

CLASS STRUGGLE



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20p



All women who come into contact with the DHSS experience its sexism, which always seeks to define them as dependants and stop them claiming benefit in their own right. In addition to this, the racism that runs through the whole institution, in terms of the actual rules and their interpretation by officials, puts Black women in a very vulnerable position. Black women, oppressed by racism and sexism, are often forced to live in poverty.

REFUSED BENEFIT

In particular, this can affect married women whose husbands have to leave the country for a period of time. Many black people have family members here and in their country of origin. This is sometimes through choice, and often because the racist immigration laws do not allow them to live together in this country. Many of these relatives are elderly, and if they fall ill, there is no-one to look after them. This necessitates someone, usually the husband, going back home for a time to care for them. These women, who have to continue to maintain themselves and their children here, are refused supplementary benefit. One woman in Birmingham, whose husband has had to go to Pakistan for a short period to look after his sick mother, is trying to look after three children on no income. Her mortgage and bills alone come to almost £200 per month, and that does not include the cost of feeding and clothing her children. As a consequence, she is severely in debt.

The other group of women who are affected are those who are married to men from abroad, and are waiting for them to

DHSS REFUSE BENEFIT BLACK WOMEN ORGANISE

be allowed to join them here. They may have been entitled to supplementary benefit before marriage, but as soon as they are married, their benefit is cut off - on the grounds that their husbands should support them. Yet, the racist immigration laws don't allow their husbands in! As in the case with an Indian woman in Birmingham. She married in India two years ago, but her husband has not been allowed to come to the UK, and she lives alone with her nine-month old daughter.

"AVAILABLE FOR WORK"

Although the Supplementary Benefit rules have been changed recently - to "allow" women to claim as heads of households, this is still dependent, firstly, on agreement from the male partner, and secondly, that the woman has been available for work six months prior to claiming. Most Asian women, particularly those with children, will not have been signing on as available for work. When their husbands were here, they wouldn't have signed on, as they would be classed as dependent, and in any case, they would often see their prime responsibility as looking after their children.

When fiances of women settled here are eventually allowed in (after an average wait of one and a half years), the couple are not allowed to claim benefit straight away. They can only do this when the Home Office gives the man a 12-month extension of his stay - this usually happens months after the marriage has taken place.

"URGENT NEEDS PAYMENT"

In all these cases, having been refused supplementary benefit, the women can apply for Urgent Needs Payment. Although this is paid at a lower rate than supplementary benefit, in the circumstances it is better than

nothing. But even this pittance is usually refused. This is on the basis that the women have friends and relatives to support them - an assumption rarely made in the case of white women. The DHSS refuses to recognise family responsibilities to parents and other close relatives which necessitates the man leaving the country. They simply go on about the man's only legal responsibility is to maintain his wife and children. Yet when the woman tries to get UNP, all sorts of people, presumably from distant cousins to friendly neighbours are supposed to support her! But then, rational logic is not the basis on which the DHSS works - its only logic is to harass and oppress black people, especially women, at every turn.

CREDIT

Women, having been refused UNP, are forced to live off credit, while waiting for their appeals against refusal to be heard. Ironically, this can then be used against them - some tribunals have ruled that since the woman has been existing on credit up till now, she can continue to do so! It appears to have escaped their notice that credit is only given on the basis that it will be repaid!

FIGHTBACK

A group of people have got together in Birmingham to campaign against the racist and sexist practices of the DHSS. Our main demands are that:

THE REQUIREMENT OF BEING AVAILABLE FOR WORK BE ABOLISHED IMMEDIATELY.

WOMEN BE ALLOWED TO CLAIM FULL BENEFIT IN THEIR OWN RIGHT.

We have already held one picket of a local DHSS office, and further activities are planned (Cont. on page four)

HERE TO STAY - HERE TO FIGHT!

APPEAL LOST

JOSIE FIGHTS ON



Over 70 people picketed the Immigration Appeals Court in Leeds when Josephine Thomas' appeal against deportation was heard - on December 11th and January 12th.

Support for her right to stay in Huddersfield among friends and neighbours, in the black community, churches and women's groups among others. People from Leeds, Bradford and Birmingham also came to support her. In spite of protests after the first half of the hearing, the second half was heard in

a small court with only room for 10 or so observers and with reporters being turned away.

Josie lost her appeal. But the adjudicator recommended that the Home Office reconsider her situation. We say Josie must stay! Josie has lived and worked here for 20 years. Her home and her family are here! The struggle continues.

NEWHAM 8 FREE

After a 16-month ordeal, the Newham 8 are free. On December 22nd, four of the eight were found not guilty of the charges against them. The remaining four were found guilty of affray, but the other charges against them - possession of offensive weapons, criminal damage and threatening behaviour were dismissed. They still had nearly a month to wait before they would know whether they were to be imprisoned or not.

Then, on January 20th, a hearing took place to determine their sentences. Advancing arguments that were to be endorsed by lawyers representing the other defendants, Lord Gifford for

Vipran Kumar Pathak argued that the proper sentence would be an absolute or conditional discharge. He spoke of the background to the incident in which the 8 were arrested, pointing out that no one had contested the fact that during the week before the arrests, there had been two serious attacks on Asian children at the school to which the 8 went to defend the children. Gifford argued that by their action, the 8 were behaving out of a sense of social responsibility. He also pointed to a whole series of attacks on black people in the Newham area as the background to the incident. These arguments were underlined

(Cont. on page four)

REMEMBER

BLOODY SUNDAY



On 30th January 1972, the 1st battalion of the Parachute Regiment opened fire on unarmed demonstrators in Derry. 13 were killed immediately. A fourteenth died later. 7 of the dead were in their teens. 17 more were wounded.

At the time all marches in the north of Ireland were banned, but the Civil Rights Association had regularly held demonstrations to protest against internment (imprisonment without trial). On January 26th, the Unionist Prime Minister, Faulkner, had talks with General Tuzo. The following day he flew to London to see the British Prime Minister, Heath. On the 28th the army said they would "take action" against "illegal" marchers.

ARMY BARRICADES

The 15,000 strong march started as planned but was forced to divert at William Street by military barricades. Most of the marchers went on to Free Derry Corner 500 yards away, where a rally was held. A few hundred, mainly young people, stayed near the barricades, protesting against the undemocratic ban on protests. Stones were thrown and the army responded with CS gas and water cannon.

CONT. BACK PAGE

editorial

1983 saw growing struggle between the oppressed peoples and nations and imperialism.

* In the Lebanon, imperialist troops intervened to shore up the fascist regime. The people's resistance led to the death of over 300 US and French troops, and Israel's casualties continue to mount.

* In Ireland, Britain's shoot-to-kill policy and the use of paid-perjurers could not stop the struggle of the nationalist people. The election of Sinn Fein members showed the growth of the Republican Movement; prisoners broke out of Long Kesh concentration camp and a number of "informers" withdrew their statements.

* South Africa has occupied much of southern Angola, but the resistance of the Namibian and Azanian peoples continues.

* The United States invaded Grenada and has increased its pressure on revolutionary

Nicaragua and the whole of Central America. But Nicaragua has mobilised its people and the struggle in El Salvador goes from strength to strength.

* In Xianggang (Hongkong), the Philippines and southern Korea the conflict has sharpened. Meanwhile the Third World countries have escalated their demands for a New International Economic Order while the US has pulled out of UNESCO.

Reality shows that the people of the Third World are the main force for revolution.

SOVIET REVISIONISM

Yet 20 years ago, this was one of the central issues in the struggle in the International Communist Movement.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) backed mainly by Communist Parties in the imperialist countries, belittled every contradiction in the world in comparison to that between the then-existing socialist camp and the capitalist camp. In opposition the Communist Party of China (CPC) and other Third World parties

showed that the focus of contradictions was in the Third World.

The CPSU far from supporting the rise of the national liberation movements demanded that these movements subordinate themselves to Soviet interests. It, for example, condemned the Palestinian armed struggle, when it was launched, as "adventurist". It claimed that national liberation wars were dangerous and could lead to wide international conflict. It pushed a "peaceful road to socialism".

As the USSR grew stronger in relation to the USA, it stepped up its involvement again with the national liberation movements. But this time it used them where it could as chess pieces in its global struggle with the USA. It split or exacerbated splits in the national liberation movements. It sponsored those groups which would align themselves with the Soviet Union, while vilifying movements that were fighting imperialism. Its earlier cringing capitulation to western imperialist powers grew more into struggle with them, but now on the basis of inter-

imperialist rivalry.

* 1968 saw the direct invasion of Czechoslovakia, giving direct expression to the development of Soviet revisionism into fully fledged Social Imperialism.

* In the 1970's, a military coup in Ethiopia became, in the eyes of the Social Imperialists, an "Ethiopian Road to Socialism". The Social Imperialists supported the oppression of the Ethiopian workers and peasants and their revolutionary movements and abandoned the half-hearted support they had been giving to the Eritrean people. Only to find themselves now facing the same struggles with the Eritrean, Tigrean and Ethiopian peoples that western imperialist powers had previously faced.

* The Soviet Social Imperialists sponsored Vietnam's 1978 invasion of Kampuchea, and now face a national liberation war in south-east Asia.

* The 1979 invasion of Afghanistan has brought hundreds of thousands of Soviet troops directly into armed conflict with a national liberation



alliance involving communists and patriotic forces.

The struggle for national liberation and the right of nations to self-determination is waged today against both superpowers as well as against Britain and other imperialist powers. The two superpowers whilst engaged in deadly struggle with each other, also both face the developing struggle of the peoples and nations of the Third World. What was true in the 1960's, is truer than ever today. The main blows against imperialism and social-imperialism are coming from the oppressed nations. It is a perspective that revolutionaries must have if any serious movement is to be built here.

POLITICS OF FOOD

PART 2
CHANGING NATURE OF
BRITISH AGRICULTURE

As with any capitalist agriculture, British agriculture has always been dominated by the profit motive. There are workers alive today who can remember taking part in hiring fairs to get work. (The farmers came to the local fairs, picked out the healthiest looking workers for the year and only paid them a pittance at the end.) Early attempts to organise farm labourers into trade unions were met with repression. The deportation of the Tolpuddle Martyrs to penal servitude was one such example.

Even today agricultural workers are amongst the most-exploited. Their work is very skilled but dangerous, and many live in the most deprived areas of Britain. In February 1983 Scottish farm workers got a 7.8% wage rise which gave them basic wages of £76-£91 per week for a 40-hour week. Those in England and Wales were awarded a similar 7.1% rise in December 1982. Their union's original claim was for £120 per week. The casual work done by women is even more badly paid and is usually work which cannot be done by machine. In contrast, the big grain farmers have annual incomes of about half a million pounds, and own £5-10 millions of assets.

BIGGER FARMS

In 1945, a 3,000 acre farm would employ 100 full-time male

LETTER FROM A READER

Following on from the letter in the previous issue of 'Class Struggle' about import controls, it was interesting to see what the British TUC is up to.

In a TUC report on the car industry currently being discussed by the Economic Committee of the TUC, there is a call for import controls to protect British Leyland (BL).

The report says that "without BL the UK industry would be completely in the hands of foreign-owned companies which could do as they liked to the industry."

The report claimed that BL was open to public scrutiny and control, performing a vital role in controlling the skills of British industry and acting as a "counterbalance to the powers of the multi-nationals."

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (bosses' organisation) oppose the report because it would restrict international trade (i.e. their profits).

So there you have it - the TUC

workers; today that same farm would only need 10 workers. In fact there are more tractors than there are workers on farms.

1500 individual farms disappear every year and the number of small farms of 100 acres or less has decreased by 50% in recent years. The traditional family farm of story books has become a thing of the past. With good land fetching £2,000 per acre you have to either inherit one or be very rich to buy a farm these days. The monopoly of big units, already a dominant feature of the rest of the economy, has become the trend in agriculture.

UNDER-PRODUCTION

Deliberate under-production of crops and government subsidies to farmers, went on prior to entry to the EEC. But since Britain joined, this policy has been greatly extended. The Common Agricultural Policy has been used effectively by the employers' organisation (National Farmers' Union). Government subsidies have resulted in big changes in British agriculture and have been a source of large profits for big farmers and the fertiliser and pesticide companies (e.g. ICI and Fisons).

SUBSIDIES

It is estimated that current government subsidies to farming cost the tax-payer £4-£5,000

trying to out-do the bosses when it comes to tying workers to the bosses' system.

Once again the TUC is peddling the reactionary social democrat (Labour party-type politics) policies that want to get workers of one country to side with their bosses against the workers of other countries.

I'm sure that the BL workers defeated by Sir Michael Edwards are very impressed by the TUC's claims about public accountability and control of BL.

The point is that the TUC's artificial distinction between nationalised industries and multi-national companies covers up the reality that all big companies and the state are part of the rotten imperialist system that exploits and oppresses the peoples of the world.

Ironically at the same time that the TUC report got press coverage, there were also media reports of Japanese car workers opposing the plans for Nissan (Datsun cars) to set up a factory in Britain because it would mean job losses in Japan.

From a Midlands reader.

million per year (more than state aid to steel, coal and the railways combined). Guaranteed prices for crops keep food prices up and maximise profits. Research on new high-yield and pest-resistant crops is all done at the state's expense. None of the high investment in pesticides, fertilisers and machinery would be profitable without state subsidies.

Subsidies actually accelerate the trend towards bigger farms. The amount of subsidy received is directly proportional to the sum invested in the farm and the total output. Larger farms can remain profitable even if the profit per acre is less than on a smaller, more efficient farm.

No longer is farming dominated by a seasonal pattern of ploughing, sowing and harvesting. Today it is the over-production of grain crops all the year round that dominates. In recent years, wheat production has quadrupled, barley has doubled and production of rape oil seed is increasing rapidly. It is estimated that 40% of grain production would not be profitable without subsidy, food prices would drop and farming would have to diversify.

(To be concluded.)

Dear Editor,

Last month's article on the events at Winwick Quay, Warrington, was good in the way it supported the stand taken by the union while at the same time it made some positive criticisms about the NGA, and secondly in the way it showed up the reactionary nature of those so-called labour leaders whose primary concern at any time of sharp class conflict is for the total acceptance of a legal system which has been designed to protect the interests of people such as Eddie Shah.

However it was on the question of the closed shop that the article was weak. It is correct to say that it has often been used against working class interests. Some employers find it very useful to get all of their staff into one union and then allow a convenor both time and facilities to go round the factory sorting out all the problems that arise daily on the shop floor. In this way many shop stewards find themselves doing much of the manage-

SHIPBUILDERS: STRIKE IS OFF

The first all-out strike in the shipbuilding industry since nationalisation, was averted by an interim agreement in early January. This was even though the shop-floor had rejected a plan initially accepted by union negotiators last November. After being without a pay rise since April 1982, shipbuilders were offered a rise of £7 a week, dependant on productivity rises and sweeping changes in workplace practices.

The British Shipbuilders' (BS) 'survival plan' calls for an end to job demarcation. They warn of a "slow, painful death" unless jack-of-all-trade practices are adopted. Inevitably the media has trivialised what one Swan Hunter steward describes as: "Strapping on welding equipment, a caulker's hammer, some joiner's tools and a broom when I go out into the yard". Workers recognise that by meekly accepting new measures, men are "rationalising" themselves out of a job. Yet the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering unions are seeking an "agreed pace of change".

LOSS OF JOBS

Since nationalisation in 1977, the unions have lost the initiative to BS management. Mr Graham Day, new £80,000 a year company chairman, has seen 6,000 jobs disappear in the last six months, with a further 3,000 due to go by April. While the closure of Scott Lithgow, with the loss of 4,300 jobs is regarded as inevitable, smaller yards are given little hope of finding new orders. At least three face imminent closure.

The unions have accepted the chauvinist appeal to pull together, subordinating the interests of the workers to management's corporate strategy.

ment's work for them. Also many closed shops are run on the basis of understandings and meetings between the company and the local full-time official, with the membership only ever being involved to give their formal approval to what has already been thrashed out. In this sense the closed shop is not a good thing. But that is not the whole story. In many other cases it has been the means whereby companies have been prevented from doing just as they please, it has prevented victimisation and has kept wages up much higher than they otherwise would have been.

From a Leeds reader.

To pay the price of job losses and the restructuring of work practices, makes sense for the efficiency-orientated union officials. In the climate of a prolonged contraction in world shipping since the late 1970's, their faith is placed in making capitalism work.

British Shipbuilders is not alone in its plight. While there was a rise in new orders last year, the new orders obtained by EEC yards fell by 33%. A recent Norwegian report emphasised the peripheral nature of EEC merchant shipbuilding in the international market. It suggested that "the next year or two will see a further extinction of a not insignificant part of European shipbuilding capacity."

CUT-THROAT COMPETITION

The malaise in world shipping has been evident in the scrapping of 221 tankers in 1983. The world tanker fleet, currently around 3,470, accounts for 48% of merchant shipping. The fall in shipbuilding orders has meant a more active second-hand market in ships. Such is the cut-throat competition for orders, new ship prices are now probably even lower than a year ago (according to the 'Financial Times'). Yards in the UK, West Germany, the Netherlands, France and Eastern Europe "face almost impossible cost-related problems in obtaining any share of orders in international competition."

Consequently in the international division of production, the future of European shipbuilding industry is seen to lie in providing technology to the developing countries. The strategy of using shipbuilding as an export market leader to support domestic industrialisation has won orders for south Korea and Brazil. Their advantages are evident in the social-chauvinist complaints of European workers about foreigners' low prices and high efficiency levels. Such factors explain BS' emphasis on more "flexible working practices."

An 'Observer' journalist wrote: "In ten years or less, merchant shipbuilding in Britain may belong only in history books." Whether this prediction comes true or not depends on the strategy adopted for the restructuring of British capitalism. But it is obvious that the Labour Party policy of state nationalisation has not altered social-relations within the shipbuilding industry. Whether nationalised or private, when industry "rationalises", it is the working class that pays the cost.

Fight for Peace

The New Year starts with the world in greater danger than ever of the two superpowers starting a world nuclear war, and with a world already at war in many areas where people

On November 17th, at the Utah desert range, a Tomahawk ground launched missile of the kind based at Greenham, flew into the ground 20 minutes after launching, having covered 70 miles. This latest test failure is only one of many: of 114 test flights so far, on all forms of Tomahawks, 30 have so far been failures. They have not even yet tested its ability to fly over snow-covered areas where its height contour mapping system is likely to be confused.

are fighting imperialism for their very existence and for freedom. However the New Year also starts with increasing determination and action towards peace, not only by the people of the Third World, who are the main force against the superpowers, but also by the people of Western Europe, of the United States and the Soviet bloc.

CRUISE OPERATIONAL?

Mrs T's government is beset with problems on the nuclear scene: they have Cruise missiles in Greenham Common and can't get them out; they have Cruise missile test reports which show increasing likelihood of them crashing on Westminster; they have Rolls Royce workers refusing to work on Trident missiles; and they can't discuss any of this in secret without efficient moles unearthing it.



GREENHAM COMMON

Morale at Greenham Common is high with enough women to cover all the gates and enough nerve to get three women through the

Rolls Royce confirmed last month that it is not proceeding with work on a stainless steel piping prototype which could be a component for Trident. Earlier in the year, the 3,000-strong workforce at Hillingdon, Glasgow refused to do the work. When management tempted them with promises of bigger American orders if they did that one, they revolted with an even bigger majority against doing the work.

fences to spend three hours up the top of one of the control towers. There is increasing activity at many of the other American bases - over 100 of which had a 24-hour peace camp on them in November. Molesworth peace camp is celebrating its second anniversary; the USAF command bunker at High Wycombe now has a permanent protest; and an extensive underground bunker at Corsham, Bath, where

a wartime government would live, has recently had a large demonstration.

THE MOVEMENT GROWS

Plans for 1984 include increasing awareness and activity at other USAF bases and increasing local organisation to harrass and publicise any Cruise missiles sneaking out of Greenham. As more people join

In 1984 we will continue to expose the lies behind all the military bases throughout Britain, and to increase our links with women's struggle, for nuclear disarmament and an end to oppression, prejudice, exploitation and violence in every country on earth."

New Year statement, Greenham women.

the Peace movement, take direct action and begin to question all aspects of the state, the movement will increase its political understanding and, as the Greenham women have called for, build links with other anti-imperialist forces.

new jobs and will now be on the dole.

■ Kettering Council has built a shelter for use in the event of a nuclear war - with an outside toilet!

■ At a recent hearing in the Old Bailey, the following evidence was heard: "Mr Watson-Sweeney, of previous excellent character, met the child - the daughter of a friend - and her mother when he was out shopping. He had been drinking heavily and asked the little girl if she would help him with some household chores. When he got her to his bedroom, he removed her clothing and had intercourse with her. He gave her some sherry and took her home. The girl, who was crying and distressed, told her mother what had happened."

The girl in question was seven years old. Watson-Sweeney pleaded guilty to having unlawful sexual intercourse with the little girl but his plea of not guilty to raping her was accepted. The Judge, Brian Gibbons QC, said that although this was a serious offence he had "considerable sympathy" for the defendant. "It strikes me as being one of the kinds of accident that could almost have happened to anyone," he said. Judge Gibbons further remanded him in custody, saying: "I want to see if there is some other punishment available rather than prison."

■ Under the Reagan administration, new nuclear warheads are going into America's stockpile at the rate of 8 every working day. The USA already has 26,000 nuclear bombs and warheads and the current annual cost of US nuclear forces is 45 billion dollars.

"There are women of many descriptions
In this queer world as everyone knows,
Some are living in beautiful mansions
And are wearing the finest of clothes.
There are blue-blooded queens and princesses,
With their charms made of diamonds and pearls,
But the only and thoroughbred lady
Is the Rebel Girl."

Sheila Garnett

It seems extraordinary to anyone who knew her that Sheila Garnett, with her warmth and energy, is no longer with us. She was one of those women who so many look to for support and help - her absence seems unthinkable. She died on December 26th from a tumour on the brain, the effects of which she must have been battling hard against, because it was only detected a fortnight before it proved fatal.

Sheila was drawn into active political life in the 1960's through the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the campaign against the Vietnam war. She came to recognise Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought as the only possible ideology to guide the world towards a better future, and looked to China as a living example of socialism in practise.

Sheila was a founder member of a Marxist-Leninist group on Merseyside dedicated to party-building, which later became part of the Communist Federation of Britain (in turn a founding organisation of the Revolutionary Communist League). Her strengths, dedication to serving the people and a living understanding of the "mass line" were not always put to good use in that period, nor her situation as the working class mother of a large family properly understood and supported.

Sheila then went to college and took a degree. "It did me the power of good, because I realised that half the people who came from the bourgeois classes spoke a load of bloody shit, and I had a better understanding of what was going on than they had. I definitely didn't believe that before." Afterwards, she formed with neighbours, Speke Women's Action Group which stuck terror into the hearts of the bureaucrats in the DHSS, the Housing and schools. Her last years were spent working with youth in Speke developing artistic skills, including some lively and down-to-earth drama.

Her funeral was fittingly arranged by her family at the crematorium on Thursday 29th December. The cross was removed from the chapel, her coffin was draped in red and poems and tributes were read from family and friends.

She will be sadly missed by many.

Whose 'National Day'?

"Kampuchea-Fifth National Day-Grand Celebration Reception" read a recent notice in the revisionist paper, "Morning Star."

It might seem a little strange to announce the National Day celebrations in January, when Kampuchea's National Day is April 17th, the day that Phnom Penh was liberated from the US puppet regime of Lon Nol in 1975. However, this advert turned out to be for a different "National Day"-the day when, five years ago on January 6th, 1979, Vietnamese troops occupied Phnom Penh and installed their own puppet administration there.

Among the advertised guests who were apparently ready to join in celebrating this act of aggression was Labour MEP Alf Lomas. He was billed to be rubbing shoulders with representatives of Vietnam and Laos.

Five years ago, the Vietnamese authorities invited themselves into Kampuchea through their puppets. Today, according to the "Morning Star" advert, if anyone wants to celebrate Kampuchea's National Day, they should apply for an invitation from the Britain-Vietnam Association!

-From a reader.

NEW ERA BOOKS

203, Seven Sisters Road, London. N.4. Open Monday-Friday-10am-6pm, Saturday-11am-4.30pm; late opening-Thursday until 7pm.

NEW BOOKS

The Future of Maoism-Samir Amin. 154pp. £3.85+35p p&p.

Supergrasses: the use of Accomplice Evidence in Northern Ireland-Tony Gifford. 38pp. £1.50+20p p&p.

The PLO and Palestine-Abdullah Frangi. 256pp £5.95+45p p&p.

Debate on Class, State and Imperialism-ed. by Professor Y. Tandon, introduction by A.M. Babu. 310pp £7.95+50p p&p.

Barrel of a Pen:Resistance to Repression in Neo-colonial Kenya-Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. 103pp. £2.95+30p p&p.

The Tamils of Sri Lanka (Revised 1983)-Minority Rights Group. £1.20+25p p&p.

Lebanon-A Conflict of Minorities-Minority Rights Group. £1.20+25p p&p.

If you want to subscribe to any Chinese journals at a 20% discount, it is still possible to do so if you let NEB have your subscription by February 15th. Find out about China from Chinese periodicals.

Correction

The previous issue of "Class Struggle" should have been numbered "Volume 7, No. 11&12."

France: *Struggle at Poissy*

Violent clashes at the Talbot car plant at Poissy near Paris, hit the headlines in early January. Workers favouring a return to work, mainly members of the pro-'communist' CGT, hurled metal objects at those, largely non-unionised African workers, who favoured continuing the strike against redundancy plans. A compromise redundancy plan of 1,900 instead of 2,900 jobs, drawn up with the help of the 'communist' Minister for Employment, without union consultation, was arranged between the Socialist Party/'Communist' Party (PS/PCF) administration and management before last Christmas.

The strike began spontaneously when the non-unionised national minority workers walked out, with the support and encouragement of the pro-'Socialist' union, CFDT. CFDT militancy was designed to offset the serious decline in membership in recent months to the CGT and the Force Ouvrière, a growing reformist union. The CFDT reputation had been tainted by association with Mitterand's preaching of the gospel of capitalism's economic realism. Poissy was the first major example of a whole series of mass lay-offs planned in numerous industries: 30,000 in steel, 20,000 in coal. The PS/PCF administration no doubt wish it had never described the Poissy agreement as a "model" for similar cases of "industrial restructuring" that involves compulsory redundancies.

RIOT POLICE

During the New Year weekend, the 'Socialist' government ordered the riot police to evict about 100 workers occupying the plant in protest against job cuts. The protest continued into the New Year and divisions in the workforce erupted into violent clashes. Condemning the "excesses" of strikes, Mme Trehel, local leader of the revisionist-led CGT at Poissy, claimed that strike action "would only play into the hands of the fascists and racists". The CGT-initiated fighting led militants to use cars on the production lines as barricades.

The fear of losing control spurred the pro-'Socialist' CFDT's local leaders to ask management to call in the riot police. Upon the arrival of 1,500 police, the mainly white non-strikers applauded and sang the Marseillaise. There were reports of non-strikers chanting "To the gas ovens with them" when African workers were evicted.

REPATRIATION

About 53% of Talbot's 17,000 workers at Poissy are from North Africa, and they form the vast majority of workers who are to be made redundant. They have complained of neglect by the unions and many have raised their own demands. "No one wants or needs us any more," explained a Moroccan worker. "No one in France, the government or the unions, is really going to fight for our rights and dignities." Many contemplate government offers of aided repatriation. One of the black workers' demands is the raising of 'aid' from 40,000 francs

French police, the demands of the march included the right to vote; measures for protection against racist attacks and the right to a 10-year work and residence permit. Thousands of supporters joined en route beneath the banner which proclaimed: "Live together with our differences."

The organisation Immigrant Youth which grew out of the 600-mile march, stated: "We are in complete solidarity with our brothers and fathers who were thrown out of Talbot under a hail of bolts and cries of "to the gas ovens".

At the Press Conference on 12th January, workers expressed their anger: "Our blood has been spilt; many of us have been injured and a violent anti-immigrant campaign has been started."

'Class Struggle' reported on aspects of national minority resistance in France at the beginning of 1983, and the lack of support from either unions

a blatantly racist alliance of local right wing opposition parties and the National Front, the largest fascist party in France. Their call for repatriation of all immigrants was not new. It found a response in the large proportion of votes from the traditionally revisionist and socialist white working class in the area. Such electoral support reflects a climate of murderous racism in which police raids and racist violence continue unabated.

The government "compassionate concern" is advertised in terms of offering an amnesty to "illegal" migrants and instructions to the police to be less discourteous when dealing with those known derisively as les bicots (wogs). The truth of the matter is that the main factors accounting for the increase in open racism in France has been the legislation, administrative practices and politics of the 'Socialist' state machinery of Mitterand. The almost total impunity of perpetrators of the increasing number of racist attacks is mirrored in the state's vicious regulations and racist policies.

The entry of 'foreign workers' intending to settle in France was stopped nine years ago. From 1977 a repatriation grant of £1,000 has been made available. Amongst the incentives to take up such offers was the Bonnet Bill of Giscard's administration. It enables the authorities to expel any foreigner automatically, on grounds of any irregularities in visas, possession of 'false papers', failure to justify regular entry into France or threats against public order.

NEW CONTROLS

France's socialist administration reinforces the vile number game that finds the capitalist system 'not guilty' of causing unemployment by arguing the presence of 'many immigrant workers in France' is one of the principle causes of unemployment. New controls to restrict immigration were accompanied by labour inspectors to spy on firms employing migrants without permits, the speedier expulsion of 'illegal



to 200,000 francs each (about £16,700).

The reasons for such demands being raised were well illustrated by last year's march from Lyons by young unemployed Algerians, which ended in a mass rally in Paris last December. Organised initially because of the "accidental" shooting of Toumi Djaida by

or left parties. 'Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité' has long ceased to be their watchword as the racist scapegoating by the PS/PCF government and resurgence of fascism testify.

LOCAL ELECTIONS

The Dreux local elections in September, and those at Morbihan in Brittany in December, saw

immigrants' and limits on employment of seasonal workers.

Some 4½ million immigrant workers are the first to feel the tightening of the screw as at Poissy. Housed in foyers, specially constructed barrack-like buildings, or bidonvilles (shanty towns), they are denied permanent residence and political rights for the first ten years. Those at Dreux had no legal right to vote. The loss of jobs render them liable to deportation. Thus employed secretly, and cheaply, they are without rights - the sans papiers (those without papers).

Imperialism - be it French, British or German - reacts to economic crisis with vicious policies, systematically attacking national minority people. Racism is an inextricable part of imperialism and comes out more openly as the crisis deepens and unemployment rises. That the official French labour movement sides with the PS/PCF administration shows that the danger is not simply a wave of petit-bourgeois reaction. A French national opinion poll last autumn recorded 51% that thought the best way to fight unemployment was "to send the immigrants back home".

France has a long heritage of xenophobic imperialism, evident in the colonial war in Indochina and French terror tactics in the 1954-62 Algerian war of National Independence. The French African Community continues the tradition in neo-colonial form.

"Don't let the poison spread" was the chant of Montigny's PCF mayor outside a Moroccan family flat. 'Class Struggle's report on such "euro-racism", in January 1981, described how rather than support demands for decent housing the PCF revisionist council of Vitry, near Paris, sent a bull-dozer to knock down a migrant workers' hostel, complaining that Vitry was becoming a black ghetto. Such racist chauvinist behaviour is endorsed by the PCF's policy of defending "the national interest and enhancement of France's position in the world". The attacks on African people in France is but a price to pay for the restructuring programme of French imperialism in a world crisis. Such 'internationalism' has no place in communist politics.

ship and arrogated to the rulers all the privilege and power of a master-race over the slaves they regarded as sub-human. The British patronised the Indian soldiers, recruited to control India and fight for Britain. They liked to think of themselves as "ma bap" (mother and father) to the Indian soldiers. Bose destroyed this imperial myth by showing that the Indian soldiers hated the British and could be won over to fight even their own brothers in order to gain vengeance, justice and freedom.

INA WINS

The INA failed in its military mission. But it won the hearts of the Indian people and made India unsafe for the white overlords. After the defeat of the Japanese, the British put three INA officers on trial. They hoped to expose them as men who had fought their own kith and kin, and thus to rehabilitate the British Raj. Instead they gave them a platform from which to denounce British enslavement and to declare their commitment to free India. The trial was abandoned as the navy and the airforce mutinied and the people rose up in rebellion. Gandhi and Nehru had to join in the acclaim for the INA which they had never supported. The British began to pack their bags and Mountbatten, who had mocked the INA as JIF's (Japanese-Inspired-Fifth Columnists) was wheeled in to preside over the debacle. Netaji and the INA had won.

India: *Bose-the Springing Tiger*

Since, in the eyes of the British, Subhas Chandra Bose was the villain of the piece, it is perhaps not surprising that his story rarely figures when the British recollect their colonisation of India. Richard Attenborough's version of the Indian national movement is no exception. In his Sunday school saga, "Gandhi", he omits to mention Bose's existence. It is ironic that the wave of nostalgia for the days of Empire, which Attenborough's effort largely inspired, as a palliative for a society in decay, has brought the image of Bose into the British media.

The recent Granada documentary (The War of the Springing Tiger) reproduced the traditional British attitude of hatred and fear. It is only with difficulty that the outline of Bose's life can be extricated from the distortions. Bose, known to hundreds of millions as Netaji (Leader) was a Bengali, an inheritor of a long tradition of armed resistance to British rule. Gaoled by the British early in his career, he was soon to become a major leader in the nationalist movement and an important influence in the All-India Congress, its largest political wing. As early as 1928 his emphasis on the military training of both men and women activists caused consternation among conservative Congress leaders. He

had contempt for the non-violent philosophy peddled by Gandhi. When Bose went to Europe in 1932, it was not to study with the radical intellectuals in Britain's universities, like Nehru, but to work for India's freedom. He took the opportunity to meet Britain's enemies - De Valera, Mussolini, Hitler.

Such was Bose's popularity on his return that Gandhi was compelled to invite him to become President of Congress in 1937. By that time Congress had a powerful influence in India, even on the British rulers. But Bose was opposed to any collaboration. When he stood for a second term, he was elected in the teeth of Gandhi's opposition. Gandhi forced other members of the working committee to resign rather than work with Bose. Bose left Congress and formed a new party, the Forward Block.

INDIAN NATIONAL ARMY

With the onset of World War 2, Bose was gaoled again. He was released after a hunger strike, and made a daring escape from India, finding his way to Germany. There he raised a legion of Indian prisoners of war, captured when serving in the British army, to fight for Indian freedom. Before the Indian legion could be used, the fortunes of the war changed. Germany outstretched itself by attacking Russia. The real

threat to Britain's domination of India came from the East, from Japan. The old empire tottered before the new. Malaya and Singapore fell.

Bose went to Japan by German submarine. There he set about building, from the thousands of Indian soldiers of the Raj captured by the Japanese advance, the Indian National Army (INA). Units of the INA advanced with the Japanese across Burma and across the border into India. But again the tide of war turned against Bose and the INA. The British, bolstered by American support, managed to push the Japanese back from the gates of India. Thousands of INA soldiers died or were captured in the retreat through Burma. Bose himself was tragically killed when a plane, taking him to carry on the struggle in the Soviet Union, exploded.

The truth which the Granada film tries to conceal is that Bose was the hero of the Indian national liberation struggle precisely because he represented everything the British hated. He had the insight to see that the Indian people had no enemy other than the British invaders, and that those invaders could be driven out. British hysteria was intense because their Empire was collapsing about them, together with their illusions and their lies.

For centuries the nation of parasites believed in the superiority of their race. But the Indian people were mobilising against them, and rejoiced in their defeat and humiliation by an Asian power. The British convinced themselves of their civilising mission, to bring the principles of democracy to inferior black nations. Bose allied with Britain's



Subhas Chandra Bose

enemies, regardless that their social systems might be fascist. For India fascism was British rule, which stole their land and their wealth, which imposed an alien authoritarian dictator-

NIGERIA COUP

Statement by Peoples Redemption Party

We reprint below a statement (slightly edited for reasons of space - CS) by the People's Redemption Party of Nigeria, UK Branch, on the military takeover in Nigeria.

THE MILITARY TAKEOVER IN NIGERIA

by the People's Redemption
Party of Nigeria.

Since Nigeria gained its independence in 1960, coups have followed one after the other, usually meaning nothing to the suffering of the people, only representing a reactionary reversal of the efforts at National Liberation.

Since 1979 when the Nigerian Armed Forces handed over to civilian rule, the brazen corruption of the Shagari regime made a military takeover a distinct possibility.

In August 1983, when the democratic process was mutilated, popular electoral wishes of the people were subverted and Shagari was again imposed on a restless population, a chance of government by military means became inevitable.

The coup d'etat of 31st December 1983, did not therefore take Nigerians by surprise, as the British mass media would want us to believe, in their attempt to confuse the world about the events in Nigeria.

MILITARY COUPS: OUR STAND

Since 1980, we in the PRP have been drawing the attention of democratic forces in Nigeria and the international community to the possibility of a military coup.

The only alternative is for the people to mobilise to change the sham bourgeois democratic political, economic system, equip the proletariat and progressive people with the most powerful ideological weapon of Marxism for the overthrow of the old decadent system, and create a genuine new world of socialism, to provide answers to our nation's problems.

The PRP believes that only the Nigerian people themselves, exercising their organised power, gained through protracted struggles against the domestic and international forces that have created, sustained and continue to benefit from the present dependent capitalist system in Nigeria can bring about lasting solutions to the hardships presently facing the country. The General Programme of the PRP is unambiguous:

"People's political power has to be organised effectively. It requires a set of institutions appropriate to it. It simply cannot make use of the existing state apparatus created by erstwhile ruling elites. Hence people's power needs a new state - the organs of power, (civil service, military, police, judiciary, executive and legislature) have to be so organised so as to reflect the will of the people at all levels and at all times."

SUBVERSION OF DEMOCRACY AND THE CONSTITUTION

Countless examples of the Shagari regime's subversion of the democratic process and the 1979 Constitution abound, but a few here will do:

1. The brazen illegality in the impeachment of the elected PRP Governor of Kaduna State, Abdulkadir Balarabe Musa, by the NPN dominated state legislature.



2. The manipulation of the Electoral Commission and the Police in order to eliminate the PRP.

3. The para-military siege of opposition media houses and the detention of their editors and journalists.

4. The intimidation and arrests of the leaderships of popular organisations like, Trade and Students' Unions.

POLITICAL REPRESSION

The PRP statement recalls examples of the Shagari administration's record of political repression:

1. The house arrests of three elected State Governors.

2. The numerous murders of innocent citizens at police check points.

3. The more recent massive detentions of political opponents following popular reactions to the massive rigging of the 1983 elections.

4. The killing by suffocation of 50 unemployed and semi-employed workers in Lagos in a windowless police security van on 3rd March.

5. The massacre by para-military mobile policemen of hundreds of peasant farmers, rendered landless by the Bakalon irrigation project in Shagari's home state on 26th April 1980.

6. The assassination of Bala Mohammed, a university lecturer, by the organised thugs of the NPN, directed by the Nigerian police on 10th July 1980.

To speak therefore, as the western commentators are apt to do, of a military coup ending democracy in Nigeria, is to display ignorance of the realities of Nigerian political life under President Shagari!

CORRUPTION AND MISMANAGEMENT

But not only was the Shagari regime repressive, it was also corrupt and inept. As a result, it proved quite incapable of even making an attempt to face the political and economic problems facing Nigeria. Problems moreover, that arose largely out of its own corruption and mismanagement. Crippling inflation, mounting shortages of essential commodities, the breakdown of essential services, unemployment, insecurity, austerity for the poor, foreign debts, arson, nation-wide fraud, accidental shootings by the

police who are also victims of exploitation, fraudulent bureaucracy, strikes and retrenchment, non-payment of the salaries and wages of the workers for the past six months, by even governments, armed robbery and personal insecurity.

POPULAR REACTIONS TO THE COUP

Against this background, it was little wonder that the long-suffering people of Nigeria would welcome any change in the hope that an end might be put to their plight. The initial euphoria that greeted the 31st December coup, in some parts of Nigeria, must be seen against this bleak background. Nigerians were in a situation where many would welcome any change in the hope an end would be put to their suffering.

OUR STAND

As we in the PRP have maintained, Nigerians should see a military coup for what it really is, neither a solution to our many problems nor a step forward for us.

The pronouncements of the new military leadership since assuming power signify that their perceived mission is to eliminate corruption and introduce more efficient methods of economic management within the context of the prevailing socio-economic system. Certainly the class composition and outlook of the new leadership does not indicate that radical changes are underway.

So, while we do not condone military intervention, we would like to call on the new military regime in Nigeria to adopt the 5 basic principles enunciated two years ago by the PRP, as an interim programme for a broad national government, which we believe could lay a firm foundation for a return to civilian rule. These are:

1. A commitment to promote, ensure open democratic activity, in all organs of the government, the elimination of all feudal and fascist practices which violate the fundamental rights of the people.

2. A commitment to promote and defend the unity of the people of Nigeria, over and above all sectional vested interests.

3. A commitment to bring about changes in the national economy to ensure that the present concentration of wealth in the hands of a tiny minority is brought to an end, the welfare of the people is promoted on the basis of social justice, equality of status and opportunity.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES



PHILIPPINES:

■ An international campaign has been launched to call for the release of Philippine political prisoner, Jose Maria Sison. Groups and individuals including Amnesty International, International Commission of Jurists, Simone de Beauvoir, Chinua Achebe, Noam Chomsky and Amiri Baraka have urged that "whatever his philosophical or political standpoint, Sison's civil and human rights must be accorded the same respect as those of other political prisoners."

The "Free Sison Committee" has called for the Philippine authorities to "end the torture of Sison, transfer him from isolation to regular detention, and move his case from a military tribunal to a civil court". The committee adds that if such conditions cannot be met, it demands Sison's immediate release.

Sison was arrested in November 1977, and has spent most of the time since then in solitary confinement. For more than seven months, he was shackled to his bed. The length and severity of his solitary confinement are unprecedented in recent Philippine history. The Marcos regime calls Sison a "subversive" and a threat to national security. It claims he is a chairman of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which today leads a growing revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of Marcos and US-domination of the Philippines.

Copies of a petition for Sison's release may be obtained from 'Class Struggle'. For more information, contact: "Free Sison Committee", c/o Philippines Research Centre, Box 101, Mansfield Depot, CT06251, USA.

AFGHANISTAN:

■ As the fourth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan passed, resistance to the occupying army is still growing and the Soviet army and its collaborators are in deep trouble. In December, a defected Afghan brigadier told of how the Soviet Union controls the Karmal puppet troops. "The promotion, pension and transfer of Afghan military officers are matters directly under the authority of Soviet advisers." He talked about the declining strength of the Karmal armed forces. His division now has only 1,000 men instead of its normal 8,000. "Continuous and successful guerrilla operations account for the sagging morale of the Karmal troops", he said.

Another report told of how on December 5, guerrillas attacked a jail in Ghazni and released 375 prisoners, including 100 freedom fighters. Some jail officials had cooperated with the guerrillas. Others had opened the jail doors for prisoners to escape.

COMORO ISLANDS:

■ In July 1975, French imperialism gave into the independence movement in its colony, the Comoro Islands, in the Indian Ocean and held a referendum.

95% voted for independence. But in a manner remarkably similar to the imposition of partition in Ireland, the French government decided that because one of the islands, Mayotte, voted against independence, this one should arbitrarily be carved off and baptised a "territorial collectivity of a particular type within the French Republic" (!). Francois Mitterand, when he was campaigning for election in 1981, promised to end this unjust state of affairs, which has been condemned by the United Nations, Organisation of African Unity and Non-Aligned Movement. But so far all he has done has been increase French military deployment, turning Mayotte into a military base in an area already plagued by imperialist contention.

The French parliament is now due to debate the issue and the Democratic Front of the Comoro Islands has issued a detailed plan showing how Mayotte must be re-integrated into the national territory.

PALESTINE:

■ Just before the main PLO forces were compelled to leave Lebanon by Syrian aggression, the PLO secured the release of thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners in exchange for six Israeli soldiers it held. But Israel has gone back on the deal by refusing to release 13 prisoners who it had agreed to set free. One of them is Ziad Abu Ain, deported from the USA to Israel in 1981, and given a life sentence. He and 12 others were brought to the airport from where they were meant to fly to Algeria, but after they'd signed release papers in a Red Cross tent, Zionist soldiers took them back to prison.

4. A commitment to promote and defend our national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and the building of a balanced, self-reliant and self-sustaining national economy and national defence.

5. A commitment to support the liberation struggle of all the people of Africa, black people everywhere, the support of all revolutionary movements throughout the world, fighting for liberation from imperialism, and its aggressive instruments, apartheid and zionism.

The events in Nigeria, particularly the announcement that political parties have been proscribed must have thrown some of our supporters and contacts in the UK and overseas into some confusion. For the avoidance of any doubt therefore we wish to make it clear that the UK Branch of the PRP shall

continue to exist. Furthermore, we shall try to maintain regular contacts with our comrades in Nigeria, who will continue to struggle for a new genuine system of socialism. We shall also try to continue to inform our friends and supporters of the day to day developments of our struggle.

Over the years, the solidarity and support of friends and supporters in the UK and overseas has inspired us in the face of immense odds. We have no doubt that we can continue to count on that solidarity and support - particularly in this our greatest hour of need.

Issued and produced by the Party Committee,
UK Branch,
PRP of Nigeria,
15 Carroun Road,
London SW8 1LJ.
16th January 1984.

Whose Conspiracy?

We reprint below a statement by four of the defendants in the ten-week long "conspiracy" trial that ended in Cardiff crown court on November 16th, 1983, (see last issue of 'Class Struggle').

THE BITTER TASTE OF 'JUSTICE'

On November 15, at Cardiff Crown Court, the four of us were found not guilty on every one of nine charges relating to conspiracy and explosions.

These very serious charges had been hanging over us for more than 16 months, including a ten week-long trial - the biggest and most expensive court case in Welsh legal history. Throughout this time, on many hundreds of occasions, our names were published and broadcast as the alleged perpetrators of a bombing campaign.

This defamation will, despite the verdict of the jury, blight our names for many years to come.

We trust, therefore, that you will afford us this opportunity to make the following points about our ordeal, and about the police and legal system which produced it:

1. REMAND

Three of us spent between six months and nine months in prison on remand, awaiting trial. Cardiff magistrates remanded us week after week on the say-so of the police, making no attempt to inquire into the strength of the allegations against us. One defendant was kept in prison for six months on a charge that was subsequently dropped! During our period of prison custody, two of us lost our jobs. Yet in Britain, unlike other EEC countries, we are not automatically entitled to compensation for this scandalous injustice.

2. EVIDENCE

The central and essential evi-

ence against three of us was that we had supposedly 'confessed' our part in terrorist activities to police officers in the police station - by word of mouth only, having written and signed nothing. We have always denied making such incriminating remarks.

This use of 'verbals' - unsigned, unsubstantiated police accounts of alleged interviews - has been condemned by every professional legal body for decades. As in some American states and European countries, 'verbals' should not be admissible as evidence in court - unless they can be confirmed by a tape recording of the interview, or the presence there of a suspect's solicitor.

3. SEARCHES

A major element in the evidence against one defendant was the alleged 'discovery' of a chemical at his house. The defendant has always claimed that this substance was 'planted' in his house by police.

Police searches in serious cases should take place in the presence of a solicitor. The current system, under which magistrates have scattered search warrants around like confetti, must be reformed.

4. POLICE CUSTODY

Most of our court case boiled down to a single question for the jury: "Do you believe the police accounts of what was said and done, when the defendants were in the police station, or do you tend to agree with the defendants' version of events?"

All of us insist that we were 'verballed', offered deals and threatened: two of us maintain that we were physically assaulted: one of us was brutalised into signing a false confession. The jury did not accept the police accounts of supposed interviews, nor did they accept the signed confessions as true

and voluntary.

In future, there must be safeguards for people in police custody, immediate access to a solicitor, and the right (for example) of police authority members to inspect police stations unannounced, would be a start.

Cardiff 6



5. CONSPIRACY

Conspiracy charges are notorious for their use in Britain - especially in Wales - against political and trade union dissidents. They are a substitute for real evidence of criminal activity. They permit the prosecution to introduce all sorts of prejudicial matter into a trial - as was an abundant feature of this trial.

In his summing-up, Judge Farquharson told the jury that if they accepted the defence case, they the jurors would be agreeing that numerous - and very senior - officers from four different police forces had conspired to fabricate evidence on a massive scale. So who conspired against whom?

We let the jury's verdicts answer that question.

6. TRIAL BY JURY

Had we been tried in northern Ireland, all of us would undoubtedly have been found guilty in a non-jury Diplock Court. As it was, we had the protection of trial by jury. Even then, considering how enormous are the powers and resources of the State, justice is not certain. We were fortunate to have twelve courageous and independent-minded people to weigh up the 'evidence' against us.

But there are moves afoot to abolish the trial-by-jury in at least some cases in Britain. Indeed, during our trial a Lord Justice in the Appeal Court, delivered a speech in Cardiff in which he dwelt upon the alleged 'burdens', 'inadequacies' and even 'injustices' of the jury system.

7. AN INQUIRY

Following the verdicts in our case, an internal police inquiry is taking place into our allegations against the police. We have no faith that such an inquiry can be sufficiently impartial in its considerations and ruthless in its conclusions.

Our allegations are very serious ones: we would not in all fairness expect any police officer - however honest and forthright - to find twenty fellow-officers (up to the rank of chief superintendent) guilty of conspiracy, fabrication, forgery, perjury, physical assault, making threats and inducements, etc. etc.

Those are our charges, which we are prepared to argue and substantiate in front of any inquiry, even a one-sided police one. But the truth and justice would be better served by a more independent inquiry, such as one established by the Home Office or the Welsh Council

for Civil and Political Liberties.

8. THE MASS MEDIA

Outside Wales, our trial and tribulations have received almost no publicity whatsoever. Despite the recent history of police swoops, mass arrests, frequent Special Branch intimidation and surveillance, protests and pickets outside police stations in Wales, culminating in this disgraceful show trial, these events and the issues raised by them have been ignored by the London-based 'British' newspapers, television and radio services.

Had this police persecution and show trial occurred in the Soviet bloc, the publicity throughout Britain would have been enormous. Mrs Thatcher and Mr Reagan would have denounced this hounding of political dissidents, the fabricated evidence, the KGB methods, the political charges, imprisonment without trial and so on. But when it happens here, all we have in the freedom-loving British mass media is Silence.

We were arrested - on this and other occasions - because of our political views and activities. Our political and civil rights have been upheld by a brave jury. We remain what we have always been - socialists and Welsh patriots.

The British State has become more openly oppressive in its treatment of political dissidents in recent years. The Police and Criminal Evidence Bill should be seen in this context. We urge all people who treasure democratic rights to rally to their defence, to support the political and civil liberties organisations which give priority to this crucial struggle.

David Burns, Robert Griffiths, Nicholas Hodges, Adrian Stone, Pen-y-Peel Road, Canton, Cardiff.

Defend SRSP

On 26 November of last year, over 1,000 people marched through Glasgow to commemorate the great Scottish revolutionary John Maclean. The march was organised by the Scottish Republican Socialist Party (SRSP) and supported by the Republican Band Alliance. This event marked an important step in the growth of mass support for Scottish Republicanism based on an alliance with Irish Republicanism.

The growing Republican Movement in Scotland has not escaped the notice of the British state. Thomas Kelly is still being held in custody and his trial comes up in the last week of January (see last issue of 'Class Struggle'). At the end of December, the police detained Donald Anderson, the SRSP's National Organiser and Creag Browning, a 16-year old who had played a leading role in organizing the John Maclean march. (At the same time, police detained Sandy Mathers, a founding member of Glasgow

Irish Freedom Action Committee (GIFAC) who have worked closely with SRSP.) All were held under the PTA. Sandy Mathers was later released. Donald Anderson and Creag Browning have now been charged with conspiracy to further the aims of SRSP or other association unknown by criminal means. The police claim to have discovered some 70 sticks of gelignite at Creag's house. By 'coincidence' gelignite was also discovered on loyalists in Glasgow 2 days earlier. It is obvious that Donald and Creag have been set up using some of this explosive. The last time Donald was detained, the police said to him: "Next time, we'll fit you up." It now looks as though they are carrying out their threat.

Another two SRSP members, David Dinsmore (formerly National Organiser) and Adam Busby are at present in custody in Dublin. They will be fighting extradition by Britain.

As the attack intensifies, so

has the campaign to defend the SRSP. Numerous letters of support have been sent to the prisoners. Pickets were organised outside the police station in Glasgow where SRSP members were held. On Saturday 14th January a meeting was held to build further support, at which the main speaker was Matt Lygate, himself only recently free from prison (see October 'Class Struggle').

The SRSP is now being attacked in the same way that Welsh Republicans and the Bradford 12 were attacked. British imperialism fears the growth of revolutionary organisation and has always attempted to smash such movements. It is no accident that these organisations have arisen among the people of Scotland and Wales and the national minorities within England, who all face national oppression and have been the first to build links with the Irish national struggle.

New Year with the PTB

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

The Party of Labour of Belgium (PTB) is a Marxist-Leninist organisation which, through patient work over a number of years, has built up a healthy base in the industrial working class of Belgium. It anticipated and avoided the sort of crises which most European Marxist-Leninist organisations have gone through in the past few years. It publishes its weekly paper, "Solidaire", in French and Flemish language editions, which are widely distributed. It was therefore with great pleasure that I went to the New Year celebrations of such a strong and healthy revolutionary party.

I saw posters advertising the event in several towns on the way to Brussels, as well as in Brussels itself. A good job of publicity was done, through "Solidaire" and posters, and the party even managed to get it mentioned in one of the bourgeois papers.

The celebrations took place in a working class area which has a high proportion of migrant workers living in it, but also a racist mayor. Quite a number of young national minority people came to the event.

The evening began with the showing of some slides about the revolutionary struggle led by Pierre Mulele in the Congo (now called Zaire) after the neo-colonial authorities had murdered Patrice Lumumba. They showed how Mulele's Marxist-Leninist views led him to wage a struggle against the neo-colonial regime by mobilising and relying on the people in a mass armed struggle. They also showed how the regime saved itself by calling in mercenaries, many from Belgium, who "restored order" in the most barbaric way.

Then there was a strong performance by a Zairean poet, followed by the Azanian group Pula Arts Commune. The latter is composed of Azanians who had to leave their country during the 1970's, and their words and music reflect their identification with the Black Consciousness trend in Azanian politics.

At midnight, everyone stood for the singing of the "Internationale", and then people embraced or shook hands, wishing each other "Happy New Year" as the Belgian progressive group "Seven Roots" launched into their first number.

All in all, it was a great opening to the New Year.

Send cards and letters to: Donald Anderson, 11631, HMP Barlinnie, Glasgow.
Creag Browning, 4074, Longriggend Remand institutions, Greengairs, Nr. Airdrie, Scotland.
Thomas Kelly, No 9467 at same address as Donald Anderson.

FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



Hypocrisy and Harrods

By Mark Harris.

During 1983 a number of nationalists were shot down on the streets of northern Ireland by the British Army in the shoot-to-kill campaign.

Hundreds of people have been held for up to 22 months waiting to be tried in a no-jury court, with the sole evidence against them being statements by paid-perjurers who have been threatened and bribed into signing the statements written by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Of those who have been subsequently released when some "supergrasses" have retracted their false statements, many have been re-arrested on the word of yet another paid-perjurer. Internment lives on in a new form. Over 70 have been imprisoned, and given long sentences solely on the word of these informers, despite their evidence being described by the judges themselves variously as "contradictory, bizarre and in some respects incredible" or "unsatisfactory and inconsistent" etc.

Loyalist terror gangs have murdered and injured nationalist people. In one recent case a 15-year old boy was grabbed outside his house by two men and shot in the groin.

The Army, Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) and RUC harass and intimidate nationalists at every opportunity.

The nationalist population are discriminated against in jobs and housing. Their country is economically dominated by British imperialism.

An occupying army patrols the streets in the north of their country. The police force and the UDR work hand-in-hand with Orange fascists.

MEDIA DISINFORMATION

And where has been the British press? It justifies the partition of Ireland, the military occupation and the legal repression. It hides the reality of every day life for the nationalist people. It presents Orange fascists as democrats. It ignores or plays down loyalist terrorism against the people. It denies the nationalist parties the right to be heard in Britain. It lies about and distorts the aims and policies of the Republican movement. And it flies into hysteria and hypocrisy when the people of Ireland fight for their rights.

It is in this context that the media's response to the Harrods bombing by the IRA must be seen. It is not the bombing itself that the press is most concerned about. That is only the immed-

iate reason for their explosion of contemptible rhetoric. It is the reason behind the bombing, that drives them into such a frenzied fit of anti-Irish racist abuse. It is the Irish people's fight for freedom that outrages the Barons of Fleet Street.

SOME UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

The police were given 35 minutes warning of the Harrods bombing. They were given the location and description of the car. They knew the call was genuine through the use of an IRA code word. Why did they take so long to get there? Why was the street not cleared immediately? Why did Harrods not clear the store through the rear fire exits? Who turned a risk of civilian casualties into a reality?

"IT'S WAR" shouts a Sun headline, declaring war on the nationalist people. "Send in the SAS" cry the gutter press. But they are years too late.

The SAS have already been sent in. They have already murdered nationalists in Ireland. The war has been going on for 800 years already. The latest phase has lasted over 15 years. Yes. There is a war. It is not just a question of a few "lunatic terrorists". It is a question of a struggle by the people of Ireland for the liberation of their country. There is mass support for the Republican

or condemn the struggle of the Irish people.

What they should learn is a hard lesson that as members of the oppressor nation, they have one clear duty - to give UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT to the Republican leadership - chosen by the Irish people and their fight against Brit imperialism.

Yours in struggle,

Ralph Backstrom

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Movement. The electoral successes of Sinn Fein and the total inability of the forces of imperialism to destroy the IRA despite their brutal methods show it. It is a war. And in a war, regrettably, innocent people die.

When, during the second world war, British planes deliberately fire-bombed the German cities of Dresden, killing thousands of civilians, did the Mail or the Express scream "COWARDS".

Did they call the French partisans who fought the partition and occupation of the country by German imperialism, "BASTARDS"? Did they call on the French, Norwegian, Yugoslav and Albanian freedom fighters to abandon guerrilla war and "STAND UP AND FIGHT LIKE MEN" against the tanks and guns of a modern army?

Yes: it is regrettable that civilians die in a war. But the IRA have shown more genuine intention to reduce innocent casualties and hit military and economic targets than British imperialism, whose army and loyalist agents terrorise the nationalist people of Ireland.

THE SOLUTION IS WITHDRAWAL

And there is a solution. There is only one solution. It is for British imperialism to end its colonial rule. It is for the Irish people to have their right to independence and self-determination. Because we can rest assured the Irish people will NOT stop fighting for their rights. They will continue to fight their JUST fight. They have every right to do so.

And they have every right to demand that every democrat in Britain should stand up and support them.

END THE HYPOCRISY

STOP BRITAIN'S WAR IN IRELAND

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE

REMEMBER BLOODY SUNDAY

(Continued from front page)

ARMY OPENS FIRE

By 4.15 p.m. the small crowd was moving away from the scene towards the rally when three companies of the Parachute Regiment swept up in armoured cars. They opened fire on the fleeing crowd. Afterwards the Army was to claim that they fired at people shooting at them. Kevin McElhinney was crawling away on his hands and knees. The bullet that killed him entered his left buttock and exited from his shoulder. Bernard McGuigan was shot in the back of his head as he crawled on his stomach towards his dying friend Pat Doherty. A soldier fired a shot at point blank range into the chest of Gerald McKinney as he stood with his hands over his head.

LIES TO JUSTIFY MURDER

None of the killed were shown to have carried arms. Early claims by the Army that some of the dead were on their "wanted list" were later withdrawn. None of the injured were charged with any offence.

Lord Widgery's one-man Tribunal white-washed the Army. But the facts remain. The Government years later even paid a measly "compensation" to some of the families involved. Hardly what they would do if the Army's version was true.

BLOODY SUNDAY SHOWS NATURE OF BRITISH RULE

Bloody Sunday was a deliberate pre-planned assault aimed at cowering nationalist opposition. The cold-blooded murder of unarmed civilians showed clearly how British Imperialism would respond to political protest.

Bloody Sunday will be remembered as a particularly savage act of murder by the Army of occupation. It must also be remembered as an extreme example of the basic nature of British rule in the north of Ireland. This is the enemy that the nationalist people and their Republican organisations are fighting today.

stop show trials!

By a member of Manchester Irish Solidarity Committee.

On Thursday January 18th, the Manchester Irish Solidarity Committee (MISC) held a successful public meeting in Longsight public library. Forty people heard how the "supergrass" system of paid perjurers had created a series of show trials in which over 70 people have been convicted, mainly on the sole evidence of discredited

duced by MISC. The tone of the articles was intended to whip up opposition to the meeting and special precautions were taken to defend the meeting from fascists. In the end the threat did not materialise but as the paper also printed where we would be on the following Saturday and Sunday, MISC was still prepared to defend its right to expose British imperialism in Ireland. In the event the publicity probably increased public attendance and backfired for the Evening News.

The local Council was rattled enough to hold a meeting of a special ad-hoc sub-committee to reconsider their decision to allow MISC to use the library. However, as



Picket of Crumlin Road Court against the Kevin McGrady show trial

informers who have been blackmailed and bribed into signing statements written for them by the police. Many who have been acquitted have been re-arrested on the word of another perjurer and effectively interned for up to 22 months without ever being convicted. 'Informers' who have retracted their 'evidence' such as Robert Lean have described the pressure brought on them to sign their names to such lying statements.

Over 350 people are awaiting trial on the basis of such statements.

GUTTER PRESS

The local gutter press, the Manchester Evening News, attempted to get the meeting stopped. Articles printed in the week of the meeting quoted a forged press statement which the paper alleged had been pro-

they had already banned us once last year and had had to back down after a public campaign, they voted to allow the meeting to go ahead.

It is worth noting that not once in the articles did the Manchester Evening News say what the meeting was about or quote MISC's exposure of the show trials. The paper concentrated on using the hysteria generated by media coverage of the Harrods bombing to stop the meeting and prevent us speaking the truth about Ireland. They had to deny us our democratic right to speak. They did not succeed and they won't in the future.

Editor's note:

The MISC meeting reported above was a part of a week of action by the Ireland Solidarity Movement aimed at exposing the Show Trials and use of paid-perjurers in the north of Ireland. Other activities were carried out in London, Liverpool, Bradford, Dundee, Edinburgh and Leeds, and included meetings, street petitions and prison and court pickets.

Forthcoming events

Remember Frank Stagg

Picket called by Sinn Fein in support of Irish political prisoners and in memory of hunger striker Frank Stagg, who died in Wakefield jail eight years ago.

Sunday, 12th February, 1984, 1p.m., Wakefield Prison, Love Lane, Wakefield. (Two minutes from town centre, near Wakefield Westgate BR station.)

Bristol TOM

Bristol Troops Out Movement meets every Wednesday at the Old Co-op, Chelsea Road, Easton, at 7.30p.m. All friends of the Irish people welcome.



Dear Editor,

As the armed struggle conducted by the Irish people sharpens, we see the so-called British 'Left' once again falling all over themselves in a scramble to condemn the armed struggle. In turn it is amazing to hear their silence as the murderous British Army wields its jackboot in the occupied six counties. Blinded by that most British of diseases, social-chauvinism, they fail to differentiate between the violence of the oppressed and the violence of the oppressor. The Irish people have a RIGHT to fight back; truth and justice lie on the side of the freedom fighters and they have a clear moral superiority over the British Army.

Any attempt by the so-called British left to dictate to the Irish people is an act of social-chauvinism. Ultimately they unite with the imperialist bourgeoisie when they criticise