

CLASS STRUGGLE



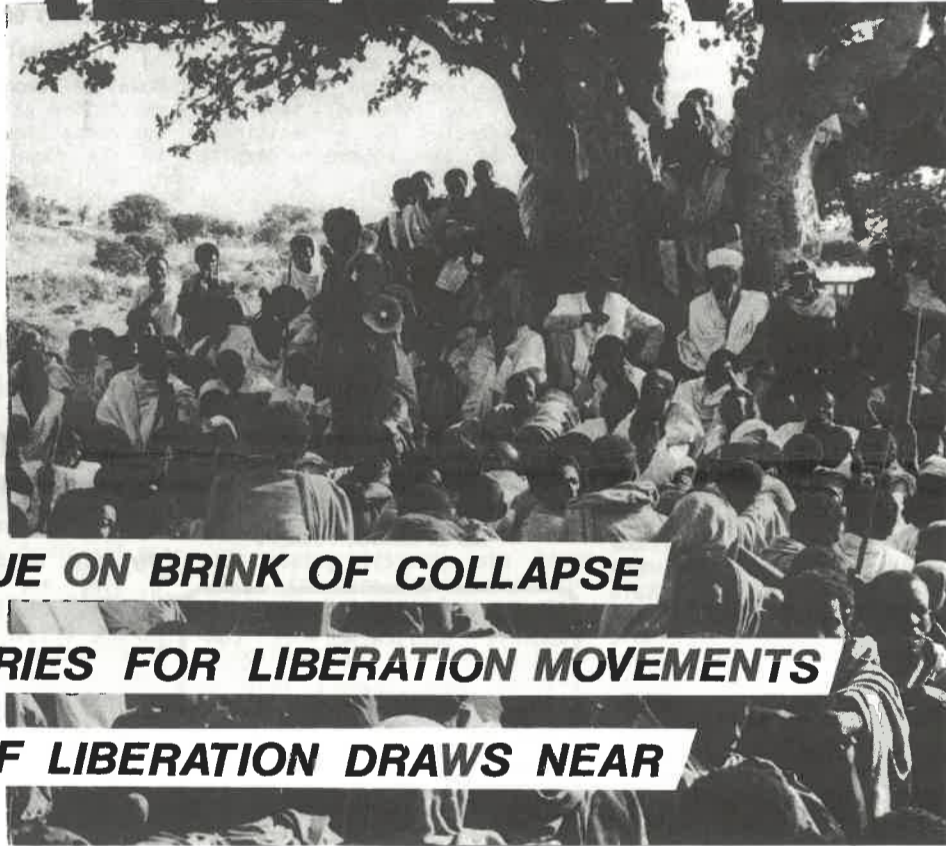
Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

VOL.12 NO.6 JULY - AUGUST 1988

(25P)

ETHIOPIA.....

FORWARD TO FREEDOM



DERGUE ON BRINK OF COLLAPSE

VICTORIES FOR LIBERATION MOVEMENTS

DAY OF LIBERATION DRAWS NEAR

In the last four months, the liberation forces in Ethiopia have won a series of great victories over the Dergue, the reactionary Ethiopian government.

The Dergue, backed by the Soviet Union, has mobilised all the forces it can. But their huge army, made up of unwilling conscripts, is collapsing under the co-ordinated attacks by the different liberation forces.

The freedom fighters of Eritrea, Tigray and other areas of Ethiopia can see an end in sight to their long years of bitter struggle. Recent reports of victories include:

*** On 10th June, the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) withdrew their forces having defended themselves from the Dergue's counter-offensive. The joint forces had put out of action over 9,200 troops and taken 4,000 prisoners....

*** In March, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) scored the greatest and speediest victory in the history of their struggle... The EPLF took a large number of prisoners, including three Soviet officers, two colonels and a lieutenant...

In the long run, the Dergue is bound to be defeated. It has lost all popular support within Ethiopia and faces



liberation struggles on different fronts that are increasingly co-ordinating their strategy.

More importantly, the freedom fighters are struggling to defend and extend the progress they have made in all areas of life: land reform, women's equality, health-care, education and democracy.

The corrupt military regime cannot win. But it can prolong the fight. It still has the air-force which rains down bombs and napalm, particularly on unprotected civilians. The

EPLF has warned that for some time now the regime has been stockpiling chemical weapons and that these are being transported to the battlefronts.

IMPERIALISM OUT OF THE HORN OF AFRICA

There has also been a long history of interference by imperialism in this strategic area of Africa. The Ethiopian regime would collapse sooner if its backing by the Soviet Union were withdrawn.

Whereas the Soviet Union has been the main arms supplier, western governments have given economic aid and many of the international agencies still recognise the Ethiopian government's claims to international relief.

We must demand that all such support and interference in Ethiopia is stopped, whether from the two superpowers or other imperialist powers. The day of liberation is close! The people of Ethiopia have the right to determine their own destiny!

Celebrate Women
Part 5....
education & culture.

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GLIMPSES INTO HERSTORY... PART 5

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

...or how women are taught their place

Women fighting for equality be it at work, at home, in public life or in bed, discover they are up against two immediate obstacles: firstly, men backed up by the social and economic system constructed by them to sustain male power, and secondly, the enemy within - their own psychology which is similarly, but less obviously constructed.



The real me

Take for example, the common problem of a woman wishing to return to paid work after having a baby. Firstly, she has to convince her husband that he must share in childcare and housework. And then, (as if this was not enough), she has to struggle against her own guilt and uncertainty at leaving the baby and entering a competitive job market.

The construction of feminine psychology is central to the process of female subordination and it works alongside, or as an alternative to, violence in keeping women down. It prepares women for their own appointed role, and leaves them poorly qualified to perform any of the roles that men have reserved for themselves. It ensures that women acquire certain knowledge and skills, but not others. And it equips them with a sense of what is appropriate and possible for women in general, and thus for themselves.

The process starts as soon as a baby is born. It is continued in schools and outside the classroom and in different ways by our culture. For many women, their identity as working class and/or black is also impressed on them in the same way, adding even further restrictions or contradictions to their own self-image.

Teaching girls to be wives and mothers

This aspect of their oppression, more than any other, has been discovered by women coming together in small groups and has led to much feminist research into education and culture over the last thirty years.

From the first days of life, boys and girls are treated differently, with boys being praised and encouraged in active, boisterous, exploratory and self-willed behaviour and girls being talked to, cuddled and encouraged to be quiet and conforming. Pre-school children learn much from copying and modelling themselves on others and get the same message from home, television and books.



Teaching childcare to schoolgirls

Once at school, not only does this continue, but the historical legacy of teaching girls to be wives and mothers has in no way been overcome.

Less surprising perhaps when we remember that although about 60% of teachers are women, 97% of the people involved in the "government of education" are male. In 1977, for every boy who passed O level cookery there were 61 girls. For every girl who passed O level woodwork, there were 166 boys.

The deep and hidden nature of discrimination in schools was revealed in the work done by Dale Spender into the way teachers behave. She discovered that teachers mete out preferential treatment to boys on an astonishing scale without realising they are doing it.

By taping lessons, she found that teachers spend about two thirds of their classroom time with boys. Girls had to wait longer for the teachers' attention. Teachers knew more personal details about their boy pupils, preferred teaching them and expected them to do better. They also commended some behaviour in boys whilst denigrating it in girls - for example, elaborate or careful presentation of work.

When these things are pointed out to the teachers, they find it difficult to give more than 40% of their time to girls, although once the students are told about it, girls are quite capable of asserting themselves and challenging the boys.



In addition to the methods used in teaching, all subjects tend to start from the male experience, from reading schemes through history (Egyptian queens?, suffragettes?); geography (Third World farmers mainly women?) and science.

Careers guidance still channel students into traditional sex-typed occupations. This is reinforced by what children see in the school hierarchy, where male teachers predominate in senior posts and the sciences and in headships, whilst low paid jobs of dinner ladies and cleaners are all done by women.

Changing Education

Having made their second demand "equal education opportunity" the women's movement in the west has put much energy into trying to change the educational system. Except for the theoretical work, and some individual victories, it has been a difficult task and one where positive action is required from the educational establishment.

It has gradually become evident to feminists that what girls need is not access to boys' education, but for education to be redefined and transformed, and then to be made available to both sexes on an equal basis, in such a way as to intervene against inequality. Some women have demanded the retention of, or return of, single sex schools in order that girls may be treated more equally.

Racism and sexism

For black women and girls, in imperialist countries such as ours, the role sexism plays in education and culture is often overshadowed by racism. In the book 'The Heart of the Race', the authors, and the women speaking through the book, are in no doubt as to priorities:

"For Black schoolgirls sexism has, it is true, played an insidious role in our lives. It has influenced our already limited career choices and has scarred our already tarnished self-image. But it is racism which has determined the schools we can attend and the quality of education we receive in them.

"So it is our consciousness as Black people, rather than as feminists, which has led us to take collective action against the education authorities. For us to campaign for non-sexist text books or career

guidance, when the racism in those areas has already determined what our daughters do, or to demand their right to do motor mechanics or play football, when our sons could aspire to nothing else, would be a denial of reality. Nevertheless, the campaigns we have taken up as mothers, teachers and schoolgirls, have been given added strength and direction by the experience we have brought to them as women."

Black women in this country have in some areas tackled the racist and sexist education system head on. Such campaigns as Saturday schools, where children are taught their own history and importance, and rejection of labelling black children as ESN and dumping them in special units, have won victories in the 1970's. At the same time, black women are taking up any adult education openings and struggling against all odds to catch up on what they were denied at school.

In the Third World

In many Third World countries, women are denied any education at all except in the upper classes. Nawal El-Saadawi has written passionately of her own struggle for education in Egypt. One of the first tasks and one of the most popular, of any liberation movement, is to combat illiteracy, especially among women. Visitors returning from such places as Guinea Bissau, Nicaragua, Eritrea and Palestine always describe the enthusiasm for schools - usually held alongside work or military action. One of the big changes for women in socialist China has been the opening up of educational opportunities for all women.

Images in Culture

Women's psychological subordination is not, of course, confined to formal education. Indeed, even as children, the images of women portrayed in the culture of society - the media, writing, music, art - have a tremendous and largely hidden effect. In a country such as Britain, people's culture has been largely taken over by imperialism and promotes imperialist ideology in a variety of ways.

In complete contrast to this, there are cultures of peoples resisting exploitation, and cultures of socialist societies; so in examining our own culture, we must be clear about its nature and its particularity to British imperialism.

As well as promoting imperialism, and bound up with that very closely, our culture promotes men, and largely ignores women, especially in the creative fields. Men control the means of expression - from the press and broadcasting, to advertising, film, publishing and even criticism - by occupying dominant positions within them.

It is also true to say, of course, that those controllers are also white, and ruling class, thereby promoting racism and anti-working class propaganda. Thus for most women in this country, culture is alienated on two scores. Black women are almost totally alienated although many turn to their own communities and culture which forms part of their resistance.

Even 'factual' aspects of the media, such as the news, are extremely sexist. A spot check on two national newspapers revealed that on 28th January, 1981, the news pages of 'The Guardian' included reports of 237 named individuals, of whom 19 were female. 'The Sunday Times' that week, featured 14 women among 181 individuals. This illustrates that not only are women depicted in sexist ways - by advertisers, pin-ups etc. but also women are in all other respects just ignored. Women writers and artists have great difficulty promoting their work both now and historically - as in many other fields, our history has been taken away. The last decade has seen some progress in some aspects, especially publishing, with the Women's Press and Virago promoting women's work.



Jazz player, Jean Davis

Bread and Roses

The exploitation of women both within art, literature and other cultural expressions, and by their exclusion from it, is a large and complex area. There have been many clashes between the women's movement and the liberal left over such matters, as the latter often find it difficult to accept that any work of art can be sexist. But as Marxist-Leninists we need to be clear in our understanding of English culture as an expression of the ideology of the ruling class, and to be sharp in picking up the sexism within that.

In promoting socialism, do not let us forget the tremendous creative energy which can be set free in such a society. This side of life, denied to the working class and especially to women for so long, is one very important reason for pursuing the struggle.... Women want bread, but they also want roses.

40TH BIRTHDAY OF NHS:

Soon the government will announce its plans for changing the Health Service. The details are difficult to predict. However, it is clear that it will be bad news for the millions of ordinary people who rely on the NHS.

Already the government has started its campaign to sell its new approach. In mid-May, Health Secretary, John Moore (ex-Treasury Minister and champion of privatisation), announced that there would only be gradual changes and no "Big Bang" approach. Of course, a gradual series of changes is harder to fight, as he well knows.

All the evidence points to a two-pronged attack. An increased involvement of the private sector combined with increased competition within the NHS itself. There will be a blurring of the distinction between the state provision and the private sector.

TAX RELIEF BOOST FOR PRIVATE MEDICAL INSURANCE

By early June, it became apparent that Moore had won his battle in the Cabinet to get the idea of giving tax relief to those taking out private medical insurance.

Mr Forman, Managing Director of PPP, the second largest private medical insurance company, said his industry would welcome such a change. But he also said:

"But if you ask me personally, are such measures in the interests of health care development in the country as a whole, I don't think they are."

Other criticism came from the Chairman (government appointed) of the Brighton Health Authority:

"I don't want to see the NHS becoming a Poor Law institution, coping on a shoestring, providing a grotty service to the most difficult chronic cases, with all the talented professionals siphoned off to the private sector."

MORE PRIVATE HEALTH TREATMENT DEALS

Although "co-operation" between sections of the NHS and the private sector is not new, the numbers of such deals have increased in recent years. This is a trend the government will encourage.

One company, Bioplan Holdings, has announced several such deals this year:

**** A £1.6 million deal to build a private hospital on NHS land next to Leighton Hospital, Cheshire.

*** To build a community hospital at Uckfield (Eastbourne)

*** To run jointly day surgery centres at Salford and Oxford

Another company, United Medical Enterprises, has made a £1 million deal with the Royal Eye Hospital, in Manchester, to provide a jointly run day surgery centre for cataract treatment.

On the face of it, it looks as though the NHS gains from such deals. The NHS hospital gets a guaranteed profit from referring patients to the private unit; they do not have the expense of trying to get private patients to pay for their treatment and the private firms agree to help the NHS do up its own hospital.

However, such deals establish that certain sorts of treatment are only available in the private sector: available for those who can pay. They ensure that the private sector makes maximum use of its beds (and thus maximises the profits). Also, it means that NHS hospitals are looking elsewhere for money to run themselves, no longer relying on funding



Reduced Life Expectancy?

from taxes. As more competition is introduced between NHS hospitals, those with "profitable" deals will win out, leaving rundown hospitals which cannot make such deals.

This last point is important. Moore openly talks about how, in the future, GPs will be shopping around (using desktop computers) on behalf of patients to find the hospitals with the shortest waiting lists. That might be all right for those with private insurance. But what about the millions who have to rely on a rundown NHS?

COMPETITION WITHIN THE NHS

There are growing demands from hospital managers to be allowed to run private beds in their hospitals in order to make a profit.

A less obvious way of putting the NHS on a narrow cost-effective basis is using what is called Clinical Budgeting. A consultant is given money to buy services from other parts of the hospital services. Already this has been tried out as a pilot scheme in five hospitals. There are plans now to extend the idea to all NHS hospitals.

Once again, this seems a reasonable thing to do. Tax-payers obviously want value for money. However, the approach has to be seen in the context of years

of starving the NHS of funds. Staff in hospitals are already overworked and demoralised. Virtually every hospital has had to make cuts in order to try and balance their finances. Such a scheme is still trying to cope with too little money. It will bring destructive competition between hospitals and within different hospitals without solving the basic problem which is a serious lack of money to maintain and develop the services that people need.

WORKERS IN THE NHS

The government has been clever in how it has used all the recent media coverage of the NHS crisis.

By announcing apparently significant pay rises for nurses, the government gave the impression that they had "solved" the NHS crisis. The NHS crisis suddenly was no longer headline news.

Agreeing to provide all the extra money to fund the nurses' pay was obviously a good thing. But all it did was not make matters any worse. There was no extra money for the NHS as such.

All the nurses actually got was 4%. Any more is dependent on a long drawn-out process of looking at every nursing

job in the country in order to re-grade them. This will take many months and there is no guarantee that all nurses will get the sort of rises that were newspaper headlines. The promised new rates will leave many nurses poorly paid.

Nurses are still leaving to get better paid jobs in the USA. The actual number trying to get qualified to work abroad has doubled in the last six months.

Nurses are clear that their pay rise did not solve the problems of the NHS. The Royal College of Nursing, at their Brighton conference, criticised the government's treatment of the NHS. They are clear that a massive injection of cash is necessary.

Another important fact, often forgotten by the media, is that nearly half of the NHS workforce are not nurses. These workers have only been offered 5.5% which is peanuts. It leaves many on poverty wages. For example, a cleaner on £81 a week would only be £5 a week better off (and that's before tax and national insurance are deducted).

Chronic low pay of the workforce does affect patients. A demoralised workforce does not give its best. The quality of the service continues to deteriorate. The best staff leave.

THERE IS OPPOSITION

On July 5th, the NHS will be 40 years old. Does anyone care?

Anyone who has campaigned amongst ordinary people to try and defend the NHS has a clear answer: Yes.

Ordinary people know from their own experience that they need the NHS and are very angry about the cuts. They want their taxes to pay for services they need.

The problem is that there is no co-ordinated mass campaign to turn that anger into action. Since the massive demonstrations in March of this year, there has been no organisation willing to build a campaign.

The TUC is frightened of starting anything that will turn into mass protest. It, and the individual unions, are tied to the misfortunes of the Labour Party.

50,000 OPERATIONS CANCELLED

The MSF Health News reported in its summer 1988 issue, that more than 50,000 patients have had operations cancelled by hospitals in the last six months.

"The figure is based on a random sample of 69 district health authorities - 35 per cent of all DHA's...."

Robin Cook, Shadow Social Services Secretary commented: **"The waiting list fund and the emergency cash allocated last November have clearly failed to improve the situation for many health authorities."**

"The problems remain: lack of staff, lack of beds, lack of cash."

The report went on: **"There was no point in the fashionable 'remedy' of shunting patients from one end of the country to the other in search of a spare bed..."**

The paper gave some examples:

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly: Prior to January 1988 there was a permanent red alert (i.e. cancellation of all but referred emergency admissions) for general medicine but since that date there have been two occasions per week lasting up to 24 hours.

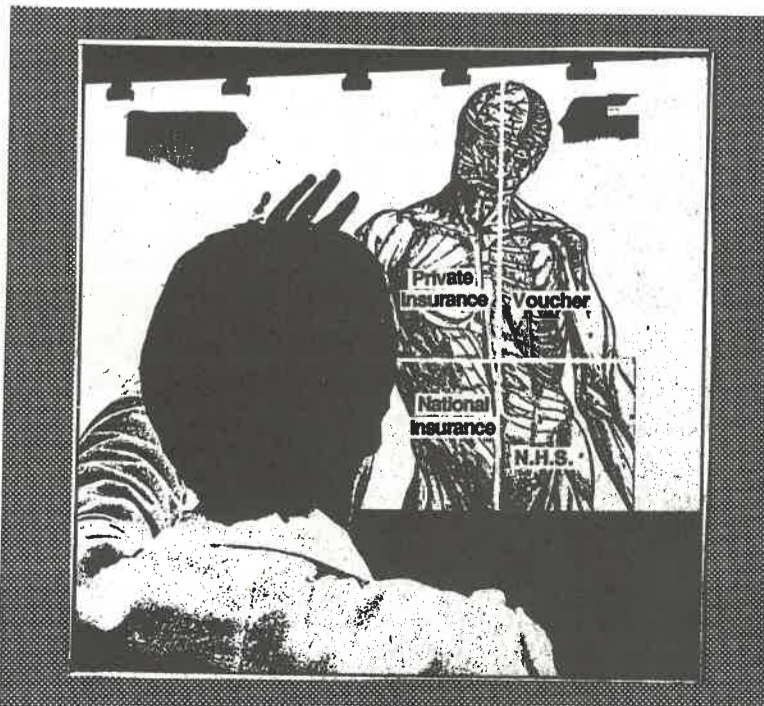
North Hertfordshire: 23 patients were postponed on one day in February because of an acute shortage of linen which resulted in all routine admissions being cancelled for the day.

Salford: Arising from a mixture of nursing shortages and financial pressures an elective surgical ward in Salford Royal Hospital was closed from November 24th, and is still closed...

Salisbury: 300 theatre sessions were cancelled out of a total potential of 1,273 with the major reasons for cancellations (in 166 cases) being due to staff shortages.

Shropshire: The implication is therefore, that if 764 sessions had not been cancelled during the six months, about 3,000 people would have had their operations sooner.

Wandsworth: It is sometimes necessary to close theatres, because of staff shortages, and thus the potential for treating patients is reduced.



The Labour Party sees any such campaign as its own electioneering fodder, (conveniently forgetting that it cut NHS funding last time it was in power). It pushes the idea that nothing can be done until it is elected at the next general election.

There will be activity around the 40th anniversary of the founding of the NHS. It will be to show that the NHS is a service worth defending. What will be lacking is a strong element of protest against the cuts.

The protest movement against the government's review of the NHS should be being built now. Protests against the existing cuts should be on-going.

There are genuine people involved in the various campaign groups and we should attempt to unite the vast majority of these people to build a strong protest movement.

The long, hard struggle to combat the idea that the Tories cannot be beaten on any issue must be fought. They can be forced to change policies, if the protest is strong enough.

The basic demand that people have the right to demand free health care must be turned into a militant, mass campaign.

The Health Service is an issue which can unite millions of ordinary people.

ST. PANCRAS 1960: When Tenants came out in their thousands

Last month, we looked at the state of housing in contemporary Britain and touched on just some of the problems that face most people trying to find and keep a decent place in which to live. This month, we continue on the same general theme of housing, but from a different angle: this time by reporting on the events that took place in the North London borough of St Pancras in the years 1959 and 1960.

Our purpose in covering this story now is to help focus attention on the fact that it is around such issues as inadequate and poor housing, lack of facilities on large council estates, high rents as well as homelessness that large numbers of people can be drawn into struggle against the economic and political system that thrives on the Holy Trinity of Rent, Interest and Profit.

It also serves to help us introduce some thoughts on the issue of the Poll Tax. By drawing on some of the lessons learnt during 1960 in St Pancras, it is then possible to point out things that need to be emphasised and pitfalls to be avoided if any future campaigns on this issue are to have any hope of success.

UNITING THE MANY

The events in St Pancras, like much of the history of the struggles of the working class, are not just of historical interest. Nearly 30 years later, there are many lessons that can be learned from them. For example, about power, both the power of the state, seen in this context in the form of the District Auditor who can surcharge councillors and equally as important, the power of the working class when it is organised and on the move, and knowing what it wants.

This is perhaps one of the main points to be emphasised here - that in any mass struggle it is essential that not only are those who are directly affected at the centre of any campaign, but also that they are present in large numbers. This certainly was so in the case of the St Pancras rent campaigns.

Briefly, the background to the events of 1960 lay in the decision of the newly-elected Tory Council in St Pancras in July of the previous year, to introduce massive rent increases for its 7,000 council tenants. Not surprisingly, in an area that had a long tradition of struggle on the housing front, in the many small factories and also on many wider issues, tenants soon began to organise resistance.

Within a very short time, 35 tenants' associations from all the major estates had formed themselves into the St Pancras Borough Council United Tenants Association, soon to be popularly referred to as St Pancras UTA. Its members quickly threw themselves into action where it mattered, among the council tenants themselves. Loud-speaker cars regularly visited every estate, thousands of leaflets were given out, and the issues were clearly and consistently explained on the door.

As a result, the tenants began to show their support for the UTA and its campaign in their thousands. Two huge demonstrations marched to the Town Hall in September, while one month later over 6,000 protested outside the Tory Party headquarters in Smith Square.

THE RENT STRIKE

Following these massive shows of support, the UTA called a meeting of 165 tenant delegates. This agreed overwhelmingly to organise a really effective campaign that included calling on the tenants to refuse to pay any rent increase. This campaign was to continue well into the following year.

At every meeting of the Borough Council, tenants were ejected from the public gallery. On one occasion, women pelted the councillors with eggs while others chained themselves to the seats. As a result, the Council was forced to bar the public from the public gallery; such as the momentum and intensity of the campaign that questions about it began to be raised in Parliament.

During the early part of the summer, the Council decided to take to court all those tenants who had stopped paying rent altogether. As a result it issued 23 Court Orders. Realising that it could not fight all these at the same time, the UTA persuaded most of these to pay off a few shillings, thus leaving two tenants, Don Cook and Arthur Rowe around whom the struggle was to be concentrated.

Following further moves by the Council about future rent increases, the UTA then decided to urge all tenants to withhold all payment of rent. This led to a new wave of action following which a further 250 notices to quit were handed out.

It was against this background that the whole issue was to come to a head.

EVICITION

On the evening of 27th August, 1960, barricades went up to defend Don Cook in his flat in Kennistoun House in Leighton Road and Arthur Rowe at Silverdale on the Regents Park Estate. The result of this action was electrifying. More and more support began to build up. Demonstrations, thousands strong marched to the besieged flats and volunteered for picket duty. In addition, even more tenants began to withhold their rent, forcing the Council to issue over a further 500 notices to quit.

Finally, in the early morning of September 22nd, 28 County Court bailiffs aided by 400 police, smashed their way into the two blocks of flats. Despite the efforts of the tenants in the battles that followed, both Cook and Rowe were evicted from their homes.

This action by the authorities made a tremendous impression on those involved. The same morning, the council painters went on strike in sympathy with the tenants. Over 200 railwaymen from the nearby Camden goods depot stopped work soon to be followed by construction workers on the huge Shell-Mex site on the South Bank and elsewhere. That afternoon, over a thousand strikers marched to Kennistoun House to show their support. That evening, they were joined by thousands of tenants who then marched down to St Pancras Town Hall in Euston Road. Here, they were met by over 800 police who, without warning, charged into the crowds, wielding batons with the result that many people were injured and over sixty arrests made.



St Pancras tenants en route to the Town Hall

PUBLIC ORDER ACT

Subsequently, the authorities showed how worried they were by the intensity and wide level of support the tenants had, by invoking the Public Order Act, banning all demonstrations in St Pancras for three months and sending many of those arrested to prison.

It is, of course, impossible to cover at all adequately all the events of this period in such a short account. Neither is it possible to do more than just mention the aftermath, one in which the Labour Party, after making many promises about how they would bring down the rents and remove the hated means test, swept into office in the 1962 borough elections and then proceeded to renege and carry out what the secretary of the UTA was later to describe as "an outright betrayal of the people of St Pancras".

It had been common knowledge well before the election that if a new Labour Council did carry out its pre-election promises on housing there was a strong possibility of the councillors being surcharged by the District Auditor who was, of course, appointed by the government.

Instead of setting out to mobilise the people of the borough to back them up, the Labour group meekly accepted the advice of one of the Labour Party's legal experts, Sir Frank Soskice and refused to bring the rents down.

THE POLL TAX

If the government can get away with it, this new tax will be introduced firstly in Scotland next April and in the rest of Britain in the following year. People from many quarters and for various reasons are now increasingly voicing their dissatisfaction with it. Already some have taken steps which they believe will ensure that they can get out of having to pay: for example, in parts of Glasgow it has been estimated that the number of names on the electoral register has already gone down by over 15%.

LESSONS FROM ST PANCRAS

It is with this in mind, and also with recognition of the fact that only a strong and effective campaign outside the House of Commons will have any chance of stopping the Poll Tax, that it is worth asking the question whether the lessons learned from the events in St Pancras have a relevance now.

Clearly the answer is yes, on at least two fronts. Firstly, with respect to any involvement by the Labour Party. As always it is essential to be on guard against those who go around preaching their pessimistic view that nothing can be done until we have a Labour government in office, one which will repeat the Poll Tax legislation.

Also, there is the added danger of letting the Labour Party gain control of any campaigns.

(It is important to make the distinction between members of groups within the Labour Party who want to take part in the campaign and letting them hijack the leadership.) Up in Scotland, they have stated their opposition to the Poll Tax and their wish to lead resistance to it, but with the rider that any campaign has to keep within the law. Perhaps it is relevant here to quote again the secretary of the St Pancras UTA, writing in 1967, when among the conclusions he drew from what had happened seven years earlier (and borne out by what happened after the evictions) he noted that "many of those who pose as friends of the working people are, in fact, the very enemies that are holding back their struggles."

Finally, perhaps the most important aspect from 1960 is on the need to involve as many people as possible in mass struggles. Struggles around housing are essentially community issues, which involve people where they live, and involve whole families. In the events of St Pancras as in the experiences gained during the miners' defence of their communities in 1984 and 1985, we can see, as Mao Zedong said: "The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history."

es/correspondent

LET THEM COME

During the course of the struggle, many of the events that took place were put to song and became part of the modern folk tradition. We reprint here some verses from the song 'Let Them Come' which is sung to the tune of 'Let Him Go, Let Him Tarry'.

It was early Monday morning as I walked down Leighton Road, The pavement was all crowded and the traffic had been slowed. I asked an old man standing there what the fuss was all about, The bailiff's men were coming to throw young Don Cook out.

CHORUS: Let them come, let them try it, we are ready they shall see, The pickets they are posted and you can count on me.

So it's shoulder boys to shoulder, if you see the bailiffs about, Let's keep the tenants in their flats but kick the Tories out.

Don Cook is our leader with him we'll stand or fall, For an injury to one of us is an injury to all, If they break down his barricade and throw him on the street Then every tenant in the land is at his landlord's feet.

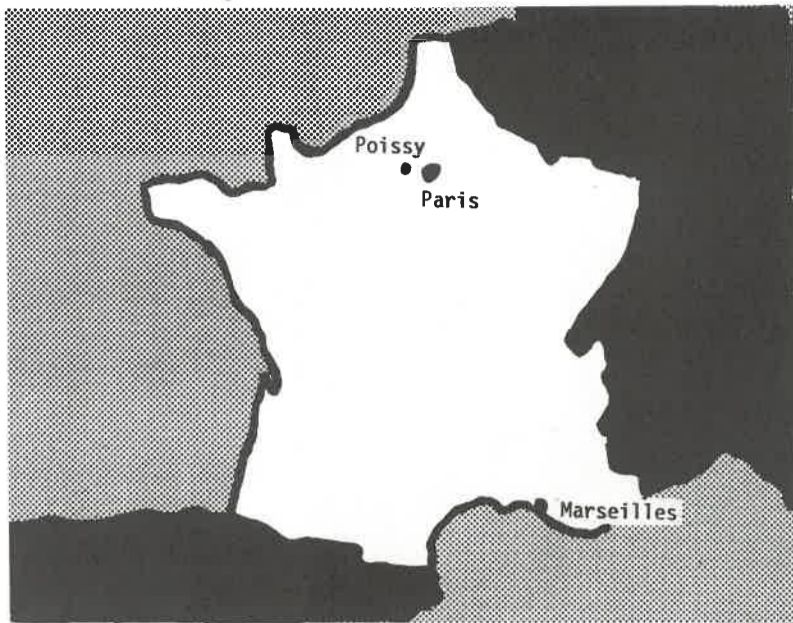
Arthur Rowe at Silverdale is with him in the fight The pickets they are posted and watching day and night, Barbed wire and pianos are drawn across the stairs, A rocket is the signal if trouble should appear.

Rent, Interest and Profit, the trinity of greed; Should councils build as landlords, or should they build for need? Today it's Hatfield, Stepney, St Pancras, Bethnal Green, Tomorrow it may be your houses inbetween.

Do you live on someone else's back? Are you a parasite? If the answer's no, a roof above your head is yours by right, But in this land of freedom, money talks it's true. Some have plenty, some have none - borther, which are you?

FASCISM: Can it be checked?

C.S. CORRESPONDENT



Many people have been alarmed by the sight of a fascist movement on the verge of establishing a solid mass base in France. We need to understand the model being developed in France, before other European fascists seek to emulate the progress made by Le Pen's Front National (FN), and the failure of the French Left to check the rise of French fascism.

In a phrase that echoes Hitler during the period leading up to 1933, Jean Marie Le Pen, the leader of the FN, describes those who support the Front National as "the national

ity is very high in the North, the Pas de Calais and on the Normandy coast, where Le Pen's vote was below average. In the rural areas, where Le Pen's vote more than doubled, immigration is not an issue.

Le Pen's support has grown since the 190,000 who voted for him when he first stood for the presidency of France in 1974. It has fed off, what one commentator called the "growing sense of despair which seems to pervade much of France at the moment, particularly among the less well-off."



Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the Front National

The PCF presidential candidate attracted only 6.7% of the popular vote this time round: the previous lowest scored was 8% in 1932.

The revisionist PCF carried out a disastrous flirtation with the Socialist Party in the 'Union of the Left' at the start of the 1970's. It then went on to adjust to popular chauvinism to undercut the FN, but only succeeded in promoting a racism that corrodes class allegiance.

Writing in June's issue of 'Searchlight', Anne Tristan, who infiltrated the FN, recounts how, as a Front member, she and others had been approached by members of Mitterand's Socialist Party for discussion. "All this 'Hello Marcel ... how are you? stuff. It's disgusting. There is no attempt to fight them," she declared. The Socialists treated the fascists, the mortal enemy of the labour movement, as a legitimate political party.

That there were no demonstrations in France on April 23rd, a European-wide Anti-Racist Day of Action, testifies to the weakness of the anti-racist movement in France. The fascist FN marched unopposed in Paris on May Day after the two main trade unions, the Catholic CFTD and revisionist-controlled CGT, decided not to confront the demonstration on a day traditionally associated with the labour movement.

FAILURE OF THE LEFT

Racism is not the sole basis of FN support. It channels understandable feelings of discontent and rebellion by talking first of the real problems - jobs, housing, despair for the future - that people face, then later of race.

The FN attracts those fed up with being continually ignored by the politicians in Paris. They see the traditional parties as, either not caring about their problems, or incapable of solving them. Support comes from those who should be turning to the political left for an answer.

The danger in France is that the FN will break out of the marginal role as a vehicle for a disenchanted minority and become the focus for a protest vote. That the FN stands ready to benefit from the frustration and anger of the working class, in an indictment of the failure of the French left and traditional working class politics.

The decline of the Parti Communiste Français (PCF), as it has capitulated to bourgeois politics, has lost it its position as the dominant party of the working class, securing a quarter of the electorate's support.

ORGANISE ACTIVELY

As a speaker at the Berlin Anti-Fascist demonstration pointed out: "In order to combat racial hatred and neo-fascist force, we must be active ourselves, and we must be organised we must deny them access to the pool they swim in - racism."

The consequences of the failure of the French Left to undertake this task underlines the need to wage a struggle against chauvinism and racism within the working class movement. The failure to challenge the resurgence of fascism and provide a political perspective for the future from the Left has been costly in France.

FN activity and escalating racist attacks and murders will be nourished by Le Pen's presidential vote. The decimation of FN parliamentary seats, reduced from 32 to 1 seat, was a result of the changes in voting procedure from proportional representation to the "first past the post system" that operates in Britain. This may in the long run undercut FN electoral support. But even if Le Pen's FN proves to be a transitory phenomenon, there still remains the deep well of xenophobic nationalism that supports the French state's racist measures.

STATE RACISM

Under Chirac, there had been an increase in police spot iden-

tity checks and "fishing raids" for "illegals". Tougher government policy saw 71,000 refused admission into the country on suspicion of seeking illegal settlement. The number being expelled has doubled in two years: more than 13,000 deported in 1986 and nearly 18,000 last year. Even Le Pen complains that Chirac has adopted FN policies, particularly on policing as the French state targets its Arab residents.

In Marseilles, the FN leader lost his seat to a local socialist in spite of a local electoral pact between the URC Alliance (comprised of the Gaullist RPR and Centrist UDF) and the FN that equally divided the sixteen seats in the area. The result did not hamper Le Pen's ambitions: "Nothing in this result discourages me from running as mayor of Marseilles in next year's municipal election." His campaign will increase the rate of thuggish attacks on the 90,000 North Africans who make up 10% of the population of France's largest port.

Anti-racist activity must be expanded beyond the popularising of the slogan 'Touche pas à mon pote' (Don't touch my mate) written on a badge of an open hand. It is necessary to create a climate of acceptance of diversity, of the rights of different peoples within French society. This is only possible when racists are challenged ideologically and confronted physically.

Amid the acts of racist vandalism and murder, the FN develops unhindered, attracting those sections of society open to a racist explanation for capitalism's failure even if not convinced of the fascist prescription.

Faced with the statement "There are too many immigrant workers", 57.9% of French people expressed agreement in 1984. The French Left's failure to combat actively such sentiments by exposing the true nature of fascism, demolishing the racist argument in its propaganda and building alliances between the French and national minority peoples based on a multi-national working class, has led to the danger of a politically relevant fascist organisation in France. Whether the FN can build on this depends largely on the response of the Left and democrats in conjunction with the minority communities.

The lessons we can learn from the failure to do this can prepare the working class for the events in France to be repeated in other countries in Europe.



Demonstration in opposition to racist violence, Poissy.

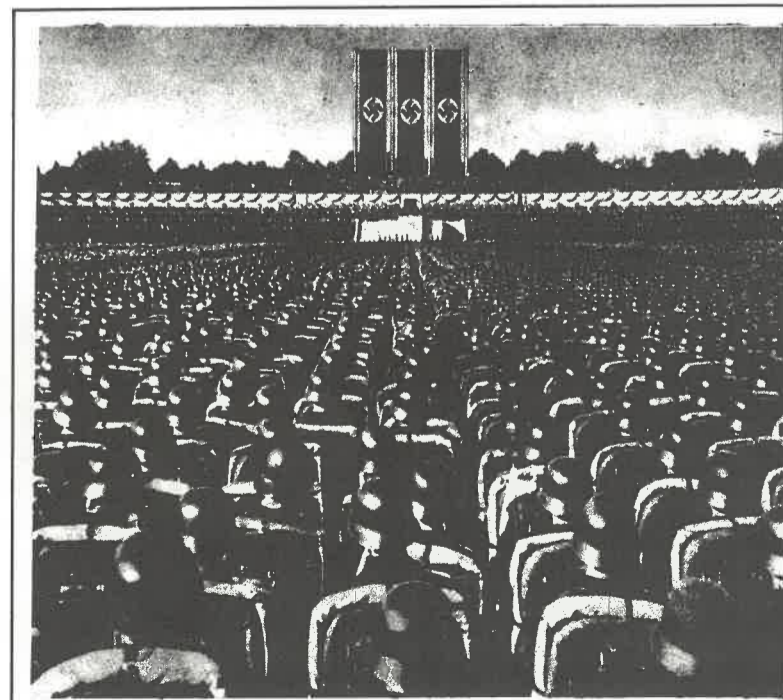
opposition". In the presidential election earlier this year, Le Pen attracted 14% of the popular vote, some 4.3 million. This compares with the 3.4 million who voted for the four "Marxist" candidates.

It is not, as many newspapers describe it, a nationalist right in the shape of the FN challenging a conventional bourgeois right. The FN's simplistic slogans against immigrants and for a resurgence of French nationalism are firmly based in racist sentiments. Immigrants are blamed in traditional fashion for most of the country's ills, from unemployment to Aids. Over four million voters supported the FN's program for "national preference" in response to the mainly anti-Arab propaganda of the FN.

UNDERSTANDING THE BASIS OF FN SUPPORT

Support for the FN does not simply come from the pieds noirs (the French colonists and their families who left Algeria after it won independence from France in 1962), although they provide a solid base along the Mediterranean coast.

Le Pen's support was formerly said to be strongest in areas of high immigration or high unemployment. But unemployment



Hitler leading Nazi rally at Nuremberg

Palestine

Israel is not stronger than the USA

by David Evans

In June, a summit conference of Arab states met in Algiers. This was an "emergency" summit, convened to support the Palestinian Uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip - six months after it had started. Every head of state but two attended, and at the end of the summit, they declared their support for the Uprising and pledged to step up their backing for the Palestinians.

Back in 1936, there was another Palestinian popular protest to which the Arab states pledged their support. The Palestinians staged a six-month general strike against the British authorities in support of their national demands. The neo-colonial Arab governments distrusted this popular challenge to Britain, which could easily set an example to their own peoples. They advised the Palestinian leadership of the day to call off the mass action, which they would then use in a diplomatic effort to persuade Britain to accept the Palestinian Arab demands. Of course, Britain did not accept their demands, and the Palestinian revolt suffered a serious demobilisation.

SUPPORT, NOT INTERFERENCE

The Palestinian people have learnt from their experiences; they are not prepared to entrust their fate to others now. From the summit, they demanded support, but no interference. In most Arab states, there have been attempts to hold popular demonstrations in solidarity with the Uprising, most of which have been stopped with tear gas and beatings, just like inside Palestine. In general, the Arab governments only represent a small ruling stratum, and are tied to the imperialist powers: they fear the spreading of the example of the Uprising, and would like to see it halted. At the same time, they know that the workers, peasants, farmers and most of the rest of their societies sympathise with the Palestinians, and so they feel forced to make the right noises about the Uprising. This was why an Arab summit was called.

The Uprising has had a big impact in the Arab world and brought gains for the Palestinians. Before the Uprising began, King Hussein of Jordan was making renewed efforts to stake a claim to the West Bank, pouring in money to buy support and convening the Jordanian parliament, whose members were elected before



Israeli soldier turned back by mass Palestinian demonstration

the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967, and which claims to represent the West Bank as well as the East Bank. Now Hussein again declares that he recognises the PLO as the Palestinians' representative, and says that if it wants to attend a peace conference in its own right (not as part of a joint delegation with Jordan), then he will fully accept its wishes.

After five years of trying to split the PLO and create an alternative to it, Syria has been forced to seek better relations with it. The groundwork for this change was laid by the last Palestine National Council meeting over a year ago, at which all the independent Palestinian organisations were represented. But since then, Syria's chosen instrument for crushing the PLO in Lebanon, Amal, has utterly failed in its efforts, and the Uprising has shown conclusively the Palestinian people's full support for the PLO. Syria badly needed to mend its fences with the strengthened PLO.

In Lebanon, in spite of a cease-

fire, Amal was controlling access to the Palestinian camps in Beirut, controlling the amount of food going in and stopping men from leaving or entering - they risked death if they tried to move. With the Uprising gathering popular support in the Arab world, Amal felt forced to lift the sieges. One result of the new mood in Lebanon was that on Land Day (March 30th), Palestinians in Beirut staged their biggest demonstration since 1982.

INSIDE PALESTINE

A recent visitor to the West Bank has told 'Class Struggle' that the Uprising is still very much alive, in spite of the lack of press coverage here. "The resistance takes different forms often. There are still many demonstrations, though not as many as at the start. But everyone's so well organised now. They have the capacity to stage the protests they want when they want. It's quite something when you run into a road block set up by youths. 'What are you? An Israeli or a Palestinian?', they say. And you better tell them what

they want to know!"

People have planted every inch of soil they can with crops to feed themselves, so they can be less dependent on Israeli produce. This shows that they are serious about keeping up a longterm confrontation with Israel.

Israel's tactics for facing the Uprising have undergone some adjustment. It is relying heavily on economic pressure to make the Palestinians give up. In Gaza, Israel has told the population that they must take new identity cards. Workers who normally go to labour in Israel from Gaza will not be allowed to cross the checkpoint between the Gaza Strip and Israel unless they have the new identity cards. But no-one will be issued with these identity cards unless they can show they have paid their taxes, which the great majority of Palestinians have refused to do since the Uprising began, as the Unified Leadership said they should. Thus, Israel is trying to make the people of the Gaza Strip go against the Unified Leadership by imposing worsening hardship on them.

During the Uprising, the people have created new songs of resistance, and many slogans expressing the will to win have been popularised. The confidence of the people in their ultimate ability to win through is well represented in one popular slogan: "Israel is not stronger than the USA, and we are not weaker than the Vietnamese!"

BOYCOTT!

An international conference of solidarity with the Uprising took place on June 13th-14th in Benghazi, Libya, organised by the PLO and hosted by Libya. Over 280 delegates from more than 100 countries attended. PLO Chair Yasser Arafat was one of the first speakers.

At the end of the conference, a 10-point action programme was adopted. This included support for an effort to get those governments which have not yet recognised the PLO (like the British government) to do so. The programme also called for material aid to be sent to the Palestinians and for boycott measures against Israel - "economic, cultural, touristic, etc. until it accepts to abide by and implement all relevant UN resolutions on the treatment of civilians and against deportation and expulsion of Palestinians, and until it ceases state terrorism and systematic crimes."



ACROSS SEVEN SEAS AND THIRTEEN RIVERS

(ed) Caroline Adams

Collected here are ten life stories of pioneer Sylheti settlers in Britain - Bengali seamen who wish their story and the story of their community to be written down: "This country has changed so much. They don't understand why we are here - have forgotten we were born under the British flag." Theirs is a testament to the explicit link between British colonialism and the situation of black people in Britain today. 230 pages.

£4.95 + 62p P&P

VICTORIAN VALUES

James Walvin

The government has turned to the images of Victorian Britain in a conscious attempt to "the lessons of history" when Britannia was at its peak of economic and imperial achievement. At home, disease, child prostitution, poorhouses and fierce class struggle dominated. This investigation questions Victorian values' relevance as an antidote for contemporary Britain. Such an assessment is, at heart, political and not historical. 182 pages.

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Jacobo Timerman

Himself a victim of imprisonment by the Argentine military, Jacobo Timerman describes his travels and encounters through Chile, brutalised by fourteen years of military rule, punctured with testimonies from victims of Pinochet's rule. 134 pages.

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THE BLIND WATCHMAKER

Richard Dawkins

In defending the work begun by Wallace and Darwin, Richard Dawkins sees off the mythology of creationists and persuadingly demonstrates that evolution by natural selection is the only answer to that nagging question: why do we exist? 332 pages.

£4.95 + 50p P&P

Azania

Around 80 people were present at the rally held in London on the 12th anniversary of the Soweto Uprising, a commemoration organised by the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCM(A)). The audience heard from a woman comrade of the BCM(A) of the importance of the occasion, when black youth faced in defiance the armed might of the Apartheid regime: they smashed the climate of fear. At Soweto, the black youth have sown dragon's teeth. "As we salute them, we have to till and nurture the soil, so that the harvest is a thoroughgoing revolution". The resistance of the youth was to set the pace for subsequent years and stands as a landmark in the history of national struggle.

An equally militant and inspiring contribution came from the Balsa choir. The necessity for self-reliance, and an outstanding example of its successful application, shone through

Soweto: A landmark

the solidarity contribution from the Eritrean People's Liberation Front. Other speakers came from the All-African People's Revolutionary Party and the Paris-based Movement Against Racism and Apartheid. Solidarity messages from the RCL, Azania-Namibia Forum and the City Anti-Apartheid Group (who presented a donation of £500) and others were given.



RCL SOLIDARITY MESSAGE 16th JUNE, 1988

The RCL pays tribute to all the people, many of them children, who gave their lives 12 years ago during the Soweto Uprising. We also pay tribute to all those who since 1976 have carried on with the struggle and have ignored all

threats and intimidations from the racist South African regime.

History has again and again shown that the right and duty of oppressed peoples to launch uprisings is the most sacred and irrepressible right. Witness the example of Palestine at this very moment. The uprising of the masses has the power to galvanise the forces of progress and bring confusion to the reactionaries and their neo-colonial followers.

The Azanian people's movement is a multi-faceted struggle with all the richness of an act of creation, one which is opening fresh horizons not only for the Azanian masses but for the whole of suffering humanity. Even the establishment cannot fail to notice this extraordinary creativity. But their response is to try and mould it into their own frame of reference. The commercial exploitation of Azanian music

and the birthday concert last weekend are recent examples.

Our response must be, on the contrary, to respect the logic inherent in the movement itself. This is first and foremost the struggle for the land. This can also be seen as a facet of the world-wide striving of the labouring and exploited people to seize control over their own destiny.

Revolutionaries in this country recognise themselves in this struggle, while at the same time, they deeply respect the vanguard role of the Azanian nation, whose revolutionary process of rebirth will have a decisive, strategic effect on the world situation in the years to come.

Long live the unity of the Azanian people and the working and oppressed peoples of the world!

Izwe Lethu!

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FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



Opposition to Orange Celebrations

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

A few hundred Orange Order supporters, accompanied by four bands from English-based lodges, were prevented from marching through Chesterfield on June 18th. A counter-march and demonstration was organised by Anti-Fascist Action, the Troops Out Movement and Labour Committee on Ireland. The police stopped the Loyalists and fascists from marching through the town, turning them back on the outskirts of Chesterfield to their assembly point, when faced by the counter-demonstration. This counter-demonstration was technically in breach of the Public Order Act.

LABOUR COUNCILS SUPPORT ORANGE ORDER

The stopping of the Orange Order march was a victory in stopping the triumphant anti-Irish creed of violent sectarianism being paraded as pageantry. The pretext for the Loyalists was the accession of Mary and William of Orange to the throne in 1688. The support and blessings of this Midlands town's ruling Labour Council was given to this sectarian parade.

Labour councils are getting into the habit of supporting loyalist displays. Exeter's Labour Council has spent £60,000 in sponsoring the 300th anni-



versary of William's landing in Devon.

They claim it is good for tourism. The Labour councillors must have a short memory as two years ago there was a rampage in nearby Bridgewater at a demonstration called by the fascist-inspired "British Friends of Ulster". What are they expecting from loyalist and fascist 'tourists' at parallel 'celebrations' this summer?

* * * * *

On the same day as the Chesterfield march, some 100 assorted rabble of the National Front marched in central London. Their march, called at short notice, seemed designed to divide anti-fascists from concentrating their forces to oppose the loyalist march. There was some fear that the fascists would attempt to disrupt the 2,000 Lesbian Pride march that covered an almost identical route three hours later. However, there was a determined group of anti-fascists, largely Islington Anti-Racist Anti-Fascist group, who shadowed and harassed the marching fascists. Later they reinforced the non-stop picket outside the South African embassy. The day passed off peacefully apart from the odd scuffle around the fringes of the Lesbian Pride march as the fascist threat sulked away.

DEMONSTRATE

DEMONSTRATE
AGAINST
GENERAL EVREN'S VISIT
TO U.K.
2nd JULY - SATURDAY

While 400 political prisoners await the decision taken by the military court to execute them to be approved by the National Turkish Assembly, the British government plans to give General Evren, President of Turkey, a friendly welcome in return for Thatcher's visit earlier this year.

Fourteen Turkish minority organisations have come together to campaign against the planned visit of General Evren in July.

General Evren, the architect of the 12th September military coup, has been responsible for the suppression of basic democratic rights with the arrest of over half a million people and a climate of fear that prevents others from expressing their views.

Thousands of cases of systematic torture and hundreds of deaths have been documented. The attack on Turkey's working class is continuing. At this year's May Day demonstrations police attacked and arrested more than 200 workers after they had banned the march.

In Istanbul, 8 MPs from the social democratic Populist Party and about 1500 people attempted to demonstrate against the ban on celebrating the historic international working class holiday. Police brutally attacked the demonstrators and detained 84 people. Some of them, including journalists like Erkoca from Cumhuriyet (one of the biggest newspapers in Turkey) were also beaten up.

On the same day, President Kenan Evren threatened that, "if one day Turkey again fell into an era like before the 12th September military coup, military forces would save the country."

Suleyman Demirel, who was Prime Minister at the time of the 1980 coup, and now leads the True Path Party, said: "Evren is stirring up those eager for another coup."

Muzaffer Erdost, spokesman for a Human Rights Association, pointed out that "the ban on the 1st May celebration is a symbol of oppression".

SUPPORT CALLED FOR

In an appeal for financial support, the Organising Committee to Prevent General Evren's visit to the UK, report that:

"As part of our campaign to highlight the violation of basic rights in Turkey today, under the Evren regime, we are organising a labour movement delegation to visit military prisons in Metris, Mamak and Diyarbakir".

Included in the delegation are three Labour MP's, from areas where many Turkish people live in London: Diane Abbott, Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Grant.

More immediately, the campaign has called for support for a demonstration in London against Evren's visit. People are asked to assemble in Hyde Park (near Speakers' Corner), at 2 pm on Saturday, July 2nd.

Donations and further information from:
Organising Committee to Prevent General Evren's Visit to UK,

Liberty Hall,
489 Kingsland Road,
London E8 4AU.

Revolutionary ideas are the threat

The following article is reprinted from Troops Out paper, June 1988.

Peter Jordan, who is in his 60's, was found guilty of conspiracy to cause explosions and is a Category A prisoner, i.e. he is regarded as "a serious threat to prison order and discipline".

He is applying to have his category withdrawn on the grounds that he is not a threat to anyone.

A copy of a prison officer's report on the matter has been sent anonymously to Troops Out. It is dated: 23.3.88:

"Please report on No.H22338 Jordan for the purposes of Cat.A review.

It is my opinion that whilst Jordan has neither the stature or youth to pose any physical threat personally to anyone inside or outside this establishment he is extremely well educated, very articulate hence a good orator. He could, I think, have a manipulative influence on the less intellectual prisoners. Jordan associates with prisoners who are of the same intellectual level. He is seen on occasions with known IRA members and is also a frequent reader of the Irish press, such as An Phoblact.

Because of his offence, his obvious political sympathies and his capabilities in manipulating other prisoners, I think he should remain Category A."



RESTRICTIONS

By keeping Pete Jordan as a category A prisoner, his visits are restricted to those people who can get through security clearance and the conditions in which he is being held are unnecessarily harsh.

Most people understand a high security prisoner to mean one who is violent, dangerous or likely to escape. The prison authorities have now discovered a new danger, one who reads newspapers, discusses politics and talks to other prisoners.

POLITICAL PRISONER

Pete Jordan is being punished for his political views. It is outrageous that he remains a category A prisoner when this report admits that he represents no threat. Britain denies that it has any political prisoners. This report clearly exposes that lie and we will be sending a copy to Amnesty International.

Readers can support Peter by writing to him: Peter Jordan, H22338, HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, rcs. WE11 5TZ.

TOM DELEGATION

12th-15th AUGUST, 1988

Once again this year the Troops Out Movement is organising its annual delegation to visit Belfast. TOM describes the aims of this delegation as:

"We see the delegation as a way of building a wider movement of people demanding an end to British oppression in Ireland. We also see it as a basis for developing a better understanding of anti-Irish racism and the way it prevents an understanding of Britain's role in Ireland."

The delegation is made up of about 120 people from England, Scotland and Wales. Some go as representatives of organisations, others as individuals.

The group spends four days in West Belfast staying with local families. The delegation is hosted by Sinn Fein. Those taking part will have the opportunity to tour West Belfast and participate in several workshops. Topics covered include strip-searching, supergrass trials, trade unions and the growing revival of Irish culture. Visits to advice centres, Falls Road Women's Centre and to the Divis Flats are also arranged.

During the weekend, the anniversary of the introduction of internment will be marked by the traditional big march.

If you are interested in taking part in the delegation, contact: Delegation Organising Committee, Box 353, London NW5 4HN.

