

CLASS STRUGGLE



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30P

SELF DEFENCE IS

NO OFFENCE



Free Satpal Ram

es: correspondent

5th June 1989 marks the second anniversary of the murder conviction of Satpal Ram, a victim of a racist attack whose assailant died while Satpal defended himself.

Satpal and two friends, an Asian man and a white woman, had gone to eat at the Sky Blue Bengali Restaurant in Lozells, Birmingham on 16th November 1986. A group of white people were sitting at a nearby table. One of that group, Clarke Pearce, who was very drunk, began to abuse the waiters and called for the music to be turned off, telling the waiters to 'turn off that wog music'.

Understandably, Satpal reacted by saying that the music was good and asking for it to be turned up. Pearce picked up a glass, smashed the top, and advanced on Satpal. In self-defence Satpal drew a knife, and in the ensuing struggle Pearce, who was far bigger and heavier than Satpal, fell to the floor with knife wounds. He was taken to hospital, but was so drunk that the doctors had difficulty in treating him for his wounds. He died later that night.

Satpal gave himself up to the police, and, when questioned, admitted the stabbing but explained that he was defending himself against a racist attacker who was trying to glass him.

A FAIR TRIAL?

He was charged with murder and his case came to trial at Birmingham Crown Court in June 1987. Satpal found himself faced with an all-white jury. His white barristers made no attempt to petition the judge for any racial balance. Shortly before the trial, his Q.C., Douglas Draycott, had seen him briefly for the first time and told him not to plead self-defence, which is a complete

defence, but argue provocation, which reduces a charge of murder to one of manslaughter. Confused and desperate, having spent six months in custody on remand, Satpal agreed, assuming his white lawyers knew what they were doing.

At the trial, the dead racist's family packed the public gallery. Satpal's own family were so intimidated by this bunch of racists that only one or two of them dared to attend the trial regularly.

No defence witnesses were called. The prosecution called all the people who had been at Pearce's table, his relatives and friends, and their lies were so preposterous that even the judge had to tell the jury to disregard their evidence. By then of course it was too late because the jury had heard it all. Other white customers were called, and one, who had a clear view of the incident, testified that Satpal had been defending himself from a racist attack. The restaurant manager confirmed this.

A Bengali waiter also gave evidence. In his statement to the police he had clearly told how Satpal had been viciously attacked by Pearce, how a large woman had joined in the attack, and how glasses had been thrown from Pearce's table. In court, it was clear that the waiter had little understanding of English. He did not understand the barrister's questions. He could not give meaningful answers in English. Neither the judge nor Satpal's 'learned' Q.C. were prepared to call for an interpreter. The typical racist attitudes of English lawyers were displayed: - Who cares if they can't understand a black witness? Who cares if a black man does not get a fair trial?

The all-white jury took only an hour and a quarter to convict Satpal of murder. Bemused, Satpal's only response to the life sentence was to say:

'Are you sure you've got the right guy?'

His barristers refused to help him appeal, and only the assistance of a sympathetic London counsel, Patrick O'Connor, enabled Satpal to make an application for leave to appeal. This was eventually turned down by a court headed by Lord Chief Justice Lane, the well-known reactionary, and including Mr. Justice Kennedy, who had presided over the Bradford 12 trial.

It seems that all the legal avenues to redress this miscarriage of justice are now closed. As with the Birmingham 6 and the Carl Bridgewater cases, the judges have decided it is better for the innocent to be locked away than for public 'confidence' in British justice to be shaken.

BLATANT RACISM

More important is the blatant forensic racism which Satpal's case reveals. If Satpal had been a white man involved in a fight where he was attacked first, he would undoubtedly have been acquitted or convicted only of manslaughter. If he had been a white man attacked first by a black man, he would certainly have walked free.

Time and again there have been cases of black people deliberately killed in racist attacks where the killers have escaped with trivial sentences. The most glaring example is perhaps the little publicised killing of Dr. Dharry, a popular Asian doctor in Coventry. In 1982 Dr. Dharry was stabbed to death by a young white man while he sat in his parked car. The killer admitted that he had deliberately walked over and intentionally stabbed the doctor because his friends had dared him to. He had no defence. But the prosecution did a deal and the killer pleaded guilty to manslaughter. He received a 3-year sentence.



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EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL...

The last month has seen three important international developments which have important implications, not only for state to state relations but also for the Marxist-Leninist movement.

NORMALISATION OF SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS

The normalisation of relations between the Soviet Union and China marks the end of the 30-year long rift. It should be noted that, on the international level, it has been achieved on the basis that the Soviet Union has now conceded the three conditions laid down by China. The Soviet army has withdrawn from Afghanistan; Vietnamese troops are to be withdrawn from Kampuchea before the end of this year and agreement has been reached about reduction of troops on the joint border.

We welcome these developments and support the view that these moves will help create a better international situation.

At the same time, China now recognises the Soviet Union as a socialist country, marking an important political change. Since the polemic of the 1960's, the Communist Party of China (CPC) has considered the Soviet party to be upholding a revisionist line and that the Soviet Union itself was social-imperialist (socialism in words, imperialism in deeds). This position was reflected in the split in the world communist movement.

The present position of the CPC is that: "It remains to be tested by practical deeds and time as to whether the Soviet Union can thoroughly correct its deep-rooted big-nation chauvinism and hegemonism under the guidance of Gorbachev's new thinking."

The lesson for the international Marxist-Leninist movement is that no one organisation can dogmatically follow the line of another. We have to study the situation and develop our independent analysis, learning from others as we do so.

Our own position remains that the two superpowers, the USA and the SU are the main enemy of the people of the world. But it is urgent that we develop our understanding of changes in the international situation in the near future.

CONTRADICTIONS IN SOCIALIST CHINA

Recent events in China reinforce the urgency of this task. Whichever way the immediate situation is resolved, in the long term the CPC will have to take on board many of the just demands raised by what has clearly been a people's movement.

In tackling this, they are faced with a new historical problem - the problem of how to handle and resolve contradictions that continue in a new form in a

socialist society. Mao Zedong learned from the negative experience of the Soviet Union about this. His article 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People' was about this. The Cultural Revolution was also aimed at dealing with this question. But, in practice, it did not achieve its aims and was widely discredited among the people, particularly in the later period when led by the 'Gang of Four', whose overthrow was widely welcomed in China.

The new policies have now thrown up new contradictions, the solution of which must concern all of us who are serious about building socialism. If our understanding of socialism is that it is the transition stage, probably a lengthy period,



between the overthrow of the old and the achievement of a new, classless, truly communist state, what is happening in China has important lessons for us all.

We cannot, however, copy mechanically the experience of other revolutionary movements. Our main task is to apply our theory to the conditions that face us in England today, learning from the experience of others and working in solidarity with anti-imperialist forces around the world.

LIBERATION IS NEAR!

In this sense, the events unfolding today in Ethiopia are of equal importance as those which get far more publicity in the western press. The recent attempted coup is one more sign of the impending victory of the liberation forces in Eritrea, Tigray and other parts of Ethiopia.

The Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Tigray People's Liberation Front's armed struggle is nearing victory, as a result of their years of hard, self-reliant struggle, not only on the military front but in the struggle to mobilise their own people to liberate themselves. They have had to fight against a regime first backed by the US, and more recently another regime backed by the Soviet Union. Their main strength has been their self-reliant path, based on the support of the masses of their people.

We send our solidarity to all the peoples fighting for liberation in Ethiopia and must learn from their example.

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

Much of the media in Britain seems pretty pleased about the student demonstrations in China's capital. They speak in a smug way of how the students have "defied the authorities" by demonstrating in the centre of Beijing, near the Great Hall of the People.

I'd have a bit more respect for them if they were consistent. Last November, I was one of those on a march by British students in London, which was about grants, not far-reaching changes in Britain's political system. A couple of thousand tried to leave the agreed route, and march to the Houses of Parliament. They were stopped by police vans and mounted police at Westminster Bridge. Soon after four o'clock, when the students refused to disperse, we were charged by the mounted police. I personally pulled to safety one student whose leg was being crushed against a wall by a police horse. As we dispersed, I saw several people with blood running from their heads, and I talked with women who were clearly shocked at the violence with which the demonstration had been dispersed.

Next day, the press did not congratulate the students on defying the authorities, and those few politicians who suggested that the police had been a little heavy-handed were branded as people who were abetting left-wing extremism and castigated for "undermining the rule of law". The hypocrisy is nauseating.

The attitude of most of the news media seems to be one of contempt for the public. Do they really think we can't contrast the different attitudes they take towards similar situations here and in places which are ideological enemies of our rulers? It reminds me of a series of reports last year from Korea, which was on the TV. Standing in the middle of a public square in a city in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a reporter, microphone in hand, spoke into the camera, explaining that the filming was being done illegally in a very repressive and closed society. The fact that the reporter, plus camera team, could lug their equipment round this 'repressive' country without so much as a policeman saying: "What's your game then?" or "You are causing an obstruction, and I must ask you to move along.", suggests that they weren't being very honest with their viewing public.

Maybe we can't expect anything better. But that doesn't mean we should just take what's dished out to us and let these condescending media stars think they really have pulled the wool over the eyes of all of us.

A London reader

Dear Editor,

How exciting to see a big article on women in China and to read such an open and down-to-earth debate on jobs versus homemaking. It is difficult to appreciate how far and how quickly women in China have come. In a mere forty years, they have emerged from a society where most were virtual slaves, both to the landowners and their own menfolk, with no rights over their bodies or their lives, to living in a society where equality between men and women is an important part of the constitution, and rape is punishable by death.

What the article did highlight was how far they still have to go. And I say that in a humble way, because at least they have got rid of imperialism which is more than we've even started to do. I was horrified to see the debate posed in such a black and white way, either women go out to work and then come home to more work and a neglected family, or they stay at home. What about the possibility of men staying at home? Or even better the demand for a shorter working day so that men and women share the home chores and no-one suffers?

I know that for women achieving socialism is only the first step towards their liberation. But let's get some battles fought now, like sharing household chores and childcare. Men, only then have you got time to read 'Class Struggle'.

A South West reader

Dear Editor,

Your paper mentioned the first prize awarded to the documentary 'Death on the Rock' on the front page of the last issue and has indeed covered the brutal murder of three Irish people by the British Secret Service.

Recently 'Private Eye' has produced a pamphlet 'Rock Bottom' on the Gibraltar shootings which gives a factual account of inconsistencies in the inquest. It is a good read.

Awarding the prize was like sticking up two fingers when you are at the receiving end of verbal abuse or sticking one's tongue out whilst teacher has turned his back. It makes you feel good but is totally ineffectual. It is only when the coverage of Ireland improves on British TV and in the newspapers, and the IRA are allowed to tell their side of the story (surely, "in British fairness?") to British people, that some progress will have been made.

A Midlands reader.

Dear Editor,

For the Association of Political Prisoners Now!

Since February of this year, the West German authorities have attempted to dismiss a hunger strike of mainly Red Army Faction (RAF) prisoners as "fasting". After 18 years,

the prison authorities have failed to break the solidarity of these political prisoners despite the strict isolation in which they have been kept.

A 10,000-strong demonstration in support of the prisoners' demand for association with each other held in February, went unreported by the bourgeois media. A further 8,000-strong solidarity demonstration in Hamburg sought to break the official silence in March. Support for the hunger-strikers cuts across political lines but is strongest in those of the extra-parliamentary resistance, although the Green Alternative List is providing some resources for information offices supporting the hunger-strikers' demands.

In a statement dated February 1st, 1989, the RAF prisoners listed their demands:

- Association together of all prisoners from the guerilla and resistance in one or two large groups, in which new prisoners would be integrated with access to common exercise yards with all prisoners.

- Association of all prisoners who are struggling for the above.

- Release of all prisoners for whom a return to health after sickness, injury or torture through isolation is impossible under prison conditions.

- Release of Gunter Sonnenberg, Claudia Wannersdorfer, Bernd Rossner and Angelika Goder.

- Free choice of medical care for all prisoners without staatschutz control.

- Open political information and communication for prisoners with all groups in society.

There are now at least 50 prisoners on hunger strike. To maximise the pressure on the authorities, two prisoners have been joining the hunger strike chain every fortnight. After the last hunger strike, a new law known as the 'coma law' was brought into being. It allows for the state authorities to administer forcibly intensive care to any hunger striker who falls into a coma. The prisoners' statement states: "We're not letting go any more until we have association together."

While not agreeing either with the political analysis of the RAF or the individualistic armed actions carried out in isolation from a mass political base, we should still support the political prisoners inside West Germany's top security establishments in their demands for free association and an end to the torture imposed by isolation.

Further information and letters of support should be sent to: Hunger Strike Information Office c/o GAL Bahrenfelder 244 2000 Hamburg 50 Federal Republic of Germany

From a North London reader.

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OVERSEAS

The Labour Party Policy Review by JOE STEEL

The cracks in the Labour Party policy have been papered over with pale-pink rose-coloured wallpaper. That is what the recent review of policy boils down to. The only difference between the old and the new is the dropping of any pretence to be socialist. Policies from the past that have lost votes have been dropped or watered down. Policy now is whatever

In opposition, despite left-sounding phrases, the Labour Party has effectively tried to limit and use protests against the system.

Whether it is women's rights, the issue of world peace or anti-racism, the Labour Party tries to push the line that no protest can succeed without first electing a Labour government.

a truly communist party. What he wrote, nearly 70 years ago, was correct but has to be re-evaluated based on the experience of what has gone on since.

But first we have to be clear what Lenin wrote all those years ago.

He had no illusions about the Labour Party, even then. He saw that it was a thoroughly

and struggle to build a movement to overthrow the capitalist system and establish a workers' state. It was also only correct as long as the Labour Party remained a federation of all trade union organisations of the working class.

Lenin also thought that it was correct to take part in parliamentary elections and to

by Militant, which in an editorial on 12th May, claimed that: "Labour leaders have decisively turned their backs on socialism."

But they go on to claim that: "But the return of a Labour government can only be assured by socialist policies that can convince voters that the party does know how to tackle the deep-rooted problems of British

PAPERING THE CRACKS

wins votes. Token socialist phrases must go.

The Labour Party goal, as always, is to serve imperialism better than the Tories. After all, Neil Kinnock said about capitalism, that it is "the system that we live in, and we must work to make it work more fairly, more efficiently and more successfully in the world market place."

The review includes plans to re-expand state involvement in the economy, although there is to be no large-scale renationalisation.

A promise is made of more funds for the welfare state.

The usual empty statements about support for the Third World, the environment, rights of the Palestinians (and the Zionist state!), opposition to apartheid, discussions with Argentina about the Falklands etc. are all there.

A toning-down of recent Tory anti-trade union laws in a new charter for workers is promised.

Consumer rights, controls on food production etc. will be brought in.

Excitement has been created by plans to drop a commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament.

In the real world, the details of the review do not matter. Only time will tell as to whether or not they make Labour electable. The key thing is that, as with past policies, they do not challenge the basis of the imperialist system. Imperialism at home and abroad is based on exploitation and oppression. If the new version of Labour does anything, it will only hide the harsh reality of the system which will only help the system survive. This is what the Labour Party has always done.

LABOUR'S PAST RECORD

All Labour governments have served imperialism well.

Active involvement in bloody colonial wars of oppression has been a dominant feature of foreign policy. They still support the armed oppression of the Irish people. They supported the invasion of Argentinian territory.

Under the banner of socialism, they donated billions of pounds of wealth created by workers to bail out failing capitalism (nationalisation), resulting in tens of thousands of job losses.

None of the laws they passed to curb the worst excesses of imperialism have any teeth. Also they have the added advantage (to the system) of channeling potential mass protests into narrow, often individualistic, legal paths.

National pay disputes, such as those of health service and local council workers, have seen the reality of Labour governments and Labour councils as bosses, when they have been forced to take industrial action.

How many times have workers been told not to rock the boat because this will harm Labour's election chances?

Despite a long pro-imperialist record in practice, there are many on the so-called left that argue that support for the Labour Party is a necessary starting point for revolutionary change. They even claim that they are only doing what Lenin advised.

LENIN AND THE LABOUR PARTY

Virtually all the self-styled revolutionary left supports the Labour Party, in varying degrees, either working within it "to change it" or campaigning for it at election times.

They can all quote Lenin to "prove" that this is the correct thing to do. However, communism (and Lenin's teachings) has to be judged and developed in the light of experience and looked at in an historical context; not quoted as empty dogma.

Lenin wrote a great deal about the early days of the Labour Party and the struggle to build

capitalist party, chauvinist and opportunist.

Lenin argued that it was correct to work within the Labour Party because the politically most advanced workers were in it, and supported it. Workers needed to experience the limitations of the Labour Party for themselves, up to and including the experience of a Labour government. He saw this as a means by which the politically advanced could make contact with the broad mass of the workers.

Lenin saw work within the Labour Party as a tactic to help build the revolutionary struggle. The aim was not to use the Labour Party to lead the socialist revolution. He was clear that the Labour Party was not the revolutionary party.

Lenin laid down clear guidelines on the circumstances under which the newly-formed communist party should affiliate to the Labour Party. It was only correct as long as the affiliates were allowed the freedom to criticise the party and had the freedom to organise indep-

become an MP if elected. Once again, he saw this as a tactical weapon and a means of getting revolutionary politics over to as many people as possible.

It is also clear that Lenin did not see work within the Labour Party or taking part in parliament as a substitute for a much broader revolutionary movement led by the communist party, prepared to overthrow the whole capitalist system.

Since Lenin's day we have suffered six Labour governments. The internal organisation and nature of the Labour Party has moved a long way from that of the early 1920's. What lessons has the pro-Labour left learned from this experience?

THE "LEFT" & THE REVIEW

Obviously, the likes of Benn, Heffer, Skinner and Livingstone say that the review is a great betrayal. They would. They think that the Labour Party is socialist. They do imperialism a great service by perpetuating that myth.

They are backed up as expected



A FANTASY (Labour Leaders at their Devotions).

Daily Herald, December 3, 1913.

THE LABOUR PARTY: LITTLE CHANGE IN 75 YEARS

capitalism."

Socialist Worker, commenting on the 1974-79 labour movement, moaned (6.5.89): "If Labour had stood full square behind this movement and given it a lead, it could have made real inroads into the capitalist system." Once again, illusions that Labour is socialist.

The Morning Star at least called the review "Capitalism with a Kinnock face". Seven Days, however, (on 13th May), claimed that "Labour is making important advances" and only saw defence policy as a problem. Both these remnants of the old communist party are extremely pro-Labour, having abandoned revolutionary politics with the publishing of the 'British Road to Socialism' way back in 1951.

Even less pro-Labour groups such as Workers Power still blame the Labour Party leadership alone for the problem and still argue for working within the Labour Party.

Even 'The Next Step', which would claim to be anti-Labour, spreads illusions in its editorial of 12th May:

"The Labour Party might start anew as a middle-class outfit, but it is finished as a party of the working class."

Presumably, up to the recent review, it either was, or could be, the party to lead the working class.

THE SAME OLD SONG

The common theme throughout all these, is to still try and pass off the Labour Party as the means to overthrow capitalism. No real lessons have been learnt from the last 70 years. It is no good to try and argue that there is yet another new generation that has not gone through the learning experience that Lenin argued for. That is a never-ending argument. There will always be new generations that have not experienced the past.

The reality is that the Labour Party always diverts potentially revolutionary mass struggles into the safe narrow arena of parliamentary politics. Parliament is nothing more than a minor part of the bosses' state machinery, as Lenin identified it all those years ago:

"The British Government is the purest form of the Executive Committee of the Bourgeoisie."

This conclusion was echoed by Harold Wilson, in one of his rare moments of honesty, when writing about his experiences of the 1964-70 Labour government. It didn't matter what you put in your Manifesto, he said. When in power, you had to carry out Tory policies.

To be blunt, if you are part of the system, it determines what you do. You are part of it.

The issue is to break clearly, with the Labour Party, learn the lessons of history and win people to the reality that the only way forward is to smash the imperialist system. That struggle needs a new communist party to lead it.

REBUILD



MAY DAY

MAY DAY IN LONDON

This year, May Day was marked on May Day in London, as May 1st was a bank holiday Monday. That did not seem to make a big difference to the turnout at the May Day march, unfortunately. Called by the South-East Region of the TUC, the march drew around 3,000 people. It only reached that size because of the magnificent turnout by Turkish and Kurdish workers from Turkey who, with their children, made up two thirds or more of those present. The Left in Turkey has been under attack from government after government since it came into existence. But it is strong and marks May Day with mass demonstrations whenever it is possible to do so, despite physical assaults by the police, including shootings.

For the most part, the Turks and Kurds marched in organised contingents, with hundreds of red flags flapping in the breeze above them. Of the remainder of the march, the largest single group was a contingent of students. There were a few trade union groups and left organisations. It is clear that the May Day tradition needs to be rebuilt in Britain. The commemoration of this day of international workers' solidarity has been historically dominated by the Labour Party and its trade union allies, and in their hands, support and militancy has withered away.

MAY DAY MEETING

A couple of days earlier, the RCL and the Political Economy

Study Group held a May Day meeting, with speakers from the RCL, PESG, Black Consciousness Movement and Tigray People's Liberation Front, plus a performance by Pula Arts Commune.

The focus of the meeting was on the Horn of Africa, where the TPLF and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front have won great victories over the last year.

In Eritrea, the entire west of the country has been liberated, and most of the rest of the land, too. The whole of Tigray has been liberated. The TPLF speaker explained that his organisation sought a democratic and progressive Ethiopia, in which the right of the various nationalities to self determination is guaranteed. Its own preference for the future of Tigray is that it should remain part of a democratic Ethiopia.

The RCL speaker recalled how much of the thinking of revolutionaries in the 19th and early twentieth centuries was dominated by the experience of the French Revolution of 1789, and new ground was then broken to make the October Revolution of 1917. The thinking of revolutionaries in Europe has since then been dominated by the experience and models of the revolution in Russia. We should take all that is still valid and useful from the experience of 1917. But new thinking is needed about how we will work to realise socialism under the very different conditions which exist here and now.

Support Kurdish Refugees

London's Kurdish and Turkish communities have rallied round to support over 400 Kurdish refugees recently arrived in Britain seeking political asylum.

The refugees began arriving in early May, fleeing mainly south east Turkey, according to the refugees, the scene of indiscriminate attacks on villages and widespread fear of the Turkish military.

While a few have been granted exceptional leave to stay in Britain, the system for dealing with political exile has broken down. The lack of official temporary accommodation has meant that most of the over 400 refugees have been put up in makeshift accommodation provided by the Kurdish community in Hackney, east London, sleeping on church floors and in community centres in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions.

An ad hoc Kurdish Refugees Support Group has been set up by community groups to raise support and focus attention on the lack of provision of services for these people.

The Association of London Authorities said that with 21,000 homeless families in bed and breakfast accommodation and a further 10,000 single homeless people on the streets, the capital's councils could not manage without government financial help.

The only response from central government to date is to raise the possibility that visa restrictions might, for the first time, be imposed on people coming from Turkey.

To find out how you can help in mobilising support, contact: Kurdish Refugees Support Group 489 Kingsland Road London E8. Tel: 01-249-6930

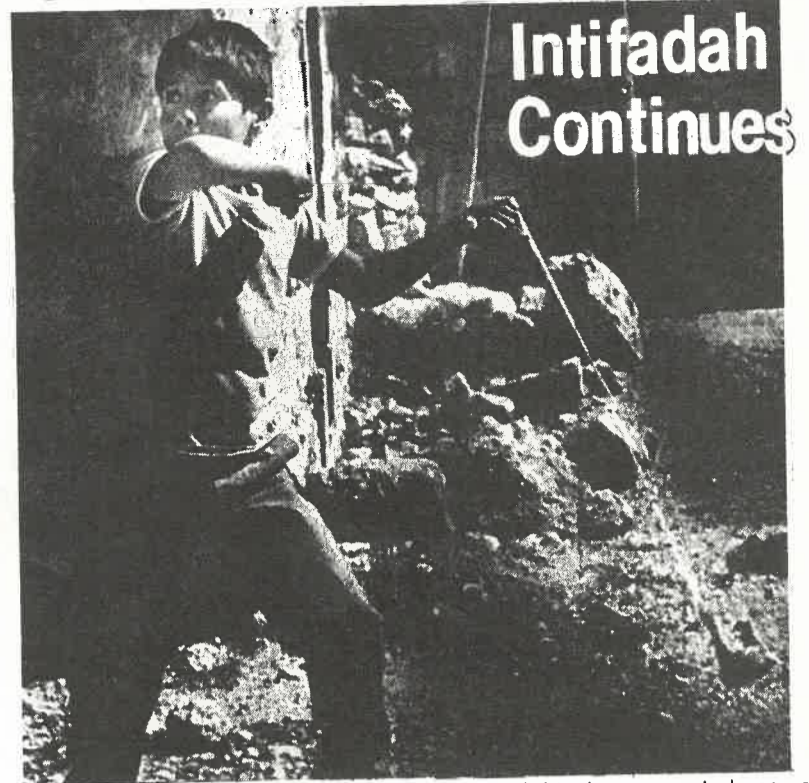
Yitzhak Shamir, Prime Minister of Israel, came to Britain on May 20th, on an official visit. Part of his objective was to promote his "peace plan". This involves the holding of elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to establish a local leadership which can negotiate with Israel for "autonomy". Shamir has made it quite clear, however, that he will not negotiate for Israeli withdrawal or for a Palestinian state, nor will he talk with the PLO. Defence Minister Rabin has said that people using election meetings to state their support for the PLO will be arrested.

The Palestinians have rejected Shamir's plan. Many organisations in the 1967 occupied lands came out in opposition to it, saying that the PLO represents them, and Shamir must speak with the PLO if he wants to speak to Palestinian representatives. On May 16th, the PLO Executive Committee issued a statement rejecting the Shamir plan. The PLO would be happy for elections to take place in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but believes that they cannot be free or fair while these areas are under Israeli occupation and there is no effective international supervision. The Palestinians want to achieve a peace settlement through a UN-sponsored international peace conference, and have called for Israeli soldiers to be replaced by a UN force in the West Bank and Gaza Strip until their ultimate fate is determined.

Shamir cannot seriously believe his plan has a future. It is merely a ploy to buy time: time when international pressure on him to agree to talk with the PLO and attend a peace conference on the lines which it proposes will be eased. That should be worth six months: six months in which Israel will intensify its repression against the Uprising and try to crush it with more violence.

In the days following Shamir's announcement of his plan, there was an increase in Palestinian casualties to the highest levels

SHAMIR'S VISIT



since the first days of the Uprising. Hundreds of people needed treatment for injuries caused by shooting and for exposure to tear gas in the weekend following the launching of the "peace plan". The total death toll in the Uprising has shot up to over 550.

SUPPORT THE UPRISING

The Palestinians still intend to continue the Intifada, however long they have to go on. But no-one can plan how things will go in the near future. When Shamir's plan comes to nothing, it is quite possible that he and a sizeable section of Israel's leadership will decide that the answer to their problems might be another full-scale war (suitably dressed up as an act of self-defence, of course).

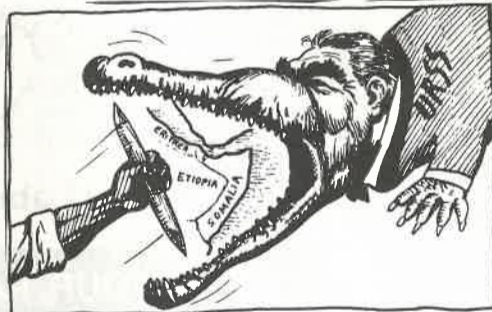
This might be presented as a war with Syria but would, in fact, be a cover for a much higher level of violence against the Palestinians under Israeli military occupation, aimed at encouraging many to leave their homeland and the others to submit to Israel's dictates. This approach too, will fail, but it does not mean that Israel's stupid and criminal leaders will not try it.

Foreign solidarity which keeps Israel in the international spotlight and supports the Palestinians' resistance is one of the most effective factors working against such Israeli moves. It needs to be stepped up over the months to come, which are likely to see an increasingly bloody struggle between the Palestinians of the '67 occupied lands and the army of occupation.

Struggles in Horn of Africa

correspondent

Last month Ethiopian President Mengistu was forced to break off a state visit to East Germany to tackle an attempted army coup. The coup attempt was spearheaded by senior officers of the Northern Command engaged in the war in Eritrea.



The Eritrean People's Liberation Front had declared a unilateral ceasefire once it was clear that the demands of the officers was an end to Ethiopia's wars, and the army returned to barracks.

The roots of the rebellion lay in the low morale of the Ethiopian forces. The Eritreans have been fighting for nearly 30 years, sapping the military strength of successive regimes, and the neighbouring Tigrayans have fought the Mengistu regime for more than a decade now.

The EPLF are fighting for the right of secession and independence, while the TPLF argue for the territorial integrity of Ethiopia, but wants the overthrow of the Addis Ababa regime.

The EPLF and TPLF have won a succession of victories in the past year, beating back government offensives, and have begun to push government troops out of their regions, deepening the military dissatisfaction.

Rumours of coup attempts have circulated the Ethiopian capital

for months. The liberation of Tigray by the TPLF saw 26,000 government troops killed, wounded or captured, four army generals killed and an army corps annihilated. The sense of weariness and dismay at the human sacrifice of thousands of young Ethiopians after conscription of 13-year-olds was introduced by Mengistu, moved some of the country's top generals to move against the regime.

The attempted coup failed. Mengistu holds power after his army chief of staff, the Commander of the Northern Army and the head of the Air Force were among the nine generals killed in the crushing of it.

The attempted coup occurred against the background of the threat of a general unravelling of the Ethiopian regime. The victories of the TPLF and EPLF increase the pressure on the regime at a time of widespread popular exhaustion, economic shortcomings and reliance on Western charity, coupled with a high burden of military expenditure. Ethiopia needs peace, but Mengistu, who came to power

in an army coup in 1974, seems incapable of creating conditions of internal peace so that genuine internal development can take place. While at its recently held third congress, the TPLF put forward a comprehensive peace proposal, however the Addis Ababa regime dismisses any solution based on recognition of the rights of those involved in the armed conflict in the region.

Mengistu may face some pressure that is less easy to dismiss. Negotiated settlements are favoured by the Soviet Union, as it has told its Ethiopian ally that such conflicts cannot be won militarily.

In the past the Horn of Africa has been a region of superpower rivalry. It seems that Ethiopia is becoming the latest negotiating pawn of Soviet 'new thinking' in foreign policy. The Soviet Union is hinting that it will use its stranglehold on military supplies to Addis Ababa, both to demonstrate its impatience at Mengistu's slow progress to peace, and to build confidence in its sincerity with the Americans. A settlement in the region would rid the Soviet Union of an expensive and increasingly politically counter-productive involvement with a besieged regime. The Ethiopian regime cannot win against the peoples of Eritrea and Tigray, and the Soviet Union may provide the necessary impetus to convince Mengistu of that fact.

CHINA ~ May 1989

Correspondent

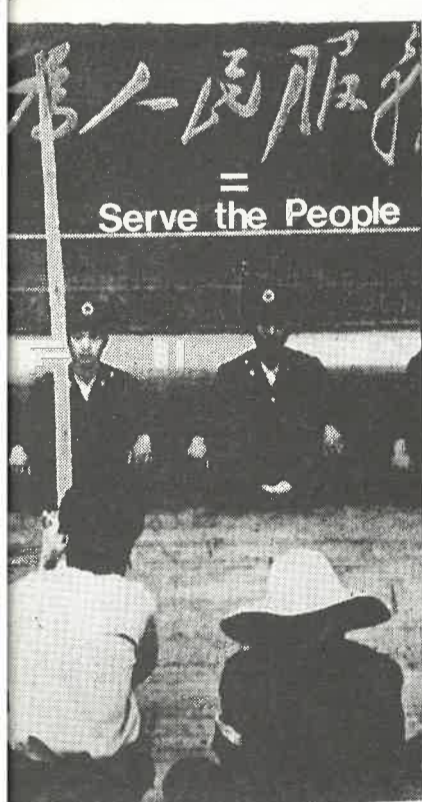
The last month has seen one of the most important of recent political events, in a shifting international stage, as Gorbachev's visit to China marked the healing of the Sino-Soviet split.

The meetings between Gorbachev and Chinese leaders, held in Beijing (Peking) between 15th and 18th May, were, however, overshadowed by the popular demonstrations led by students but increasingly joined by people from all walks of life.

As we go to press, it seems that the Communist Party of China has decided to take a hard line against the protests rather than open up a dialogue. But the situation is far from clear and even if, in the short-term, the demonstrations cease and order is restored from above, this seems unlikely to resolve many of the questions or demands raised by the people who took to the streets of Beijing and other cities throughout China.

In this article, we outline some of the main events and impressions of what happened over the month, as reported in the Western media. Later, we will have to study and make a deeper analysis of the significance of these events for the direction of socialism in China.

In April 1989 China's 'Peasant Daily' newspaper carried a major article that there was a spontaneous revival of support for Mao Zedong (Tsetung), in many parts of the country. It reported how local people in Dandong, in the North East, had successfully opposed the removal of a statue of Mao. In many other places, Mao badges were being worn again and portraits of Mao put back up. The paper reported that this was happening among the poorer workers and farmers.



'The Christian Science Monitor' explained this as follows: "Popular nostalgia for the Maoist era reflects in particular anxiety over the social strains from China's rapidly changing economy."

"As double-digit inflation erodes wages and competition widens income gaps, some Chinese seek a return to Mao's egalitarian regime of fixed prices and salaries."

The article also linked renewed support for Mao with anger at growing corruption and crime in China.

Student protests in Beijing were renewed in April at the funeral of Hu Yaobang. Hu was sacked from his leading post

in the Communist Party following student demonstrations for democracy in 1986.

Popular support for Hu Yaobang reminds many people of the popular protests and mourning for Zhou Enlai (Chou Enlai) following his death in 1976, events which built up to the overthrow of the Gang of Four.

April 27th: Over 100,000 march through Beijing demanding democracy. There are definite signs of support for the student movement from workers.

2nd May: A big demonstration is planned in Beijing on 4th May. A student leaflet explains: 'Our protest will show that Chinese democracy has arrived at a new stage.'

May 4th is the 70th anniversary of the May 4th Movement, 1919, when students led a mass anti-imperialist movement in protest against the decisions of the Versailles Treaty which handed over former German-occupied territory in China to Japan. The movement called for science and democracy to be brought to China and became recognised as the vanguard of the struggle against imperialism in China.

The student movement clearly has a number of different strands within it. Its main focus is on the demands for democracy and against corruption. It is not fundamentally anti-socialist or anti-communist. As one student leader explained to a reporter: "Government should be more in tune with the wishes of the people.... I believe in communism as an idea. The problem is that the party has so many internal problems. It is corrupt, bureaucratic and undemocratic..."

May 4th: Massive protests take place in Beijing, Shanghai, Changsha and other cities. Tiananmen Square, Beijing, is a mass of red flags, banners with slogans and the blue and white flag of the independent student union. Students from Hong Kong are also present. Beijing residents line the streets cheering. A popular slogan is "We want dialogue, not empty talk."

Most of the press does not cover the student protests. Over 100 journalists in Beijing hold their own demonstration in support of the students. The Shanghai World Economic Herald carries banner headline calling for an environment in which it is possible to speak the truth. Democracy is not a gift from on high but the creation of millions of people. The May 4th demonstrations mark 19 days of the most recent wave of campus protests. Zhao Ziyang, head of the Chinese Communist Party and thought to be more sympathetic to the protests than other leaders, said at a meeting with Asian bankers:

"(The students) meant in no way to oppose the fundamental system of China but to correct the errors in the work of the party and government."

5th May: People's Daily, China's leading newspaper, reports the marches in Beijing and eleven other main cities. Protests now seem to be waning and classes at many colleges are resumed.

There are clearly conflicting attitudes within the party. Deng Xiaoping warns of "chaos and bloodshed". Zhao Ziyang calls for "broad consultations and dialogue - dialogue with students, dialogue with workers, dialogue with intellectuals."

9th May: 1,000 journalists present a petition demanding talks on press freedom. They challenge the dismissal of the editor of the Shanghai World Economic Herald.



500 students protest outside the offices of the People's Daily.

13th May: Students begin a hunger strike in Tiananmen Square, demanding talks.

14th May: Demonstrations in Tiananmen Square build up again. Popular target is the Prime Minister, Li Peng. "Li Peng Come Out" is one slogan. It is noted that there is increasing support from residents of Beijing for students. One group of 1,000 workers march to join the students under a banner reading: "Beijing Residents Support Group."

15th May: Gorbachev arrives in Beijing. Over the next three days and for the fourth in Shanghai, his agenda is disrupted by demonstrations.

Many slogans and banners focus again on the question of democracy and some greet the arrival of Gorbachev. "Democracy is Our Common Dream". Over 300,000 demonstrate in Beijing and also demand an end to corruption.

Speakers and slogans also recall Mao's statement, made in Tiananmen Square on the official ceremony marking the Liberation of China, in 1959: "The Chinese people have stood up."

There are now 2,000 hunger strikers in the square. The students have been joined by people from all walks of life in Beijing: factory workers, office workers, residents in support groups, and several hundred prominent writers, academics and intellectuals, who carry a banner proclaiming "the great alliance of workers, peasants, soldiers students and businessmen." Another banner reads: "The hunger strikers are the good children of the people."

Many of the demonstrators carry placards with the portraits of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. The most popular song is 'The Internationale'.

16th May: Half a million demonstrate in Tiananmen Square while Gorbachev meets with Deng Xiaoping in the Great Hall of the People. This time they are joined by even more people including those from government ministries, sections of the party, members of the party's Liaison Department. Workers at the Revolutionary History Museum hang out streamers announcing their solidarity with the students. There are unconfirmed rumours of strikes. Marches and demonstrations take place in many other cities.

17th May: More than one million people march in Beijing. Other marches take place in Shanghai and 20 other provincial

capitals. More students join the hunger strike: 3,000 are now on hunger strike.

Solidarity banners are hung out of windows. Buses and cars are commandeered. Deng Xiaoping is a frequent target of the protests: "Deng, Take a Rest". "Xiaoping resign. Let the People Rule". "Thank you and Goodbye."

18th May: Prime Minister, Li Peng, meets with students. Li Peng warns of anarchy and chaos and the need for order and stability.

Gorbachev is in Shanghai where similar demonstrations are taking place.

There are unconfirmed reports that the 38th Army has refused orders to move to Beijing.

It is reported that whereas May 17th was the day of the students, May 18th was the day of the workers. 'The Independent' reported:

"Workers from factory after factory, from the Peking Brewery to the huge Capital Iron and Steelworks, paraded on foot or roared up and down the few unclogged streets in trucks and vans bedecked with irreverent slogan boards and posters. A local Christian seminary marched under two banners 'The Lord Loves You All' and 'Long Live Democracy'. Two off-duty soldiers joined the procession in a Red Flag limousine."

May 19th: There are reports that the whole of Beijing is under the control of the people. Particularly, in the centre, the protestors control traffic, keep order and provide a health service. There are frequent reports of police showing their solidarity with students.

May 20th: In the early hours of the morning, just after Zhao Ziyang and Li Peng visit the students. Li Peng remains silent. Zhao Ziyang apologises to them for not having come before.

May 20th: In the early hours of the morning, just after midnight, President Yang Shangkun announces that the troops are to be sent in to restore order. He says: "Beijing is in a state of anarchy and if the situation were to continue, our capital would no longer be a capital."

Troops, armed with truncheons but no guns, sent into the city are blocked by students and residents. Slogans such as 'The People's Army should Serve the People' are used; tyres are let down; windscreens covered up and barriers built. Later in the day, martial law is declared in Beijing. Strikes and demonstrations are made

Zhang Wei was a Red Guard, 23 years ago. He saw similarities between today's movement and the Cultural Revolution but also differences:

"Some things look the same - the college flags and the sound of the crowd. But in the Cultural Revolution, we were naive and were easily fooled. The students today can see things more clearly.... We beat and abused innocent people then, and just created chaos. It was not our fault.... The students this time are not being manipulated and they are not using violence. Deep down this is different from the Cultural Revolution because it is about principles, about the whole system and not just battles between individual leaders. The students now know what democracy means... I support them."

Sheng Cheng, interviewed by 'The Independent', on 10th May, was a 20-year old railway worker at the time of the 1919 May 4th Movement.

He explained that "there were many similarities with what is happening now.... A ray of dawn in the evening of hope, 70 years has passed, the moment has returned."

"Students have now realised they have to organise themselves too. For every 100,000 students there are a million workers behind them."

Workers in Beijing expressed their support for the students:

"The students express the voice of the people. The living standard of most workers is going down.... We have lost out in the reforms because our factories do not pay good bonuses. An important cause of inflation is official corruption...."

"The students want democracy and a free press for the country... We want that too in our factories. No-one pays much attention to what workers say. People do not say what is on their minds."

"Before, we were afraid to speak. The students have given us courage."

(Independent, 19th May)

illegal and foreign journalists are forbidden to take photographs and make recordings.

More troops are sent in, this time armed with machine guns. They too are blocked by students and ordinary people. Troops are sent by train and wait at the railway station, near the centre of Beijing and others are reported to be in underground tunnels beneath the city.

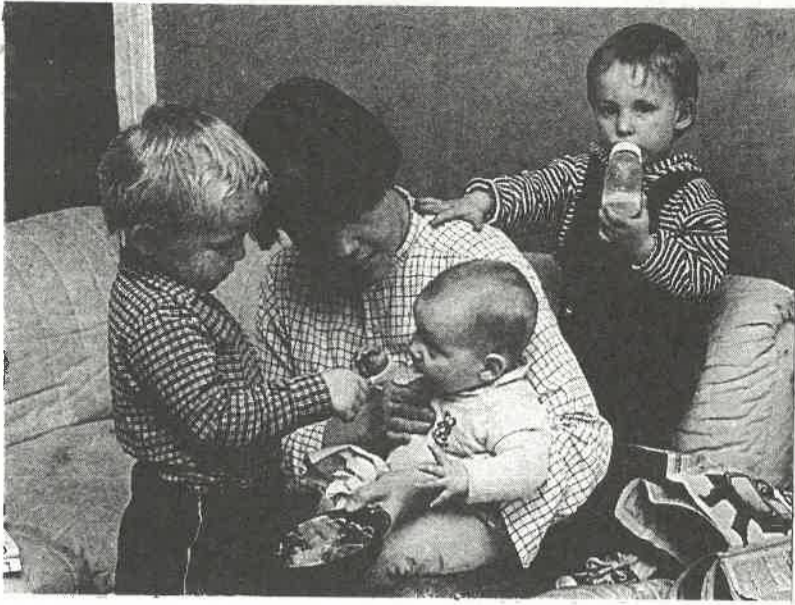
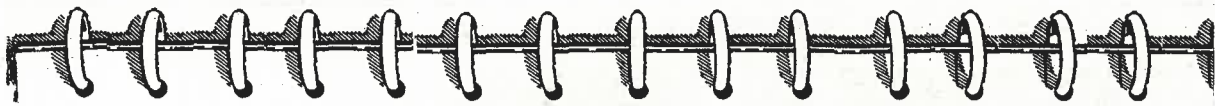
For the next week, the protests continue on a smaller scale; the army does not move against the people and there is clearly a debate going on within the party on how to deal with the situation.

It is uncertain whether the army would move against the protestors, even if ordered to. There is conflict within the army on the question. On 21st May, two veteran revolutionaries, Marshalls Nei Rongzhen and Xu Xiangquan make a statement on television in support of the students.

21 May: Chinese students in many parts of the world demonstrate their support for the students in China. They demonstrate in London, USA and Canada.

In Hong Kong, more than one million people demonstrate in support. Marches continue all week. The pro-China trade unions join the march and the leading Communist daily, Wen Hui Bao, condemns the declaration of martial law.

May 28th: Students hold another demonstration in Beijing but announce that the occupation of Tiananmen Square is to be called off on Tuesday. It appears that the line of Li Peng and Deng Xiaoping has support in the party. But the situation is still not clear.



Mandy's Diary

April 28th: The Midlands Electricity Board has written to us. They want us to go on their Budget scheme, which means paying our bills monthly instead of quarterly. They have calculated how much they think we should pay per month. It's not far short of what we now pay per quarter.

Suddenly there are five quarters in a year. And they have made their calculations, not on what our bills actually were last year, but on what they estimate them to become next year (if we use a lot more electricity?). April is the end of the winter quarter, so of those five quarters, two of them cover the period January to April, the coldest time of the year.

Interesting, isn't it? The MEB have mislaid our bills, their calculators, their memories, but not apparently their cunning, in a desperate attempt to persuade us to part with a lot more money than we actually owe them.

May 2nd: As I took my daughter to school today, I met Dean's mother again. Her name is Susan. She was pushing the new baby in the pram, and the two-year-old was sitting on the edge of it.

"Another boy," she said. "I wanted a girl. That's four boys now. My fella keeps on at me to try for a girl. But, I don't know. I know a woman with eleven boys, keeps trying for a girl."

She told me she wasn't married.

"He wants me to register the baby in his name. They're all his kids, but they've got my name. His family keep saying: What are you going to tell the kids when they get older and they find out they've got a different name from their father? I don't know what to think."

I knew what to think, and I told her.

"When you were pregnant," I said. "He didn't lift a finger for you, and he's on the dole. He didn't even bring the kids to school. You used to leave him lying in bed because he'd been out drinking the night before and he couldn't wake up, and you dragged yourself - and Craig here - to school and back, day in, day out. He wants the kids to have his name. But who gets them up and feeds them? Who looks after them? Who does the work? You do. And another thing, if they had his name, they wouldn't have yours. What happens when they ask why they've got a different name from their mother?"

Doesn't that count for anything?" Here another mother joined in.

"Susan, tell her what you were doing last night. One o'clock in the morning, he decided he was hungry. So she got up to fry eggs and bacon for him."

"I'd have told him to cook it himself."

"I'd have told him something less polite."

I thought about Susan again later in the day when I came across an article in a newspaper.

"When women realise who their real oppressors are," it said, "they will join with men in fighting the system which oppresses men and women alike."

Real oppressors?

This man wants to own and control the means of production (Susan's body). He wants to own what she produces (the children). But he doesn't want to do any work. He gets her to do it.

If this isn't real oppression, what sort of oppression is it?

May 6th: I've got to do some cleaning. My American cousin is over here on a European tour, and she's staying with us for a few days next week. The house is a tip. It only gets cleaned when we're expecting visitors. I can just about keep up with the shopping, cooking, washing and washing up. But that's it. Oh and packing up the kids' toys and the old man's newspapers. I gave up ironing a long time ago. We all go round in chunky sweaters so nothing shows that needs ironing. It gets a bit hot in the summer. (What summer?)

The trouble is, my husband has chosen today to do some painting, of window frames, doors, etc. We've had such lovely weather this week, the wood's all dry, must take advantage of the opportunity, you know the sort of thing.

My job is keeping the baby away from the paint pot and the newly painted woodwork.

"I was hoping to do some cleaning," I said.

"I'm not doing this for my own benefit," he said. "I'm doing it for the long-term benefit of everybody in the house. Painting the woodwork preserves it and gives it a longer life."

For once, I couldn't find anything to say that was sarcastic enough. He's doing us all a favour by painting the house, but when it comes to cleaning it, I do that for sheer personal pleasure!

May 10th: I keep seeing this advert on the telly. It says something like: "How do men cope in a world where women have it all: family and a career?" (I suppose men don't have families and careers! I suppose they don't come home from work to wife and children, they go to the monastery! Or have they got a God-given right to basic human rights, but they can deny these rights to others? Again, if that isn't real oppression, I don't know what is!)

But it gets worse. It shows this glamorous-looking woman sitting up in bed talking on the phone while her husband's trying to sleep. It is a joke, isn't it? I've got a family and a job, and I don't think there's a single night when I don't roll into bed exhausted. Family means children, and yes, they are a great joy, but they are also hard work, and tiring, like when they keep waking up in the night. Glamour doesn't come into it. Unless you're a top fashion model and can afford to pay a live-in nanny. Or unless you're the Princess of Wales.

But a lot of women have it much worse than me.

A couple of months ago, there was an 'Open Space' programme on BBC2. It showed women working from home. One woman makes Christmas crackers, earning one penny per cracker. In a good hour she makes 40p.

I have a friend who hand-knits Fairisle sweaters. They're beautiful. They sell for £80 each. She gets £5 each for them, and each one takes her about a week to knit.

I read an article in a paper. It said women roll the casings for fireworks for 50p a hundred, address envelopes for 60p a hundred, and pack Christmas cards for 24p an hour.

If you're a single woman with children or elderly dependants, homeworking might be your only opportunity to earn money. There are more than a million homeworkers in Britain, most of them paid below the legal rate.

Also homeworking is not covered by the Health and Safety Acts. Small children have been killed by heavy boxes and sewing machines falling on them. Workers and their families have developed illnesses from the materials they use, e.g. mohair causing asthma and glue containing benzene causing leukemia

Many women don't have any choice but to work for money. For a lot of women, it is not a question of choice! It is a question of struggle for survival.

In Risley Remand Centre THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE PROTEST

CLASS STRUGGLE CORRESPONDENT

On 17th May, Janet Munawar hanged herself in her cell in Risley Remand Centre. She became the 8th suicide victim of the gruesome Risley regime in a period of 22 months. Janet, a 27-year old Oldham woman, had been remanded for medical reports by Manchester Crown Court on a charge of arson.

MAY UPRISING

Janet's death followed the massive uprising with which Risley prisoners forced their plight into the public consciousness. Cell doors were torn off and barricades erected, walls were broken down and whole floors occupied, and a three-day rooftop protest was staged.

The immediate causes of the May uprising seem to have been petty restrictions by prison officers, turning off lights early and stopping visits. The media made play of some prisoners' raiding the prison's drug supplies. But it is clear that the Risley uprising was directed against the intolerable conditions the prisoners have to suffer. Risley is situated close to the M6 on the outskirts of Warrington. Its 600 male and 140 female prisoners are mainly on remand and come from all over the North and Midlands, but mainly from Liverpool and Manchester areas. It is a converted military establishment, built in the 1960's, with low ceilings, small cells and no toilets in the cells.

BARBAROUS AND SQUALID

Judge Turnin, Chief Inspector of Prisons, described it in his recent report as "barbarous and squalid" and its inmates as "forgotten people". After the uprising, he renewed his criticisms and called Risley "unsuitable for unconvicted people."



Prisoners' own descriptions are more graphic. A Welsh woman prisoner told the Guardian: "People were just waiting to do something about the disgusting conditions and crap food they are forced to eat." A Liverpool man said: "Risley is the worst prison I've ever been in. The food was always cold and watery, the building is dirty and dingy and there was shit and gravy stuck to the walls. There were cockroaches all over the building, even in the food, and when we complained, no-one took any notice. It's degrading for people to have to spend months banged up in what is just a stinking hell-hole."

Risley is also severely overcrowded, like most of England's gaols. Prisoners are locked up twenty hours a day in tiny cells with one or two other people. This has a serious psychological effect and, as one ex-prisoner said: "Can drive first time offenders to committing suicide."

Add to this the fact that Risley is for remand prisoners, those who have not been tried and are "innocent until proved guilty". These are the most vulnerable prisoners. "The population Risley contains are people who are more susceptible to suicide than other parts of the prison population because of the anxiety and uncertainty of their position," said Paul Caradino, a spokesman for the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders.

GOVERNMENT REACTION

Douglas Hogg, the government spokesman responsible for prisons, showed faint interest in the prisoners' plight when he said: "Poor conditions do not improve the morale of prisoners. That is why we have this programme of improving the regime and the quality of the cells." Even the minimal efforts at improvement meet objections from Hogg's supporters. Some Tory MP's are describing improved gaols as luxurious three-star hotels and too soft.

PRISON OFFICERS DISCONTENTED

Meanwhile, prison officers are using the prisoners' desperate situation to advance their demands for more money and more recruitment. Their duel with the government has become an insignificant and distracting sideshow, drawing attention from the main issues of inhuman conditions and unfair bail policies. John Barfell, Chairman of the Prison Officers' Association, has threatened a summer of discontent. In reply, Hogg's boss, Hurd, said: "I regard it as unhelpful and irresponsible for anyone to make statements which might lead to copycat action."

The fact is that Risley prisoners gained some valuable publicity by their protest, bringing the victims of society, locked away out of sight, back into the public eye. They even gained minor victories as conditions of their surrender, winning promises of no physical retaliation and having their photographs taken and sent to a solicitor of their choice.

It is certain that the prison protests will continue and that the rulers in Westminster will not be allowed to close their eyes to the agony of the "forgotten people".

STAMP OUT THE THREAT!

by

Edward Leonard

In Europe, we have seen how the "respectable" racism has paved the way for the far Right. Fascists are winning elections in West Germany; the French National Front is consolidating its base and racism is on the rise across Europe. In Britain, there is a complacent attitude on the Left about our home-grown variety of fascist thugs, a belief that they cannot repeat the performance of building a movement on the streets.

A large proportion of the May issue of the so-called Revolutionary Communist Party's (RCP) magazine 'Living Marxism', is devoted to the growing problems of racist politics in Europe. Anti-foreigner politics is fertile ground for fascist forces. But Britain is regarded as "an interesting contrast".

We are told that British fascists' organisation is miniscule and advised to let them "rot and get on with opposing the government which has rendered it redundant for a decade." It is an old familiar argument: Who needs fascism when this government is in power? The Tory Party, we are told, is "the party of race and nation". That surely needs some qualification given the Labour Party's record in office. But even accepting this, does this mean that the present government has stolen the ground from under the feet of the National Front and made Britain immune to the rise of fascism that is taking place in Europe?

In an implicit criticism of such groups like Anti-Fascist Action, the RCP claims "no matter how obscure the fascists become, many of the left will still waste time and energy chasing them."

Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) has, as 'Class Struggle' has reported on many occasions, taken the opportunity to oppose all man-

ifestations of fascist activity where possible. This has involved chasing, harassing, disrupting and confronting fascists where they attempt to organise. Anti-fascist activists have not simply turned out at by-elections, but have helped to defend left meetings on Ireland, the Non-Stop Picket



of the South African embassy and other activities.

CULTURAL WORK

Most recently, AFA has been involved in challenging the fascist attempted infiltration of a wide range of organisations - animal rights, green organisations, community groups - in order to keep the fascists isolated. AFA campaigned on the selling of fascist literature and regalia in Carnaby Street area, successfully forcing the fascists to move. The attempt by the fascists to attract the young disgruntled white youth through music is answered by an independent initiative, supported by AFA, The Cable Street Beat and its anti-fascist music events.

A WASTE OF TIME?

Is this, as the RCP claims, a waste of time? They suggest that targetting fascism has replaced the fight against racism and ignores "the truly powerful racists in Whitehall".

This would be true only if AFA activists were only engaged in narrow anti-fascist activity, as it is, AFA itself supports anti-racist campaigns such as the still frequent anti-deportation campaigns, made necessary by state racism.

However the main focus is no longer on immigration questions. We are now dealing with well-established national minority communities who bear the brunt of what the RCP acknowledges are "the anti-foreign sent-

iments (that) are never far below the surface of British society." AFA activists are involved in campaigns against racist attacks, be it by individual fascists or state forces. Too often, the RCP are notable by their absence in such campaigns.

The growth of fascist forces has been a spur to the more open display of racism and its practices in general, but the fascists are still the cutting edge of racism.

In Britain, we have had a decade of "ideological preparation", ten years of blatantly right-wing rule. In the next decade, in an even harsher social and economic climate, might not those factors that brought Thatcher to power act as a stimulus for a more overtly racist right?

In the late 70's and early 80's, British fascism underwent a sharp decline and fragmentation. A revival in the 1990's would offer the ruling class an option to utilise in the crisis unleashed with the collapse of the Thatcherite experiment. AFA is acting to squash that sinister threat now, and should be supported by those on the Left.

STOP THE FASCISTS MEETING

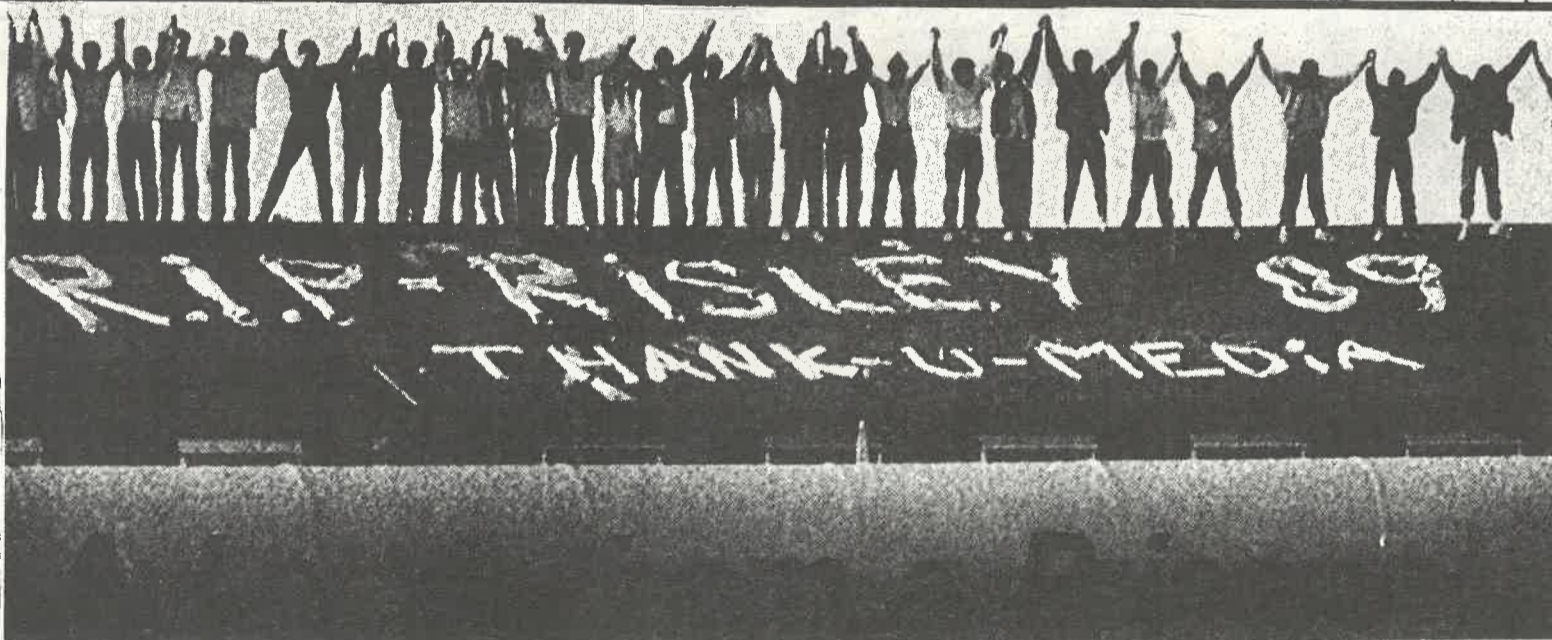
Where will the RCP be on the weekend of May 27th and 28th when the fascist-styled 'Main Event' - an international fascist gathering in London - organised by the 'Blood and Honour' fascist group for 1200 fascists?

The venue has been kept secret but fascists have been told to assemble at Speakers Corner to be given directions. AFA intends to take over their assembly point to disrupt this arrangement and at the very least, prevent some of them getting to the event. It represents the biggest fascist gathering in this country for many years. AFA does not want the international guests to walk away with the impression that fascists can walk tall, unchallenged and at ease in Britain.

Keith Thompson, RCP organiser of their front East London Workers Against Racism, boasts "in the entire nine years of ELWAR's existence, I've never had a fight. Most racists are cowards." (London Student, 6.10.88). There were an estimated 70,000 incidents of "racial harassment" in Britain last year. It is easy to uphold the complacency of the "ignore them and they'll go away brigade" if you do not have to confront the reality of such street violence.

TAKING THE THREAT SERIOUSLY

The rise of fascism in Europe was partly due to the Left not taking the threat seriously, underestimating the fascists because of the racism of the existing bourgeois parties.



Prisoners at Risley lining up on the roof yesterday evening at the end of their protest. They gave themselves three cheers and sang the football anthem 'You'll Never Walk Alone' before coming down.

Dear Editor,

I was very interested in the front page article on prisons in the May issue of *Class Struggle*. I was in Risley for just over a year, and I continually had to complain about every aspect of prison life there: filthy conditions, poor food, vicious screws and vicious governors. I made contact with the local M.P. Doug Hoyle on several occasions, and he was able to confirm the truth of my complaints. The essence of Risley 'control' is to say 'No' to any request by a prisoner, including often saying 'No' to a perfectly legitimate request for a prisoner's rights under the Prison Rules. After I'd been there a few months a new governor arrived, and I called him Al Capone because he literally looked and behaved

like Capone, - a gangster who went around with his bodyguard of screws. When he first came into my cell, I was sat down reading a paper, and I continued to do so. He walked up behind me and said, 'When I walk into your cell, you stand up'. I told him I wasn't in the army and he wasn't my sergeant-major. No sound came from him, and I anticipated the worst, but he was so shattered that he couldn't find anything to say, and just turned round and went out. When he did his rounds in the future he never even said a word. My door was opened and he walked straight by and the door was closed again. I did my daily exercise in the small hospital yard, and I often saw prisoners very badly treated in the punishment cells on the ground floor facing into the yard.

On arrival at Armlley, at the 'reception' desk I produced the rule book which should be given to all prisoners, and asked to check my property, in accordance with one of the rules. A screw snatched the book out of my hand, threw it on the floor and said: 'Don't quote rules at us. This is Armlley'. I never was allowed to make a check of my property.

When I first saw some of the teenage prisoners, I just could not believe it. They were not much more than schoolchildren, kept in this prison: medieval, overcrowded, filthy and full of brutality, mainly from the screws and governors, including so-called medical orderlies, who were in fact some of the most animal-like.

The final paragraph of the *Class*

Struggle article is correct, but in addition to the need for an increase in prisoners' rights, is the need for all existing rights to be observed. In most prisons, probably all, prisoners are not told of their rights, and very often the screws don't know what rights are due to prisoners. Prisoners are regularly deprived of many of their rights, either by deliberate policy or because of the ignorance of the so-called governors. Since the 'fresh start' system of working for the screws, prisoners' rights and privileges have been continually eroded, often by a procedure where the existing rules are given a new 'interpretation'. It ends up like 'Alice in Wonderland', - the words mean just what the governors want them to mean, - always to suit them.

From Front Page

SELF DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE!

CAMPAIGN

A campaign to free Satpal has been set up in Birmingham and is picketing the Law Courts there on the second anniversary of the verdict. A campaign spokesperson recently said: 'A setback in the Court of Appeal will not deter us from continuing in our efforts to free Satpal and to explore the racism in the criminal justice system. Whilst arguments in the Court of Appeal had to be confined to legal and technical points, the glaring fact is that Satpal is the victim of racial injustice, being convicted by an all-white jury and being denied effective representation by his white lawyers, all on top of being racially abused and viciously attacked by a white racist in the first place'.



FREE SATPAL CAMPAIGN

FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



Our Day Will Come

The annual Irish Hunger Strike Commemoration march took place in Birmingham, on 6th May, despite threats from fascist and Orange groups. In the weeks before, local papers were filled with predictions of violent disorder as the fascists vowed to disrupt the march.

The police used their powers under the Public Order Act to veto the traditional route, from Sparkhill to the City Centre. The only hall available was in Saltley, which, like Sparkhill, is a largely national minority area, Asian, African and Irish.

The police forced a circuitous route on the marchers to avoid the city centre. Near the assembly point, fascists thronged in the streets and the pubs. With a heavy police escort, the march went off successfully and without incident.

It entered Saltley in bright sunshine. The day chosen for the march coincided with the Muslim festival of Eid, high-point of the Islamic calendar. As a result, few of the dominant Kashmiri and Bengali populations of Saltley were able to join the march. But hundreds came out of their houses to welcome the marchers and to enjoy the music of the two Republican flute bands which had come from Scotland for the occasion.

SOLIDARITY IN THEIR NATIONAL STRUGGLES

Police had tried to use the march to create dissension in the community. When the local children came out of their houses to celebrate Eid, they were told they must stay indoors because an Irish march was coming and there would be trouble. The Muslim children treated



the police warnings with the contempt they deserved.

As Kashmiri Workers Association chairperson, Mohammed Younus told the rally after the march, Kashmiris were delighted to see an Irish demonstration, as they know these were their natural friends in Birmingham.

Younus also criticised the hypocrisy of the British government in its claims to respect freedom of speech. Why did they protect Salman Rushdie, a man who had insulted the people's beliefs, while banning the freedom of speech of those in Ireland seeking a solution. He pledged total and unconditional support for the Irish people fighting British occupation and said that they were an inspiration to the people of the world, including the

Kashmiri people who had been fighting for 400 years for their freedom.

SINN FEIN SPEAKER

The main speaker at the rally was Sinn Fein Councillor, Francie Molloy. We print below excerpts from his speech.

Today, we remember the hunger strikers of all generations. The hunger strike as a political weapon in Ireland is not new. We remember the ten hunger strikers and Frank Stagg and Michael Gaughan. They showed the British government that they were not making empty threats but were prepared to carry out what they said. The only weapons they had were their own bodies. Frank Hughes said that he would use his body like an Armalite.

It was a Labour politician who started trying to criminalise the Republican prisoners. It was Margaret Thatcher who was defeated by the Hunger Strike. She tried to persuade people that she would defeat the Hunger Strike and that it was the last battle of the IRA. That was far from the truth. The Hunger Strike repoliticised the struggle. It proved not only the support for the cause but that the cause was right.

It was not a defeat but a victory. The hunger strikers may not have won the right to wear their own clothes or their association. But they proved to the world that Republican prisoners would take the struggle from the streets into the prisons and back onto the streets to repoliticise it.

And the world saw that Thatcher was defeated.

We must take heart from their courage and go forward with their sacrifices. They had to endure continuous pain when it was within their power to stop it. They proved that the IRA would not be defeated.

Bobby Sands showed the way to the Republican Movement. His election as an MP showed that the people support the prisoners and the IRA. Now we have an increased number of Sinn Fein representatives. This is not a weakening of the armed struggle but a two-pronged attack. We will fight with whatever weapons we can find. But the British government has been very quick to change the rules.

TWO-PRONGED STRUGGLE

The two-pronged struggle is right. There is no point in the IRA forcing a British withdrawal to hand over power to the Gombeen men of the SDLP and the Irish government. They are not worthy of being called an Irish government. Their recent acceptance of extradition shows that they are merely a puppet of British imperialism.

The people must be given to realise that they have the power in their hands if they choose to use it. We are asking the British government not to decide for us, but to give us the right to self-determination. Then we will have the peace we deserve and Britain can also have peace.

Bobby Sands wrote "Our Day Will Come". I believe that in this generation, our day has come.

WOLFE TONE SOCIETY COMMEMORATION

CLASS STRUGGLE CORRESPONDENT

"They give up all claims to represent the people of Ireland when they hand people over the British-imposed border," said Sinn Fein Councillor, Francie Molloy. He was condemning the 26-County authorities as collaborators, for their extradition policy, in his address to the fourth annual Connolly-Sands Commemoration, held on May 7th in London.

Around 500 people attended the day of music, videos and workshops at Conway Hall. The day culminated in a packed rally reflecting the past twenty years of the struggle for civil rights and Irish freedom.

Bernadette McAliskey recalled twenty years ago. "Then we wanted council houses, the vote and not even a job, but an equal chance of a job." But times have moved on since then. "Now we want our country back."

In a thoughtful contribution, sparkling with humour throughout, she spoke of the continuity of the Irish fight for the right to decide their own future. Bernadette recalled the question she asked, as a child, about the deaths of Irish patriots throughout the ages: "Why are we called terrorists?"

We Want Our Country Back!

BRITISH LIES AND BRITISH DOMINATION

Nial Farrell spoke of the events and British lies that saw IRA Volunteers, Mairead Farrell, Daniel McCann and Sean Savage, shot dead by the SAS in Gibraltar, in March 1988.

He told of his sister's strong commitment to a free Ireland and of her courage through the years when she was in Armagh



jail.

Despite political differences between them, (Nial defended the position of his organisation - the Communist Party of Ireland - that "no shot should be shot in Ulster"), they both agreed in seeing Ireland's woes in Britain's domination.

SOLIDARITY GREETINGS

The greetings to the rally from Republican prisoners at

Parkhurst, Portlaoise and Frankland, addressed a question to the British authorities about British involvement in the six counties. "It is a cause that will be abandoned. Why not now?"

While a number of solidarity messages were slipped into a tight schedule, Sinn Fein's London representative thanked the Campaign for a Free Ireland for its donation of £1,700 for

the use of relatives of POWs in Strabane. He observed that it did not quite match last year's donation of £2,000, but it was an "example a lot of you can follow."

Among the other speakers to address the rally was Sharon Atkins of the Labour Party Black Sections. She pointed out that it is no surprise that the Labour Party, who sent in the troops twenty years ago, have no solution to empower the Irish people to decide their own fate. She expressed her support for a "united Ireland, a socialist Ireland", adding that "Sinn Fein is leading the way. I am proud to stand up and defend it. I am a Sinn Fein supporter."

Jeremy Corbyn, Labour MP for Islington North, spoke of the Anglo-Irish Accord as making permanent British involvement in the North and an obstacle to Irish unity.

Francie Molloy ended a successful day by stating that James Connolly and Bobby Sands would not want to be seen as heroes to be set up and applauded. "They would want us to go out and win the struggle." The last twenty years have shown that the nationalist people can endure. "We now have to prove that we can win. We want to live in an all-Ireland republic!"