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CLASS STRUGGLE



Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

VOL.13 NO

GET THATCHER'S GUNMEN OUT OF IRELAND.....

STOP THE WAR NOW!



March 6th was the first anniversary of the execution by the SAS of the three Irish Volunteers in Gibraltar: Mairead Farrell, Dan McCann and Sean Savage.

The occasion was marked by vigils in different parts of Britain. Over 100 people attended a silent black flag vigil in Kilburn, London, organised by the Committee for British Withdrawal, on March 6th.

On the same day, over 30 people gathered at a vigil in Birmingham, called by the Irish Republican POW Campaign (Britain).

On International Women's Day, March 8th, a torchlight vigil was held by women in London. The vigil was a demonstration of solidarity with women struggling against Britain's continued occupation of the North of Ireland, and commemorated Mairead Farrell who gave her life in that struggle.

At the Kilburn vigil, Sinn Fein speaker, Terry Moore, pointed out: "The summary execution of Mairead Farrell, Sean Savage and Dan McCann should not be viewed in isolation from the overall political situation existing in the North of Ireland where the planned killing of political opponents has been an ongoing tactic for the past 20 years....."

In the last three years, there has been a sharp increase in the numbers of IRA Volunteers, armed or unarmed, shot dead on sight by the armed forces. This tactic is being used in Britain in response to the ongoing armed struggle against the British occupation and the growing pol-

itical mobilisation of nationalists, demanding British withdrawal.

PROPAGANDA WAR

The assassination squads and shoot-to-kill policies are one tactic in the war Britain is waging to defeat the Irish people. Equally important in this war, is the propaganda battle being carried out to cover-up the reality.

In order to conceal the truth about the Gibraltar shootings, a cover-up story was invented of a massive car bomb in place and armed terrorists reaching for their weapons or remote control detonators, when challenged by the army.

But this cover story is falling apart. The Thames programme 'Death on the Rock', which questioned the official version, was vindicated by the inquiry into it. (This same programme was awarded first prize for documentaries by the British Academy of Film and Television Arts in March).

Spain's Foreign Intelligence Brigade has now also claimed that the security forces in Gibraltar knew all along that the three IRA Volunteers were unarmed and that they had not planted explosives in Gibraltar. In late March, Spain announced that their police officers involved in the surveillance operation, were to be honoured. They had no doubts that the information was passed on to the British.

END THE WAR

Paddy McGrory, the lawyer representing the families of the Volunteers, commented: "It may be that at the end of the day, they expose a cover-up which is as deplorable as the events last March...."

The people of Ireland, and particularly the freedom fighters, know that they are fighting a war against an army that does not take prisoners.

Britain, however, cannot win this war. On 20th March, the IRA demonstrated once again, their determination to continue the struggle when they ambushed and shot dead two senior RUC policemen.

This represents a major setback for the British strategy of cross-border collaboration between the security forces in Ireland - the main "achievement" of the Hillsborough Agreement.

It comes shortly after a spate of attacks on army

bases in Britain - demonstrating the ability of the IRA to bring the war home to the British state.

In order for this war to end, Britain must leave Ireland and give in to the demand of the Irish people for self-determination.

Unless it does so, the agony of the last twenty years and more will continue. And, increasingly, people in Britain will come to pay the price of a futile war - a price that the Irish people already know only too well.

H.M. Government can seriously damage



your health >> P4&5

CLASS STRUGGLE



EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL...E!

Much heralded as a "Budget for the low-paid", this year's tenth Tory Budget and all the media commentaries, give us an opportunity to think about the basic inequalities in British society.

The more serious newspapers quickly squashed any idea about significant gains for the low-paid. The Budget, at any rate, only affects indirectly many thousands of people at the bottom of the income scale who rely on benefits or state pensions.

The Budget plays an important, but limited role, in the distribution of wealth, through the setting of direct and indirect taxes and the planning of state expenditure in the public sector. Over the last ten Budgets, there has been a significant redistribution of income, through a reduction in taxes paid by higher-earners and an increase in the burden of those at the bottom of the earnings scale. At the same time, public expenditure has been cut, thus reducing the services that are available to people. (Previous Labour Budgets were less extreme but did little better.)

There are many other measures that are not part of the Budget that affect living standards. For example, the Poll Tax, due to be implemented in Scotland this April and in England in 1990, will increase taxes for those who are least well-off. The Housing Act will increase rents. Social Security cuts have already affected thousands of people. The privatisation of basic services, like electricity and water will raise prices and that of parts of the NHS and some schools will mean a worse service for many people.

Pay settlements for state employees - from NHS workers, teachers and school cleaners through to the police, judges, MP's and civil servants - also have a big effect. The state is the biggest employer in the country.

The Budget, however, still serves as a reminder of some basic points about Britain today. The inequality between those at the top and bottom of the income scale is striking and growing: for example, as a result of tax changes alone, top directors on over £70,000 a year, are now better off by £722 a week as a result of the last ten Budgets. A worker on £100 is £2 a week better off. If we took account of other factors apart from tax, the gap would be wider.

But one of the most important features of British society is the wide range in the middle of the earnings scale. Some people on the Left present a simplistic view of a minority of very rich exploiting a majority of poor, exploited people.

This "two class" line ignores the more complex reality that is the result of years of imperialism. British imperialism, on the one hand, has been built on the exploitation of nations around the world. This means that the economy and the wealth of the rich has been built up at the expense of Third World peoples. On the other hand, class contradictions within Britain have been modified over years. In the 19th century, this process took the form of a relatively privileged section of the working class forming a "labour aristocracy". Today, the reality is even more complex.

The fundamental contradiction between the working class and the imperialist ruling class remains but has been blunted. In particular, there are many divisions and grades within the working class, as well as between it and the middle strata. In addition, there are other fundamental contradictions such as that between British imperialism and the peoples and nations of the Third World and Ireland: with the national minority people in Britain and the contradiction between men and women.

Politically, imperialism has resulted in a strong basis for social democracy, represented mainly by the Labour Party and trade unions, who stand for some redistribution but no basic change in the class structure.

Communists stand for a basic change in the interests of the vast majority. In developing a strategy for this revolutionary change in an imperialist society like Britain, it is essential we get to grips with the complex reality of Britain today. On the theoretical level, we need a detailed class analysis, which takes account of the various contradictions. Politically, we have to build an independent movement which stands for the interests of all the oppressed, with a multi-national working class party, capable of leading the struggle to overthrow imperialism.

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

While understanding the feelings of Muslims in the Salman Rushdie case, I think it important that communist do not give any credibility to the sacredness of religious belief. If an idea is wrong, then it is wrong, no matter how many people believe it and no matter what nationality they are. Religion is a very effective means of mass psychological control. It is losing its hold in imperialist countries, only because more subtle means of brainwashing have been developed i.e. television, radio, newspapers, advertising.

There is no individual freedom of belief in this country or any country.

The reality is that we can think what we like as long as we think what the ruling class tells us to think! They do not fall over themselves to respect our views if we support the IRA! The only people officially entitled to respect are the ruling class themselves and those who swallow the belief systems handed out to them.

If large numbers of people are duped by religion, whether it is Christianity, Islam, or any other religion, this does not give religions the right to be exempt from criticism. On the contrary, they should be criticised all the more strongly. If people are prepared to kill or die for a wrong idea, this does not make the idea right.

Wrong ideas do not go away if they are left alone. They go away when they are proved to be wrong, by struggle, criticism, argument etc.

Nevertheless, it is racist for white people in imperialist countries to criticise the religions of other nationalities, if they do not criticise their own.

Criticism, like charity, begins at home. Let us start with Christianity.

A Birmingham reader.

Dear Class Struggle,

It has been reported in the Turkish weekly news magazine 'Towards 2000' that hundreds of murdered Kurds have been buried in a municipal refuse tip along "Butchers River" (Kasaplar Deresi) outside the south eastern town Sliirt. The allegations were also covered later by 'The Independent', 'The Guardian', 'The Times' and the BBC World Service.

In his interview with the magazine 'State of Emergency', Governor for the "South East", Mr Hayri Kozakcioglu admitted that three bodies had been buried on the dump by the Sliirt Municipality "who were killed in a clash of February 2, last year, and who were not taken away by relatives".

However, local people whose relatives were detained, and then disappeared, allege that they were killed during interrogation by the officers of Sirkak regiment.

Mr Kozakcioglu maintains that it is the local prosecutor who has the authority to give orders to unearth the remaining bodies. Yet, it is reported that demands by the families to the prosecutor's office along this line have so far been turned down continuously.

The Turkish Government has also made no official statement on the allegations.

This is yet another example of the atrocities committed by the Turkish Government against Kurdish people living in Turkey Kurdistan. In the last ten years, Kurdish people have been subjected to a brutal repression. Thousands of people were detained and tortured. Many prisoners died under torture or on hunger strikes. Whole villages and towns have been raided and kept under siege by security forces. Only a month ago, the people of Yesilyurt village were forced to eat human excrement at gun point, by security forces led by a military major.

Towards the end of the 20th century, it is a disgrace to see a Government treating a large section of its population in this way. The Turkish Government should stop these atrocities, respect basic human rights and democratic rights, including the unalienable right to self determination.

We undersigned, who are outraged with these allegations of the most brutal and inhumane crimes which are also rampant breaches of the provisions of the UN Convention on the treatment of POWs and international agreements on torture, appeal to you to ask the Turkish Government to investigate the matter, to publicise its findings and bring those responsible to the court.

Yours sincerely,

RIZGARI London Supporters
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KURDISTAN (TKSP) London
Supporters
SOCIALIST PARTY London
Supporters
KURDISTAN VANGUARD WORKERS PARTY (PPKK) London Supporters
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HOMELAND PARTY (VP)
LONDON WOMENS GROUP (LONDRA KADIN GRUBU)
SOCIALIST WORKER SUPPORTERS

Mesut Akin,
6 Kimberly Gardens
London N4 1LF
Tel: 01-800-3834

Dear Editor,

I have just read a book I saw advertised in 'Book News' - 'Changing China' by James Etheridge.

The American author, who has visited China several times since 1979 for both business and pleasure, has written this book in collaboration with Chinese researchers for the non-specialist - the general reader who needs a wider knowledge.

The author gives an enormous amount of factual information in an easy-to-read style, outlining first a brief background to events before 1979. This chapter is followed by several more explaining the new reforms now taking place in China. Chapter headings such as 'One Billion Mouths - Two Billion Hands'; 'It Hardly Matters Whether a Cat is Black or White'; 'The Six Big Reforms'; 'The Changing Countryside' and 'Education: the Vital Fifth Modernisation' lead one through the vast canvas that has to be covered to get some understanding of what is going on in China. But this is done briefly and skilfully in just over 200 pages, with the great benefit of an author who is as impartial in his judgements as one can hope to find. He mixes his criticism with a friendly and understanding attitude, summed up well when he writes:

"It is sometimes hard to keep in mind that the vast social transformation taking place in China dwarfs any such reform ever attempted - including Peter the Great's in Russia, Kemal Ataturk's in Turkey or the Meiji Restoration period in Japan - and that the process is bound to be convulsive at times. We can only hope if asked and wish the Chinese well in their struggle to lead their country into the front rank of nations in the modern world."

FACTS AND FIGURES

There are several appendix to the book: one of statistics (much needed!); a chronology of events (economic, social and political) 1949-1988 and most useful of all, especially for the new reader on China, a mini-encyclopedia. This last covers explanations of important events, slogans, terms and features of Chinese life. If one does not know what China means by anything from "Agricultural Co-operatives" through "the Four Bigs", "the Four Olds" and "People's Communes" and ending up with "Walking on Two Legs" and "Workpoints", here is the place to look.

This is not a theoretical treatise but a down-to-earth practical look at what has been going on for the last ten years and why. And an interesting and informative look, at that.

Changing China: The New Revolution's First Decade, 1979-1989, by James Etheridge, 1988, New World Press, £3.50 + P&P, is available from New Era Books.

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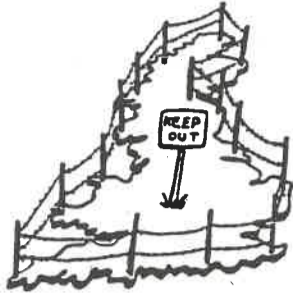
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OVERSEAS

IMMIGRANT WORKERS RAIDED

Immigration officials raided an East End sweatshop and a Wembley bakery in mid-March. More raids could follow.

After the second London raid in the space of three days by immigration officials, speculation is growing that the Home Office has started a major clampdown on unauthorised immigrant workers.



Ten of those arrested have already returned to Turkey. A further 14 have been served with notices of intention to deport by the Home Office.

Hackney North MP Diane Abbott said: 'I am horrified by the way many of my constituents appear to have been treated. Unfortunately, due to changes in the law, I think we are going to see many more of these dawn raids by the police on black and ethnic minority communities. People's civil liberties seem to have been completely ignored'

SWEAT SHOP EXPLOITATION

The raid has highlighted once again the scandal of sweat shop exploitation in the rag trade, as well as the powerlessness of its largely immigrant workforce. Pay levels in this sector are among the lowest in Britain, with 'finishers' earning around £75 or less for a 40-hour-week. Because of the vulnerable position of immigrant workers, their employers can get away with evading tax and National Insurance payments, and preventing the workers from joining unions. The Union of Turkish Workers said:

'Some employers have threatened to expose their workers as illegal immigrants if they join our union.'

It is not surprising, then, that there is a low level of unionisation in the sweatshops.

RETAIL TRADE DEPENDS ON SWEATSHOPS

According to the National Union of Tailor and Garment Workers, there are around 30,000 clothing workshops in the East End, many of whom produce garments for well-known High Street stores. Gadek itself makes clothes which are sold in Debenhams, Solo, Principles and Wallis. Chimen Hussein, company secretary at Gadek, claims that the retail trade is largely dependent on factories such as hers:

'If they try to abolish factories like ours, the retail trade will collapse', she said.

Nafiz Bostanci from the Halkevi Turkish Community Centre said:

'Although they are invisible workers, the product of their labour is not invisible. The British fashion industry needs these people to keep going.'

He estimates that the rag trade provides up to 90% of the employment in the Turkish communities, and feels that more raids would be extremely damaging. 'These are very difficult days for our community', he said.

(Report from 'City Limits' Magazine, 9th-16th March)

For further information contact: Aysel Hasan, Tel:01-986-1358, Union of Turkish Women in Britain.



Immigrants arrive at Heathrow Airport

On Wednesday March 1st 23 immigration officials and 40 police arrived at 'La Baguette Doree' bakery in Wembley. Following 'information received' by the Home Office, 33 employees were questioned about their immigration status. By Thursday only two of those held had been released. The Home Office says it found 11 'unauthorised immigrants' and a further 13 were served with notices of intention to deport.

The Home Office denies it is beginning a series of raids: 'These operations go on all the time' a spokesperson said. 'That doesn't suggest any sort of clampdown'.



London's Turkish community, though, is reeling from the raid on Monday February 27th by immigration officials on a Dalston clothing factory. In one of the largest operations of its kind - codenamed 'Operation Needle' - more than 50 police and immigration officers entered the premises of Gadek Ltd. and arrested 38 of its employees, 37 of who are Turkish. Scotland Yard said the raid followed 'complaints received' about the factory. Turkish community leaders are now complaining that requests for political asylum are being ignored by the Home Office. The remaining workers at Gadek say they are 'shocked and frightened' by the events.

repression..



..and resistance



OPPOSE POLICE ATTACKS ON THE BLACK COMMUNITY

'City Limits' correspondent

Over recent weeks, police in Birmingham have been mounting a campaign of increasing repression against youths from the Sikh community. The arrest of two Sikhs in the public gallery of the Old Bailey, during a murder trial, received national publicity. The two were brought back to Birmingham on behalf of West Midlands police. They were detained for several days before being released without charge.

damaged during police raids. In one case, a youth lost his job because the police denied him contact with his employer.

A raid on March 3rd, at 7.30 a.m., resulted in the arrest of four brothers. Despite the



After the 3rd March arrests, another picket was held outside the central headquarters of West Midlands police at Lloyd House, Birmingham. This time the youth were less restrained. In particular, their slogans targeted West Midlands police chief, Geoffrey Dear. Dear has recently returned from an all-expenses paid trip as the guest of the police of Punjab. This was ostensibly a fact-finding tour concerned with the Khalistan movement. Dear returned with stories of support for "terrorism" by the Sikh community in the West Midlands and plans to suppress this support.

Some of the youth picketing Lloyd House raised slogans of support for Khalistan as a challenge to the West Midlands police force.

The Sikh youth are supported by a Campaign Against Police Harassment which will be filing complaints against the police and demanding a public inquiry into the wave of arrests.

POLICE REPRESSION OF BLACK PEOPLE

It is clear that the police attack on the Sikh youth is part of the general repression of black people by the police. Police attacks on Sikhs, Moslems, Afro-Caribbeans, Chinese or any section of the national minority people must be opposed.

For instance, there have been two recent examples of police harassment of Afro-Caribbean people in Birmingham. One is the case of Mr Kwelakoh Minah who recently won a six-year battle for compensation for wrongful arrest and imprisonment. Mr Minah, a school-teacher, was awarded a £5,000 out-of-court settlement from West Midlands police, for his arrest and overnight detention in the police station.

The other is the case of Franklin Beckford, a Birmingham shopkeeper, who has complained of his arrest and detention for parking on a double yellow line. He had returned to his car after going to a shop for sweets for his 18-month old daughter. A policeman radioed for support and two other patrol cars arrived.

Mr Beckford said: "The officers rushed out of the cars, grabbed me, pulling my arm up behind my back, twisting it. They kicked me and pulled me into the car where they handcuffed me and took my car keys." He was then taken to the police station where he was locked up for two hours.



Our British Bobby grows into full maturity.



These arrests were only the tip of the iceberg. Birmingham police are using an investigation into the killing of a man in Sparkhill, in which Sikhs have been implicated, as a pretext for widescale arbitrary arrests of Sikh youth. They now admit to having arrested and questioned at least 700 youth in the course of this investigation. A particular target has been the membership of the youth association set up to defend the rights of the Sikh community, Sher-e-Punjab (The Tigers of Punjab).

DAWN RAIDS

Most of the arrests conform to the normal police practice of dawn raids on the victims' homes. In many cases, the young people have been held for long periods without access to lawyers or notification to their families. Property has been

fact that no resistance was offered, police broke down the front door of the house. One of the brothers owns a local factory and this had to be shut down during the owner's detention.

RESPONSE FROM SIKH COMMUNITY

The Sikh community has not been slow to respond to this attack by the police. On Saturday 25th February, a mass picket took place outside the police station in Thornhill Road, Handsworth, the heartland of the Sikh community in the West Midlands.

About 300 demonstrators took part, mainly youth associated with the Sher-e-Punjab, but supported by leading community members. The picket was orderly and restrained. Despite assurances of their concern, police continued the mass arrests unabated.

by a shop steward working in the health service

The current review of the health service means a big shake-up. Patients and staff will suffer.

The key starting point is that the review of the health service, published in the government's recent White Paper, is not about more money for health care. (An earlier 'Class Struggle' article exposed the Tory lies about more money for the NHS.)

The review is really about using the existing money in a different way. Narrow cost-effectiveness and reliance on "internal markets" (privatisation, in all but name) are to be the name of the game.

Far from "putting patients first", the review puts costs first. It puts first what it calls "revenue generation": in other words, the cheapest or the most profitable. Narrow business management decisions will take priority over providing the all-round service that sick people need. Already, the Griffiths general management structure is in place to carry out the changes.

Years of cuts and underfunding (by both Labour and Tory governments) have left the NHS in a sorry state. Waiting lists are as long as ever, with 678,000 people waiting to get into hospital. A quarter of these have waited for over one year. Many more are waiting for out-patient treatment. Hospitals are in a bad state of repair. On average, we have the oldest hospitals in Europe. The backlog of essential maintenance amounts to about £2,000 million worth of work.

A significant amount of taxpayers' money which, at the moment goes to the NHS, will be redirected to the private (profit-making) medical sector, as both hospitals and GPs buy services for NHS patients to be treated in the private sector.

There is nothing in the White Paper about the much-needed development of preventative medicine. If anything, the review will increase the one-sided emphasis on curing, rather than preventing disease.

What token planning there is in the NHS will be in tatters. What services are available locally will vary up and down the country. Patients (and visitors) will end up travelling further in search of services.

GPs' surgeries will be put on a narrow business basis and GPs will be even less a part of the NHS than they are now.

Trade union strength (already weakened) will be further undermined by local pay bargaining. Staff will be forced to work harder and demoralisation will increase.

Because the changes are to be phased in over three years and will vary locally, it will be difficult to organise effective opposition.

What are the actual changes? What effect will they have?

FAMILY DOCTORS

From April 1991, about 1,000 of the largest GP practices (who look after about one quarter of the population), will be able to control their own budgets. This budget will be used to buy hospital services, pay for drugs and also cover the costs of premises and staff wages.

In the USA, this sort of system means that doctors spend up to one day a week on their accounts and business management. Kenneth Clarke argues that they should introduce computerisation and practice managers to cover this.

Doctors will be forced to pick and choose treatment, based on its cost and not on what is needed by sick people.

Doctors will be free to advertise their services (possibly as early as this summer). This will lead to competition between doctors. This competition will be based on cost-efficiency not on the best service to patients. Efficiency will be



Mandy's Diary

March 4th: I read the news today (Oh boy, oh boy, oh boy!) A judge ruled, for the first time ever, that the rape of a wife by her husband counts as rape.

"Since the 1920 Married Women's Property Act", said her solicitor, "a wife has her own legal status." If this is so, it has taken them a long time to realise it.

It happened in Scotland, where the law is different, any way. So, in England, husbands can carry on raping their wives, knowing that the full weight of the law is still behind them.

Five years ago, the same question arose, and the judge ruled that: "a husband cannot rape a wife because of the consent which has been given in marriage".

How many women realise that when they walk down the aisle and say "I will", they are consenting to be raped, any time he feels like it, for the rest of their lives? I certainly didn't. The marriage service doesn't exactly spell it out:

"Wilt thou have this man to thy wedded husband, to be raped by him when he chooses?"

I've been conned. He is supposed to be my protector against the rest of the world. But who protects me against him?

Nobody.

If we weren't married, of course, he wouldn't be allowed to rape me.

March 8th: International Women's Day. There's a lot going on in Birmingham this year. I hope I can get to some of it. Over the space of two or three weeks there are concerts, films, exhibitions, workshops, dancing, theatre, events for national minority women and a women's Fun Run. With any luck this festival might turn out to be an annual event.

March 11th: It's a lovely sunny day. Flowers are blooming, birds are singing. Spring has come early this year.

I think I'll take the kids to the park and feed the ducks. It will do us all good to get out of the house.

So we arrive at the park. I'm pushing the buggy with the baby in it, and my daughter is running and skipping alongside.

I've promised her we can walk all round the lake.

Suddenly, I see a man's figure standing on the path about a hundred yards ahead of us. He is standing quite still and staring at me. There is no-one else around. He jerks his head to one side as if beckoning me to go with him. I freeze.

This is ten o'clock on a Saturday morning, in a public park, and we cannot go any further.

How dare he?

How dare he intrude on our enjoyment?

How dare he stop us walking round the lake?

For a minute, I am tempted to show him that he won't stop me doing what I want to do. But it's not just me he's threatening. It's a five-year old girl and a baby. I don't have the right to put them in danger. So, there is nothing for it but to turn around and go home.

On the way home, we pass the library. I've been wanting to look something up since last week. The Married Women's Property Act, which is supposed to have given wives their own legal status. My daughter often goes to the library with the school but I have never been before. We decided to go in.

I drew a blank at the Married Women's Property Act.

"You'll have to go to the big library in town for that," said the young woman behind the counter. But she showed me the section on Women's Rights, and I found an Equal Opportunities leaflet, which made interesting reading.

It said, among other things, that most women do go out to work. Not many stay at home and do housework, at least not for long.

"88% of men under retirement age are in paid work."

"66% of women under retirement age are in paid work."

"64% of married women under retirement age are in paid work. (So being married doesn't make you a housewife!)"

"72% of women aged 35 to 49 are in paid work."

(When they are most likely to have dependent children.)

"After completing education and before retirement, the average women (in this country) is only seven years without a job."

So I am not a rare breed after all. Most women do what I do: struggle against the odds to make work fit in with family, and family fit in with work. How do they do it, when nursery places are so scarce and child-minders so expensive? Who looks after their children after school? In the holidays? When they are ill?

But I still haven't mentioned the nicest thing which happened today.

While I was reading all this stuff on Women's Rights, my daughter disappeared. I found her in the Children's Corner, sitting on an enormous bean bag, reading a book, surrounded by toys, settled in for the day. I took the baby out of the buggy and started to show him the toys.

There was a young black woman sitting at a table playing 'Snap' with a group of children. And a young white working class lad who looked scarcely old enough to leave school came over to us and started encouraging the baby to play with the toys.

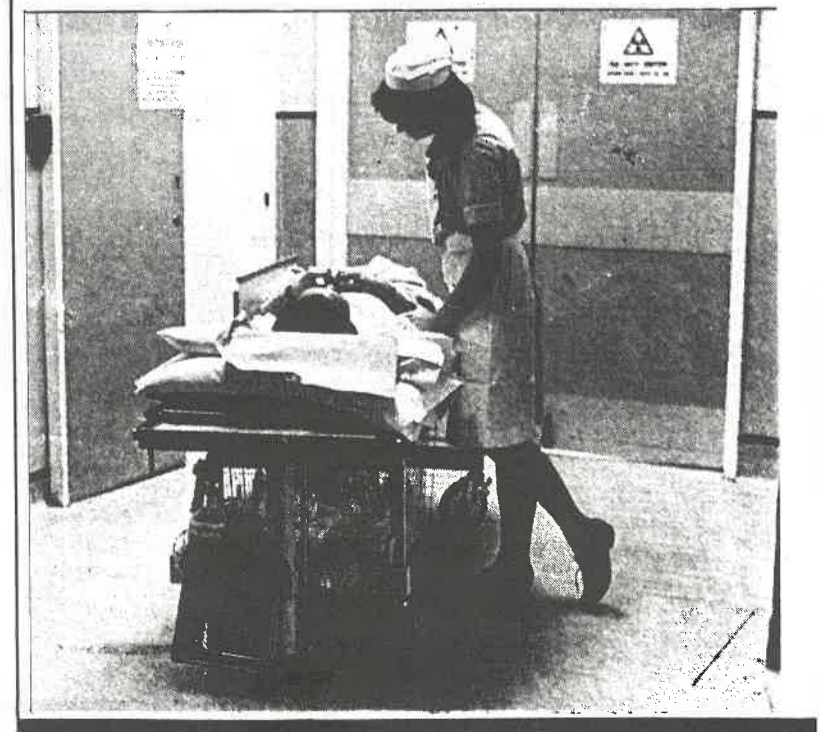
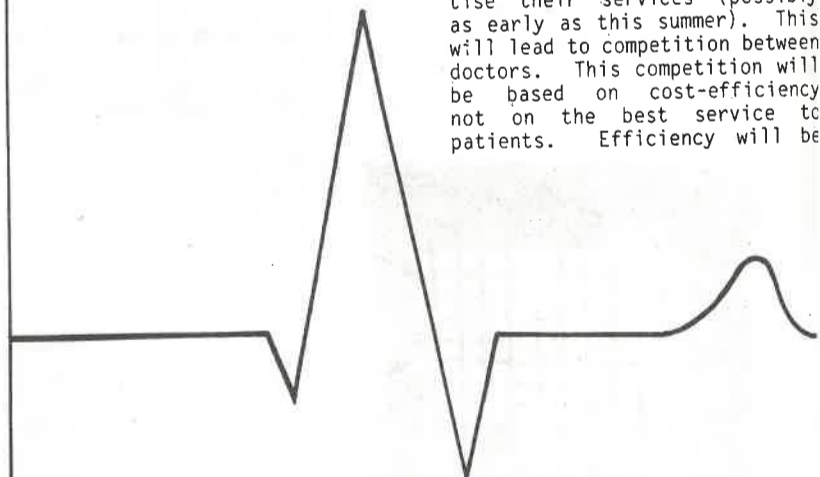
At first, I was defensive. I don't trust strange men. I was still thinking about the man in the park.

"Is this your job?" I asked him. "Playing with children?"

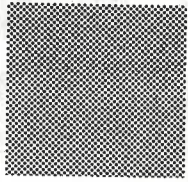
"We run a toy library," he said. "We're here Saturdays until 12.30, then we move to another library for the afternoon. I'm a qualified NNEB. I do all sorts of things: help out in nurseries, baby-sitting. I love it."

Well, I was amazed. It was hard for me to think of this young lad as a qualified nursery nurse. But I tried to look at it from his point of view. He has to battle against all the stereotypes, too. Women don't trust men, and with good reason: by their behaviour men have made themselves untrustworthy. How pleasant, and how unexpected, to come across a man who has said "No" to the stereotyped role!

But why not? Who says looking after children is women's work?



WHITE PAPER



based on treatment that can be measured on an end-of-the-year financial balance sheet. Preventative medicine, such as well women facilities, will take a low priority.

An increased proportion of GPs' income will be based on the number of people on their books. The more people on the books, the more money they will get. Practices will get bigger and further apart. GPs will know less about each individual patient. And the patients will end up travelling further to see their doctors.

It is well established that it is the poor, elderly and national minority people who suffer most from ill health. All the changes proposed for the family doctor service work against more resources going to these groups.

HOSPITALS

Every part of the hospital is to be costed very precisely. (How do you cost compassion and care?) There is to be a massive expansion of computerised monitoring systems which could cost up to £300 million nationally. This "Resources Management Initiative" is beginning now and is planned to cover a majority of general hospitals by 1991 to 1992.

Each part of a hospital is to be charged by other parts of the hospital for services it uses. (What happens when one part of the hospital runs out of money?)

New projects will need less national approval and funding. Instead, funding is to be found by joint ventures with the private sector. So, if a new department is needed, or an old one needs to be replaced, whether it goes ahead or not will be decided by whether the private sector can make a profit out of it.

Up to 320 of the biggest general hospitals will be encouraged to opt for self-government by setting up an NHS Hospital Trust, run by a small board of management. These hospitals will earn their money by selling their services. They will act in practice as self-contained businesses within the NHS. They will be free to borrow money (and pay interest). In the long term, it is doubtful whether it will be possible to keep the promise to retain a core of essential services.

Since 1986, six hospitals have been part of a trial run for some of the proposals. In these, consultants (now called clinical directors) have been given their own budgets and have set up computer systems to price treatments and buy services from other parts of the hospitals. These hospitals - Guys (London); Freeman (Newcastle); Royal Infirmary (Huddersfield); Royal Hampshire (Winchester); Pilgrim (Lincs) and Arrowe Park (Wirral) - have been targeted as the most likely hospitals to go self-governing first.

Consultants in these hospitals are on record as saying that they oppose going self-governing. They are worried that the need to run at a profit will undermine the provision of a full range of services.

At Guys, all but one of the fifteen consultants have grave reservations about the White Paper. Guys is £2 million in the red and has had to make cuts and ward closures. Is this an example of Clarke's idea of a successful hospital?

Up and down the country, GPs are calling meetings at which they oppose the proposals. In Leeds, 260 GPs have threatened to resign from the NHS.

The British Medical Association, health service trade unions and community health councils have all voiced their opposition. Local health service campaign groups are meeting to try and fight the proposals. Even some hospital general managers are critical of the proposals and point out that "You cannot market health care like you market washing machines."



women who already have many criticisms about the ability of the NHS to deal with their particular problems sympathetically. Mass production of the existing services will be the order of the day.

The promise to shorten junior hospital doctors' hours (and thus improve the quality of care) by significantly increasing the number of hospital consultants, is completely empty: 100 extra consultants over the next three years is nothing, when you consider that there are over 300 big general hospitals in this country.

It is also clear that the changes will help the private medical sector. As long as the private sector exists for the rich and powerful to buy the best, when they need it, there is no way that the NHS will be re-organised to serve the needs of the majority of ordinary people.

It is not clear whether the growing opposition will be able to stop the plans going ahead unchanged. There is the Griffiths style general management in hospitals. These management people have their salaries tied to efficiency payments. There are also financial incentives for GPs in the proposals. These two financial pressures, together with the increased interaction with the private sector, are central strands to the basic thrust of the proposals. Key people and organisations stand to gain financially. The power position of consultants, as clinical directors, could also force the proposals forward.

CLOSE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE NHS AND PRIVATE SECTOR

There is to be increased encouragement and pressure to privatise more of the NHS.

From April of next year, there will be tax relief for those over sixty years of age (and their families on their behalf) to encourage them to take out private medical insurance. This is a straight gift to the insurance companies, at the taxpayers' expense. Two thirds of pensioners pay no tax any year. So, it is difficult to see how this will improve health care for the majority of pensioners.

OPPOSITION

Since the publishing of the White Paper, things have moved. Clarke has produced eight "Working Papers" to explain the proposals in detail. These do not answer any of the criticisms and leave many things unsaid.

Clearly, the changes put costs, and not patients, first. The most expensive treatment is not always the best. But what the White Paper assumes is that the cheapest way of doing things is the best (of course, that is, for the NHS, not the private sector).

No-one can dispute the need to be able to cost the different parts of the NHS or the need for clear management of something as big as the NHS. However, these cannot bring about improvements to patients and staff unless there is a significant increase in NHS funding. In practice, there are likely to be further cuts because the changes will cost money and that money has to be found from "efficiency savings" (cuts to you and me) within the existing services.

The trend to fewer, larger hospitals, which follows from the proposals, will do nothing to solve the long term problems faced by black people and by

The basic principles on which the NHS was founded - that is, freely available care at the time of need, funded out of central taxation - are seriously undermined by the proposed changes.

Health care, like any other aspect of an imperialist society, is a question of class, nationality and sex. If you are old, poor, black, a woman or working class, there is nothing in the White Paper for you.

The on-going struggle to defend the NHS is part of the battle against British imperialism's attempts to solve its crisis at the expense of the vast majority of ordinary people.

For all its faults, the NHS must be defended in the interests of the people who need its services most: the majority of the population who have no choice but to rely on it when they are ill.

PRIVATE HEALTH CARE:



The City was criticised for seeking quick profits at the expense of investment for the future.

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

- *** About 500,000 operations are carried out privately every year.
- *** Between 1981 and 1986, there was a 77% increase in the number of operations carried out in private hospitals.
- *** One in six of all non-urgent operations are carried out in the private sector.
- *** In 1987, £909 million was spent on private acute health care in England and Wales.
- *** By 1987, 5,254,000 people had some form of private health insurance.
- *** In 1987, 90% of the population had no private health insurance.
- *** Only 5% of the 12 million people aged over 60 are covered by private medical insurance.
- *** Two thirds of pensioners pay no tax and could not benefit from tax relief on private medical insurance.
- *** BUPA is the largest private health insurer. Its 3 million clients account for 60% of the total.
- *** Three organisations dominate the private hospital sector. Nuffield Hospitals and BUPA are non-profit/charity organisations. They have 45 hospitals between them. AMI, which is run for profit, has a further 13 hospitals. The profit-making sector is the fastest growing sector.
- *** AMI is expected to announce profits of £20 million at the end of April 1989.
- *** The cost of treatment is not cheap in the private sector:
 - Varicose veins = £1,100
 - Removal of tonsils = £1,500
 - Hernia = £1,500
 - Duodenal ulcer = £2,100
 - Hysterectomy = £2,800
 - Hip operation = £3,000 - £4,000
 - Heart operation = £7,000 plus
- *** BUPA health insurance for a single person aged 61 years is £343 for full cover for a year. For a couple, where the elder partner is over 70, the same cover costs £1,102 per year.
- *** Last year, a survey of private hospitals in London showed that they only had a bed-occupancy of 52%. They were half empty.
- *** A study recently published in the British Medical Journal concluded that any further expansion of private medicine was likely to be at the expense of the NHS because of the overlap of staff. There is a limited number of nurses and consultants. They cannot be in two places at once.
- *** The general manager of Nuffield Hospitals says that the White Paper provided the private sector medicine with the biggest opportunity for development for 40 years.
- *** Tony Byrne of the Independent Hospitals Association has predicted an additional one million patients being treated in private hospitals by 1999.
- *** Last year, the Labour Party changed its policy. It no longer has a policy of abolishing private medicine.

STRICTLY PRIVATE

PALESTINE CELEBRATIONS & RUBBER BULLETS

by David Evans

International Women's Day is March 8th. But this year, most Palestinian events to mark the occasion in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, took place on March 7th. The Women's Higher Council, which consists of women from all the main Palestinian political tendencies, decided that, as there would be a general strike on 8th and 9th March as part of a regular programme of strikes, most of the Women's Day activities should take place one day earlier.

As the day approached, Israeli troops arrested dozens of women known as activists, in order to upset the planned protests. Their action was in vain: there were demonstrations by women in all parts of the territories occupied by Israel in 1967. The enhanced status of women within Palestinian society was shown this year, as last, by the Unified National Command of the Uprising's support for the Women's Day protests.

TEARGAS AND RUBBER BULLETS

A Palestinian woman from Ramallah, on the West Bank, told a conference in London on March 11th, of the demonstrations in her city. In order to make it harder for the Israeli army to stop them from assembling, the women of Ramallah gathered at half a dozen different points in the city, and then began to converge on a central meeting place. When they met up, the army attacked, first of all firing teargas, then using rubber bullets to break up the crowd. The intention had been to hold a peaceful demonstration. But after the teargas was fired, a lot of young women and girls picked up rocks and threw them at the troops. Several girls were injured when the army then fired on the women with rubber bullets.

The soldiers charged with batons, forcing most of the women into the yard of a mosque, and leaving a group of 200 out on the streets. But the women were not unprepared for this. By the time the protest took place, shops would normally be closed in observance of the partial commercial strike which has been going on since the



Standing her ground: An Arab woman protesting about a boy's arrest faces up to a baton-wielding Israeli soldier in the Gaza Strip. Photograph by Jez Coulson (Insign).

On International Women's Day



early days of the Intifadah (Uprising). But before the demonstration, women went around to ask shopkeepers on the main streets to stay open, so that if women had to escape from the army's bullets and batons, they would have a chance to duck into one of the shops. The shopkeepers co-operated. Meanwhile, the women in the mosque yard managed to climb over walls and squeeze through holes in fences to rejoin their sisters in the street and reform their demonstration. When they finished that day, some had been injured, some had been arrested. But they had held their demonstration.

GAZA

Some protests took place on March 8th. For a week before, all the Palestinian women political prisoners in Israeli jails had been on hunger strike to protest against their conditions. A protest demonstration was held in Gaza City by women demanding the release of their sisters. Israeli border police charged the demonstrators in their jeeps and then laid about them with batons. The border police ran after some of the women who took shelter in nearby houses and arrested them there.

CHANGES

The visitor from Ramallah felt that women's participation in the Intifadah and their self-organisation through the women's committees had brought about major changes in their social position. She spoke of her own experience: she had travelled abroad, and done political work, leaving her husband to look after the children, which went against the traditions with which Palestinian women grew up. People at home did not think she was doing anything wrong. This is a new attitude.

CAMPAIGN COLUMN.

This month 'Class Struggle' talked to a leading member of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) about the work and problems faced by PSC:

It has been a busy 18 months for the PSC with work in support of the Palestinian Intifadah (Uprising). PSC was involved in about 100 events in the first eight months of the Uprising.

Originally, the PSC began its activities in spring 1982 in response to a smaller uprising in the West Bank. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon that year spurred on PSC's development.

Since then, PSC has undertaken regular propagandist work in support of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. They have been involved in pickets, protests and practical solidarity work, raising several thousand pounds for the Palestinian Red Crescent (equivalent to the Red Cross).

As an individual membership organisation, with some trade union and student affiliates, the PSC has maintained a grassroots campaigning approach,

consolidating a national structure although it is heavily weighted in terms of London membership. Other branches, such as the busy Manchester PSC also operate a local membership scheme independent of the national PSC.

The work of the PSC is handicapped by the lack of paid staff or office. It did have an office a few years back but decided that funds were better spent on campaigning rather than rent. (Any contributions gratefully received.) Palestine is still a sensitive issue of the left. There is still a fear of being accused of anti-semitism, as opponents of Palestine solidarity work try to make people see any anti-Zionist work as being anti-semitic.

The PSC has an explicitly anti-racist stand. It has drawn out the strong parallels between Zionism and Apartheid and has been active in blocking attempted infiltration of Palestine solidarity work by the racist right.

'Palestine Solidarity', the PSC bulletin, first published in November 1982, is the longest

running publication on Palestine in Britain. It has gained a reputation for giving accurate information. Some of this comes from PSC members working in Palestine. But the PSC also has a wide range of other contacts and the good working relationship with the PLO's London office.

The United Nations Organisation recognises the PSC as a NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) on the question of Palestine, which enables the PSC to take part in international conferences on Palestine. The PSC will be represented at the next NGO UN Conference in Vienna next September.

On the domestic front, the diplomatic success of the PLO has created a danger that momentum may wane in solidarity work in Britain. Some people may think that since the British government is now speaking to the PLO, it is no longer necessary to continue solidarity work in the same way.

The diplomatic gains made by the PLO have been the result of the Intifadah. There is still a need to sustain the

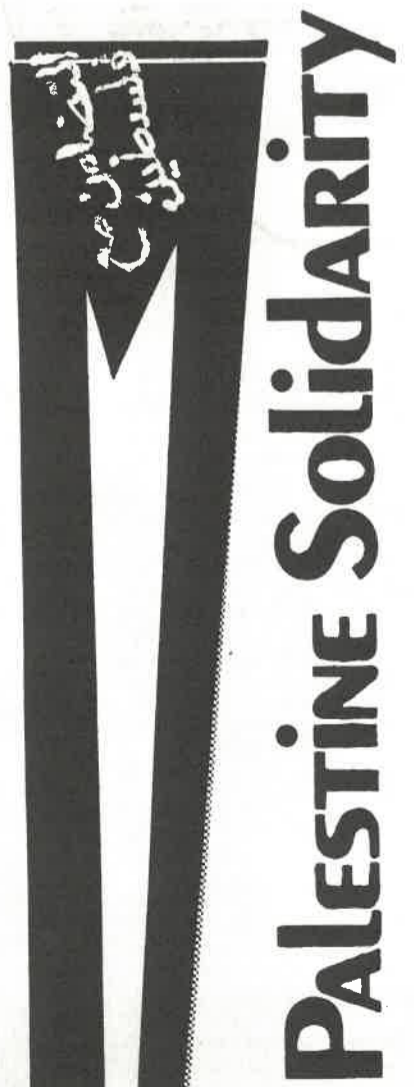
level of mobilisation, particularly as there is less media coverage of the protracted Uprising in the West Bank. Israel remains very conscious of public opinion.

PSC recognises the need for different strategies in relation to solidarity work. Different kinds of work such as the lobbying of MPs and trade union leaders, are also necessary. The result is a fragmented solidarity movement which can, however, be brought together as the work of the Joint Committee for Palestine has demonstrated.

In the future, the PSC intends to maintain its independent grassroots campaign in support of the Palestinian cause. In supporting the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the PSC does not single out any particular strand or group within the Palestinian movement.

You can help build principled solidarity activity by contacting the Palestine Solidarity Campaign direct:

Palestine Solidarity Campaign
BM PSA
London WC1N 3XX



West Germany GERMANY'S RE-EMERGENT FASCISM

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Throughout the last year, 'Class Struggle' has reported on the disturbing progress of the extreme right in France and Belgium. There is also evidence from West Germany, of a growing fascist menace throughout Europe.

The main bourgeois parties in Germany have been shaken by the successes of the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Republicans in local elections.

In January, local elections in Berlin saw the extreme right Republicans poll 8 per cent of the vote. This is not insignificant in a city of 250,000 foreigners (out of a population of two million), and the Republican Party now controls eleven seats.

In early March, the NDP won 6.6 per cent of the vote in municipal elections in Frankfurt after having run a "Germany For The Germans" anti-foreigner campaign. The NDP gained only 1 or 2 percent of the votes outside the city.

MOVING TO THE RIGHT

Instead of challenging the racist argument of the extreme right, the national leadership of the main opposition, the Social Democrats (SPD) has proposed all-party talks on West Germany's constitutional guarantees on the right of asylum to refugees in the case of political persecution and the resettlement policies for migrants from Eastern Europe.

Similarly, in Frankfurt, the Christian Democrats Union

election campaign moved towards the racist campaign of the NDP, rather like the Tories stealing a march on the National Front in the 1979 General Election campaign.

DOING THE DIRTY JOBS

The German Right employs the same simplistic and erroneous arguments that British fascists used in the 1970's: if the Turks left, West Germany's unemployment problem would disappear.

But the reality is that Turkish workers often do the jobs which others would not touch. The motor industry, restaurants, foundries, mines and docks could not function without their Turkish workforce.

All the racist insults, appalling low pay, humiliating, degrading and dangerous working conditions experienced by the investigative journalist, Gunter Wallraff, when disguised as a Turkish labourer, were not imposed by organised racists. As Wallraff observed of his Social Democratic sub-contractor employer:

"... to him, 'his foreigners' are nothing but beasts of burden. As long as they labour and work for him without complaint, he's the last person to harbour prejudices against immigrants. On the contrary, he's one of the few who really know their value. It's only when they protest, and demand their long overdue wages, that they become 'trash, rabble, robbers, idlers'." (Lowest of the Low, p.192)

NEED FOR ACTIVE ANTI-RACISM

The fascists in Germany are

a fragmented force, in around 80 organisations of varying sizes, with a total membership of about 24,000.

There is a complacent view within Germany that right wing extremism will be contained because of the experience of a repugnant and painful Nazi past. It is pointed out that the NDP obtained only 0.23 per cent (91,095) of the votes in the 1983 federal elections, and has a membership of around 6,000.

However, the xenophobic campaign run by the extreme right is not met by an active campaign against racism. Instead, there is political accommodation with the ideas it promotes. So, in the manner of Mrs Thatcher's infamous statement about the fear of "being swamped", Germany's bourgeois politicians are manoeuvring to ride the wave of xenophobia.

This manoeuvring was demonstrated last year when the Republicans (not simply a Berlin phenomenon) failed to win any seats in the Baden-Wurttemberg state elections in March 1988. They did secure 3 per cent of the vote. Since then, there has been a shift in state Prime Minister Spath's policy. Trying to bring back rightist voters into his Christian Democratic Party, he has contributed to the anti-foreigner climate by campaigning for stricter asylum legislation and a cut in spending on asylum-seekers. The argument is that they are not "genuine" refugees from persecution but migrants in search of economic opportunities.

ECONOMIC CRISIS

In the heyday of the "economic miracle", West Germany welcomed 4.5 million "economic migrants" to work in industry. Today, it is the 1.5 million Turkish workers who face the main barrage of physical attacks and abuse.

The everyday racist violence and propaganda provides the background for and reinforces the acceptability of greater state racism against different nationalities in the country. The tensions generated by economic crisis can be turned against the victims of capitalism, rather than capitalism itself.

FRANCE.

The first round of French municipal elections in March saw Le Pen's FN consolidate its vote. With its candidates running in just over half the 400 larger towns, FN now has town councillors in 90 of them.

It is thought that in 52 towns, the FN may be in a position to hold the balance in the second round of polling. Le Pen gained 15 per cent of the vote in the 20th arrondissement, the Parisian district in which he stood, splitting the Right's vote.

The argument is that they are not "genuine" refugees from persecution but migrants in search of economic opportunities.

Tigray

GREAT VICTORIES FOR THE PEOPLE

At the end of February, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) announced that they had taken the last town in Tigray controlled by the Ethiopian regime - Makelle, the capital of Tigray.

In a press release issued on 28th February, 1989, the TPLF stated:

"Makelle is now under the control of the TPLF. The Derg evacuated Makelle hastily, taking what heavy equipment and documentation it could and burning whatever it was forced to leave behind. The convoy retreated to Wollo. All civil servants, party members, troops and their families have left."

Over the last year, the TPLF together with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) have won a series of spectacular victories over the Ethiopian regime.

The scale of the military victories was explained in the same press release:

"It was the military defeat in Endasselassie which marked the demise of the Ethiopian regime. In Endasselassie alone, 9,621 prisoners of war were taken. Among them were 17 high-ranking officers.... Over 3,000 Derg troops were killed in action.... During the past 11 months, five Ethiopian Army Generals have been either killed or captured in Tigray.

"This is a victory for the Ethiopian People's Revolution and for the consolidation of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front (established 19th January 1989) and the consolidation of the TPLF."

GROWING CO-OPERATION

As the Ethiopian regime suffers

more military defeats, it is inflicting heavy suffering on the civilian population. 'The Observer' reported, on 2nd March 1989:

"Soviet-made MIG fighter bombers and helicopter gunships have bombed and strafed mountain towns and villages. Napalm was used in one raid on the remote highland hamlet of Tseftsef, while an air attack on Sherraro left eight dead and 26 wounded."

Such attacks are not new in the liberated areas of Eritrea and Tigray. But the ferocity and intensity of the attacks has been stepped up in response to military defeats on the ground.

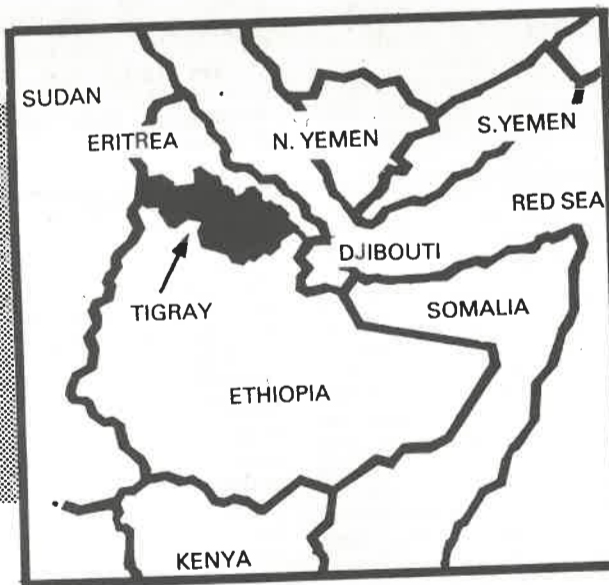
The Ethiopian regime also faces growing problems from the growing co-operation between the different organisations. For the last year, joint operations have been planned on the milit-

ary front and there is growing political unity.

In September of last year a joint communique was issued in Khartoum by five organisations: the TPLF; the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement; the Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Eritrea; the Eritrean Liberation Front Central Command and the Eritrean Liberation Front Unified Organisation. This communique:

"... highlighted the fact that throughout these 14 years, Ethiopians and Eritreans have been denied basic democratic rights and been victims of the Derg's repression and atrocities. The Derg, to try and save itself, will intensify its atrocities. But the more it does so, the more the struggle of the people gains momentum.

"Finally, the five organisations called on the oppressed



C.S. CORRESPONDENT

Ethiopian people to unite in the struggle against the fascist Derg. They addressed a similar call to the Eritrean anti-Derg and anti-Soviet friends of the Ethiopian and Eritrean struggle."

SOVIET BACKING

In the past, the liberation fronts have often pointed out that the Derg would long ago have been overthrown if it had not had the backing of the Soviet Union, particularly with military supplies.

The Derg can no longer be so sure of this backing. There are signs that collaboration between the two superpowers may lead to Soviet withdrawal of support. It was reported in 'The Independent' on 13th March that:

"The Horn of Africa could be the next region in which the superpowers try to sow seeds of peace where their rivalry once fuelled war. With the end of the Gulf War, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and an easing of tension in the Indian Ocean, their competition for bases in the region has declined, and so has their need for allies."

It seems that Moscow is planning to dump its ally. Moscow has hinted that the arms supply agreement, which runs out in 1990, may not be renewed.

The liberation forces will continue their struggle whichever way the wind blows in Moscow or Washington. However, the sooner the Soviet Union stops backing the Derg, the sooner will civilian suffering and the military campaign end, with victory to the Eritrean and Tigrayan people.

BOOKNEWS

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FREEDOM FOR IRELAND

THEY DON'T TAKE PRISONERS

by Edward Leonard



EVENTS

El Salvador Solidarity Campaign
ELSSOC

Dayschool to Discuss the
Current Crisis in El Salvador

Saturday, 1st April
U.R.Church, Pott Street,
London E2

Dayschool - all day
Social - 8 - 12 pm

10.00 Start.

Programme includes: Slide Show
- Winning Democracy; Videos
in English and Spanish; Jamie
Lopez FMLN-FDR Representative
in Britain speaking on the pro-
spects for a revolutionary
change in 1989. Workshops and
Discussions.

ANNUAL IRISH HUNGER STRIKERS
COMMEMORATION

Saturday, 6th May
BIRMINGHAM

March leaving Sparkhill Park,
12.30 p.m. Indoor Rally in
City Centre with Republican
and International speakers.

For more details, contact:
Irish Hunger Strikers
Commemoration Committee,
c/o PO Box 540,
Sparkhill,
Birmingham B11 4AU



In an orchestrated news operation, via the offices of Scotland Yard, there has been an outbreak of media hysteria, directed at what 'The Sunday Times' described as an "IRA Jackal on the loose".

All the papers carried the same story: "Hit List" of one hundred names, screamed the newspaper headlines on March 12th.

They all "learned authoritatively" of the present security blitz to protect those named on the "deathlist". Three months after this list was supposed to have been found, the story is given to the media. The media hype plants the idea

of mad gunmen roaming the country, evading capture for eighteen months. Gunmen so dangerous that they have to be stopped by any means necessary.

The explosive Semtex has been found in hedges near Scarborough, in filter beds in North London and at Clapham, South London. There have been spectacular bombings at Mill Hill barracks in August last year and at Shropshire's Tern Hill barracks in February.

Two men have been declared guilty: Sheehy and Conaghty have been set up by the state as "the team" to be taken out.

They have been put by the British authorities on their own deathlist.

FIGHTING A WAR

Britain is fighting a war to win: witness the murder of the Gibraltar Three by SAS state death squads; RUC execution teams in South Armagh and unofficial loyalist murder gangs 'used' by Britain's intelligence agencies. It is not just a propaganda war.

In February, Gerry Adams, speaking at the funeral of veteran Republican John Davey, referred to the "concerted and protracted murder campaign" that has been largely ignored by the media.

The Sinn Fein President pointed out: "Tom King's vilification of Sinn Fein is creating a climate in which such attacks are inevitable."

Councillor Davey was shot dead on February 14th. He was the third nationalist to die in a week of sectarian murders.

Previously, leading civil rights lawyer, Pat Finucane was gunned down by loyalists after being "fingered" by Tory Minister Douglas Hogg.

This is clearly not a random sectarian campaign but part of a conscious plan to stifle nationalist political momentum.

"It is aimed at terrorising us," said Gerry Adams. "It is aimed at demoralising us. It will not succeed."

THEY DON'T TAKE PRISONERS

Now Sheehy and Conaghty have been placed on the 'shoot-to-kill' list in the glare of media publicity. This is no isolated case. In a less-publicised interview, on Radio Four on March 9th, the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, normally sensitive to accusations of "shoot-to-kill" tactics, talked about the solution to the IRA: "They just have to be extirpated." In plain language, they have to be wiped off the face of the earth.

Mairead Farrell knew of the dangers involved in the struggle for Irish self-determination: "I was lucky that day," she said of her arrest in 1978. "Nowadays, they don't take prisoners."

DURHAM PROTEST MARKS WOMEN'S DAY

On Saturday, March 11th, a protest was held outside Durham Jail in solidarity with three Irish women prisoners held there.

Martina Nic Aindrea and Ella Ni Dhuibhir had been moved to the punishment block and were being held on 23-hour lock-up because of their campaign for the closure of H-Wing, where they are held. Martina Shanahan, one of the Winchester Three, is also being held in the H-Wing of Durham.

'A': Phoblacht/Republican News' reported: The appalling conditions suffered by these women were protested by over 100 people on the demonstration which also marked International Women's Day. There were contingents from London, Coventry, Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Bradford and Newcastle.

"The event was organised by the Irish Republican POW Campaign and was supported by a number of organisations including the United Campaign Against Strip-Searches, the Irish in Britain Representation Group, Irish Hunger-Strike Commemoration Committee, the Winchester Three Campaign, Irish Prisoners Appeal, Troops Out Movement and local Women and Ireland groups."

The chairperson of the meeting

reminded those present that this was the third year that a protest had been held at Durham. But she said:

Nothing has changed for Martina and Ella since we last stood outside these walls. Now in their fourth year of imprisonment they are still strip-searched, still spend most of their day and night in a cell smaller than the minimum European requirements and in contravention of recommendations on time spent in such conditions...."

KEY ISSUES FOR IRISH FEMINISTS

On March 11th, a conference was held in Trinity College, Dublin, to mark the close of a week of events to mark International Women's Day.

Over 200 women attended the conference which included workshops on women in the travelling community, women and social welfare and partition. Three videos were also shown: Mother Ireland, Witness to Apartheid and Song of the Spear.

'AP/RN' reported that the discussion on partition was led by Mairead Keane, of Sinn Fein's Women's Department. She said that partition "sets the political face of both states, the North, based on sectarian privilege and the 26 Counties which is deeply conservative in social terms with very strong

influence exerted by the Catholic Church."

The theme of the link between the fight for women's liberation and that for national freedom was addressed in this session of the conference and in the discussion round the video, Mother Ireland.

Sinn Fein's Belfast City Councillor, Tish Holland, described the changing role of women in the struggle since the arrival of the British troops. She said that "at first women's activities were restricted to warning the community when the British army entered an area, by banging bin-lids on the ground. But after internment in 1971 they were involved in every level of the struggle."

AP/RN summed up: "Today Tish Holland's presence on Belfast City Council shows that women are leading their communities. Although we see the national question as a priority issue, this does not deter us from fighting against sexism."

THE MEMORIES OF A BRIGADIER

Brigadier Peter Morton has put his memoirs of the Parachute Regiment in Ireland into print in his book 'Emergency Tour'.

He describes how days on border patrol for "Queen and country" would be made interesting with

the promise of a bottle of champagne "for every terrorist removed from the scene", by Lieutenant-General, Sir David House.

Morton tells us how the death of a soldier killed by an IRA land-mine in South Armagh, was kept secret so as "not to give the IRA the satisfaction of knowing that he was dead."

He later discloses how the army planted hoax bombs on the Belfast to Dublin railway to force Republicans attending the 1976 Easter Rising Commemoration to travel by road so that the Brits could harass them.

Morton informs us that Merlyn Rees, when head of the Northern Ireland Office, was keen to force everyone in the Six Counties to have identity cards if the British army so desired.

The "Paras" last full tours of Belfast were in August 1971 and during Operation Motorman in June 1972.

In the period of internment, the "Paras" shot ten civilians, and have a reputation for brutality and ruthlessness above other regiments in the British army. It is a reputation which the "Paras" carry with pride.

NOTEBOOK