamental agreement on all major questions of strategy and line; and on this basis, what is essential for the success of the struggle, said our host, is unity within the Republican Movement.

Such a consciousness is clearly a sign of the seriousness and strength of the movement as a whole, based as it is on the aspirations of a united people who after 800 years will not allow themselves to be defeated.

"We met a people totally unafraid.."

(Contributed)

On Saturday morning a tired and bedraggled Troops Out delegation arrived at Sinn Feins' press centre on the Falls Road Belfast only a little late after being subjected to petty harassment by the RUC at Larne docks. At around 11 a.m. the news came through of hunger striker Tom McElwees' death. Our first knowledge of it came with the sound of dustbin lids being banged on the street outside. Making our way out the pub where we had been relaxing we saw women and small children determinedly banging dustbin and saucepan lids on the pavement in protest at the murder by the British state of yet another hunger striker. Within a couple of minutes hundreds of people had gathered on the Falls Road and dozens of Peoples Taxis had formed a roadblock. Outside the press centre we saw women saying mass for volunteer Tom McElwee and across the road a number of youths could be seen organising crates of milk bottles which were soon being hurled at passing saracans and RUC vehicles. Such was our introduction to the defiant heroism of the people of west Belfast.



After standing in silent tribute, the delegation set out on a silent march through the streets of Belfast to picket army forts. On the route we had the opportunity of seeing how Belfast youth organise their free time. All along the lower Falls gigantic wall murals have been painted demonstrating support for the hunger strikers and the armed struggle. Many of these beautifully painted murals are adorned with quotations from the writings of Bobby Sands and revolutionary slogans. (We were later told that if the army catches anyone working on these murals they are fired on with live ammunition - such threats apparently have little effect on the Belfast youth.)

Outside Andersonstown fort we were shouted at by soldiers concealed in their camouflaged lookout posts. As we stood in silent tribute to Tom McElwee we could hear them shouting down abuse and threats and comments like, "You f.....g bastards", and "Traitors". During the march we were joined by a number of masked, petrol-bomb carrying youths who appeared

simply to show their solidarity, and earlier we had seen a car speed past with its horn blaring and inside could be seen four or five masked Provisionals who gave us clenched fist salutes. A truly inspiring sight when you remember that all of this took place within clear view of the army fort.

After the march we attended a reception given to us by Sinn Fein. Amongst the speakers were Paddy Bolger from Sinn Fein and Sile Darragh, a recently released internee from Armagh prison. When Sile was introduced she received a two-minute long standing ovation from the packed audience - an overwhelmingly moving moment not only for Sile but for many of us on the delegation also. In his speech Paddy Bolger reiterated Sinn Feins view that the stage of struggle in Northern Ireland is for national liberation and that the five demands represented a refinement of everything the hunger strikers were struggling for. We were reminded that it was the duty of those of us in England to support the five demands and mobilise the broadest possible support for the hunger strikers.

On Saturday night more than a thousand petrol bombs were thrown in Belfast alone; two RUC men were shot and wounded; more than fifty people were arrested and two Catholic men were shot and murdered by the British army, (one by a plastic bullet).

On Sunday morning we took part in the main mass rally to mark the 10th anniversary of internment. Well over five-thousand people took part in this march and as well as their being delegations from all over England, Scotland and Wales there were also solidarity groups from West Germany, France, Denmark and Norway as well as representatives from the American Indian movement and of black Americans. Speakers again included Paddy Bolger and Sile Darragh. Lloyd Hayes, a black ex-soldier also spoke, and not even the noise from a circling army helicopter could drown out the thunderous applause which greeted his speech.

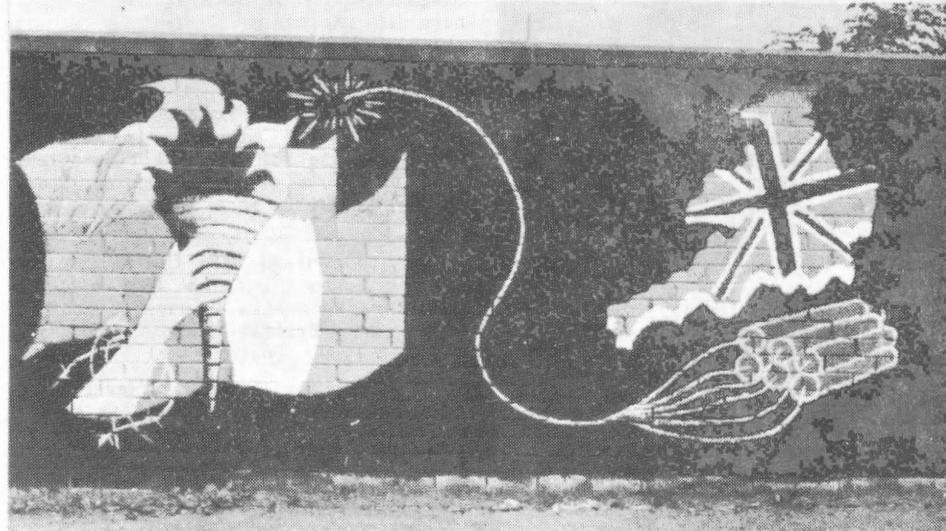
Afterwards the delegation split into two groups - some going on to Derry and others staying in Belfast. In Derry there were meetings with Derry Youth against oppression and a meeting with Derry Sinn Fein. On Monday afternoon there was another demonstration

and picket of army forts during which the whole delegation was threatened with arrest by the RUC.

In an article of this length unfortunately there is not enough space to include many of the observations, impressions and personal experiences of many of those on the August delegation. But the most striking aspect of those few days, from a personal viewpoint, was the immediacy of the nationalist peoples' ability to distinguish between us, the British working class, and the British army - between friend and enemy. To us the people showed only a moving and overwhelming friendliness. Many of those who were billeted with nationalist families were fed and given meals by families who hardly have enough to feed themselves. One person on the delegation was even given by one family a linen tablecloth decorated by a woman prisoner in Armagh jail and sent to the family on the occasion of their sons murder by the army, (surely a most treasured possession.) And three members of the delegation who found themselves stumbling about, lost, late on Saturday night in the pitch-blackness of a Belfast cemetery will be forever grateful to the group of eight, and nine year old youths who escorted them back to the safety of their lodgings. In a situation of such extreme and brutal oppression by the British state such acts of kindness and generosity by the Irish people will not be easily forgotten by those who experienced them.

In conclusion, even though it was a hard and tiring trip, I'm certain that every single member of the delegation would urge other people to go to northern Ireland if they have the opportunity - not only to demonstrate their support and solidarity with the Irish peoples' struggle but also because it is an opportunity of seeing for yourself how grossly misleading is the media's reporting of the situation there. In northern Ireland, the army is on the defensive. The soldiers are confused and demoralised with little idea of why they are there in the first place. In contrast we met a people who are totally unafraid of the army presence. The people, even the youngest child, have been politicised by the struggle. They are disciplined, defiant and courageous; women, children and men, who are united both in their support for the hunger-strikers and in their support for the armed struggle being waged by the Provisional IRA.

Victory to the hunger strikers!



The Irish national liberation struggle - Setting the fuse under British imperialism!

THE FUNERAL OF VOLUNTEER TOM McELWEE

"Class Struggle" Correspondent.

Only hours after the TOM delegation arrived in Belfast, the news that Tom McElwee had died at the hands of the British Government after 62 days on hunger strike hit the streets. Whistles and sirens blared while women banged bin-lids and youths erected barricades. The atmosphere was electric.

On Monday 10th August the remains of volunteer Tom McElwee were laid to rest in the village of Bellaghy next to his cousin, Francis Hughes, who himself had been murdered only months before.

Over 30 members of the Troops Out Movement delegation attended the funeral. Our arrival was considerably delayed by the large number of RUC roadblocks. As we passed, the RUC displayed their true character by making obscene gestures at us.

We came to the route where the cortege was to pass. People waited silently while overhead came the constant noise of 20 army helicopters vainly trying to stop the revolutionary soldiers of the IRA firing their traditional final salute to their comrade. The tens of thousands of mourners approached in lines of three and the hearse with a colour party of six IRA and six Cumann na mBan volunteers passed only feet away from us. The RUC who were only a few yards away before, had now retreated to their Land Rovers.

The remains were carried to the church while mourners gathered round the grave. Although the final salute had already been fired (outside Tom McElwee's house) the helicopters continued to swoop low throughout the entire proceedings. After Mass, the coffin, draped in a tricolour, was brought to the graveside where the funeral service took place and the last post was played. The colour party was then dismissed to massive, defiant cheers from the crowd. Far from being demoralised by Thatcher's cruel intransigence, the people, though saddened and bitter, are still solidly supporting their hunger strikers and their people's army.

Wreaths were then laid by the McElwee family, Delores O'Neill (his girlfriend imprisoned in Armagh gaol), GHQ IRA Army Council, the South Derry Brigade of the IRA - in whose ranks Tom had fought imperialism; and many others, including the TOM delegation. Wreaths were also laid on behalf of the families of dead hunger strikers and those still on the strike. As each name was read out, the crowd responded with applause.

Mary McElwee, one of Tom's eight sisters who had carried the coffin, then read a poem in tribute to her brother. Danny Morrison (editor of "An Phoblacht / Republican News") made the oration. He too paid tribute to Tom and the other hunger strikers, and condemned the British government. He then made reference to the officiating priest's sermon, which had caused

several women to walk out in protest. "Certainly, let us pray for an end to the hunger strike, and let us pray for an end to violence, and let us pray for peace.

"But there is a bigger prayer which we have to make, and that is a prayer for an end to the cause of the violence - the British occupation of our country."

He also revealed, "In the last few hours of his life, Thomas repeatedly expressed his dying wish, that the Protestant and Catholic people of this land would live together in peace and harmony."

As we left the village, our coach and the one in front were stopped by a British Army Patrol. The coach in front was just pulling away, after a fruitless search, no doubt for IRA Volunteers or arms, when a milk bottle came flying out of the window, hitting a soldier direct on the head. That image of defiance is one of the strongest that remain with me.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

IRELAND SOLIDARITY

The courageous struggle of the Irish people continues. To be informed of events around the country, phone the Troops Out Movement on 01-267-2004.

In the event of any more of the hunger strikers being murdered by the British state there will be a vigil in Kilburn Square from 7.30 to 10 p.m. on three consecutive nights.

5-8 September

WORKERS' MARCH FOR IRISH FREEDOM.

Manchester to Blackpool. A 3-day march and a lobby of the TUC. Organised by Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act Campaign. It aims to support the hunger strikers; condemn TUC and Labour Party support for government policy; condemn TUC suppression of debate; and win support from British workers for the national liberation struggle in Ireland.

Details: BM RCT, London WC1N 3XX.

Wednesday September 23rd

WHY DID WINSTON ROSE DIE?

Demonstration for a public enquiry into Winston's death in police custody.

9.30 a.m. Waltham Forest Town Hall, Forest Rd., London E 17.

Saturday October 17th

SAOIRSE - IRISH FREEDOM FESTIVAL

All-day event of cultural resistance to Britain's war in Ireland. Exhibitions, films, videos, slides, theatre, music, poetry, etc.

Caxton House, Archway, London.

Organised by Committee for withdrawal from Ireland. Details from: CWI, 1 North End Rd., London W14 8ST.

Until Friday September 11th

FESTIVAL OF PROGRESSIVE POETRY, MUSIC AND ART FROM AFRICA

Art exhibition with artists from Zimbabwe, Caribbean, Tanzania, Azania and England.

Africa Centre, 38 King St., London WC2.

Also symposium on: "Contemporary art, music poetry from Africa: which way forward?" Thursday September 3rd. 7 p.m.

Organised by African Dawn Group.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE TEA WORKERS IN ASSAM, INDIA

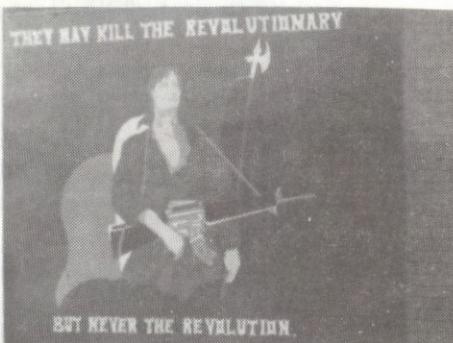
At the invitation of the World Development Movement, Paban Ghatowar, General Secretary of the Assam Tea Workers Union will be addressing three meetings in September. Dates and venues are as follows:

Thursday September 10th. Imperial Hotel, Blackpool. 6.30 p.m. (Fringe meeting at TUC conference.)

Monday September 14th. Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq., London WC1. 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday September 16th. Dr Johnson's House, Colmore Row, Birmingham. 7 p.m.

"Black people in England are now standing up"



Lloyd Hayes, a black former British soldier, served in the north of Ireland eight years ago. In August he was back again. This time, as a member of the delegation from the Troops Out Movement (TOM) come to express their solidarity and learn about the Irish people's struggle.

Speaking at a rally on the 9th August, Lloyd thanked the people of Belfast for the "whole-hearted welcome" which the TOM delegation had received.

"In addition I would like to express my personal thanks to you for welcoming me as an ex-soldier, one who for eight months in total wreaked havoc and destruction upon your daily life, upon your very existence."

Speaking of the recent wave of militant street resistance by the black people against the racist British police, Lloyd said,

"I am sure you are very aware that the situation in England today, as far as black people are concerned, is in no way very different from what it is for you here in the north of Ireland"

"For many years we sat back and took all the shit and rubbish that was being heaped on us, but fortunately black people in England are now standing up and we are fighting back, as you are aware from what you have seen on your television and in your newspapers."

"For many people there are many misconceptions as to what the struggle here in the north of Ireland is all about. It is talked about that it is religious bigotry, that it is sectarian bigotry, but we would like to say that as far as we are concerned the sole reason for the struggle is that it is a struggle for national liberation, that it is a struggle we, as black people, know very much about ..."

"Now, at the moment we're only having to contend with the racist and fascist police, but how long will it be before we will also have to contend with the British army, who are occupying your country?"

"I hope that we will never have to get to that stage, but if it should happen, then having seen the courage that you have portrayed, I hope that we will also be able to emulate you and stand up and fight, if it is needed, to defeat the British army."