

CLASS STRUGGLE



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People's War Will Win

"The imperialists can no longer rule the roost in the world as they did before." Ho Chi Minh's words were proved true when, 10 years ago, the US finally withdrew from Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos. The people of these three small countries had defeated the giant US war machine through protracted people's war.

Today, people's war is continuing to win victories. In El Salvador, the liberation forces control one third of the country. In Lebanon, for the first time ever, Israel has been forced to withdraw from Arab lands by the armed struggle of an Arab people. Significantly this has been a people's struggle not one that relied on a conventional army.

BASES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Mao Zedong developed the theory and practice of people's war in the course of the long struggle for the liberation of the Chinese people. After the Chinese Communists suffered major defeats in the cities in the 1920's, they built bases in the countryside, implementing policies on land reform, women's liberation and many other social issues. At the same time, they built an armed force to defend their bases. These policies were further developed during the War of Resistance to Japan. On the basis of broad, popular support, the Chinese Party developed guerrilla fighters, militia units and finally the People's Liberation Army, and defeated first the mighty Japanese army and later the US-backed KMT forces to win liberation in 1949.

GUERRILLA WARFARE

People's war is not simply a form of guerrilla war. Reagan's beloved "freedom fighters", the Contras in Nicaragua, use guerrilla warfare. But because they represent the forces of imperialism who want to turn the clock back on the popular, democratic changes that have taken place in the country, they can never win a base among the people. Historically, it is imperialism that has started off strong in terms of weapons and armies. The people's forces have had to be built up from nothing. They have gradually worn down a strong army and armed themselves at the same time, basing themselves among the people.

The liberation fighters of south Vietnam in the first place armed themselves with weapons seized from the Saigon and US armies. They dug tunnels and lived underground to survive American bombs. They ambushed the American GI's with traps made of bamboo spikes and shot down planes and helicopters with ancient guns. They could only win this kind of war with the people's support.

SOCIAL POLICIES

In both Vietnam and China, and in most Third World countries, land reform is a basic question. Land was redistributed or taxes

lowered by the revolutionary forces. In the Mekong Delta area, following the Geneva Agreements, the peasants rose up in self-defence when the US-backed Diem regime tried to take the land back which the peasants had gained under the Viet Minh in the earlier period.



Equality for women has been another key question. The Chinese Party policy was to redistribute land, giving women the right to own land and freedom in marriage, thus winning their support. In Eritrea today, women make up one third of the liberation forces because of the liberation front's social policies advocating freedom of women from both imperialist and feudal oppression.

Policies on medical care have also been developed by revolutionary forces, to take care of people's basic needs. In the Philippines, progressive forces have developed free medical programmes for slum-dwellers in the cities who could not otherwise afford to pay for medicine.

In many countries of the world, the majority of the people are still illiterate and it is the revolutionary forces who bring education to the people for the first time. As with medical care, the content of education is suited to the needs of the people, drawing on the traditional as well as the new. Many other examples could be given. As imperialism affects every aspect of the people's lives, the forces of progress

have to develop an alternative.

The armed struggle is not an end in itself but the means by which the people, in the first place, defend the gains they have made or protect themselves against an army of aggression. In many countries of the Third World it has been possible to win and defend extensive liberated areas in which such policies can be developed. A new society is built in the course of destroying the old.

In the Third World, imperialism benefits only a tiny elite, while the majority of the people suffer. Accordingly, progressive forces have tried to unite as broad a number of people as possible in the fight against the main enemy. One aspect has been the need for the worker-peasant alliance. Another has been the need to unite people of different nationalities. In south Vietnam, in the late fifties, the support of many of the national minority people in the Central Highlands protected those who went on to build the National Liberation Front from the Diem regime. Many of the main bases of the New People's Army of the Philippines are among national minority peoples and the Eritrean People's Liberation Front puts much emphasis on the equality of the nine nationalities within Eritrea.

IMPERIALISM WILL BE DEFEATED!

The people of Indochina defeated the US because the vast majority of the people were united in the struggle against US imperialism. Today, this struggle continues mainly in the Third World where people's war has dealt great blows to imperialism.

In the north of Ireland, British imperialism is fighting against the nationalist people who, under the leadership of the Republican Movement, are fighting back with armed struggle while at the same time the Republican Movement develops extensive policies on a wide-range of social issues affecting people's everyday lives - housing and drugs, to give only two examples.

Whatever hardships and difficulties people around the world may encounter, they are sure to succeed in the fight against imperialism. In this country the only way forward is to build an alliance with all those fighting for national freedom and independence, while at the same time, learning from their struggles. It is certainly true, as Mao Zedong said:

COUNTRIES WANT INDEPENDENCE
NATIONS WANT LIBERATION
PEOPLE WANT REVOLUTION

Ireland

Easter Statement

REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT SPEAKS

ARRESTS & P.8. CAMPAIGNS, DEMONSTRATION

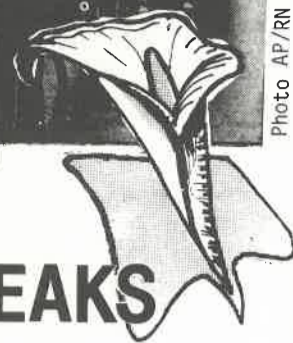


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Philippines



'Parliament of the Streets' An Interview P.6.

Kampuchea Vietnam's Vietnam P.4.



'Killing Fields' Reviewed

Editorial MAY DAY 1985 INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY

Workers and Oppressed Peoples and Nations of the World, Unite!

When the Vietnamese liberation army marched into Saigon and re-named it Ho Chi Minh City in time to celebrate May Day 1975, people around the world rejoiced in the victory of the Vietnamese people against the US. As Ho Chi Minh had predicted: "We, a small nation, will have earned the signal honour of defeating, through heroic struggle, two big imperialisms - the French and the American - and of making a worthy contribution to the world national liberation movement."

For more than twenty years, the Vietnamese people had been fighting US imperialism. The US was the most powerful country in the world and had a massive army with the most modern and powerful weapons of destruction and seemingly inexhaustible reserves to back it up. But in spite of the incalculable suffering and destruction, the people won. Their struggle had a worldwide impact.

PEOPLE'S WAR

The most important lesson of the war in Vietnam, as in neighbouring Laos and Kampuchea, was that imperialism can never defeat a people's war. In Indochina, the US used every method of modern warfare apart from nuclear weapons and every strategy of counter-insurgency. The US caused immense death and destruction. But the US was defeated.

The US war in Indochina was an unjust war. The Americans had no right to be there. The longer they pursued their aims of controlling Indochina, and the more different strategies they devised to attempt to subdue the people of Indochina, the more determined were the people of Indochina to fight for their national independence and freedom.

At the end of the Second World War, the US had emerged as the most powerful imperialist power. But US policy suffered defeats in China and Korea. The war in Vietnam was seen by the US as the key to maintaining their control in the strategic area of Southeast Asia. Their defeat was a major setback to their strategy for world domination.

TRUE NATURE OF IMPERIALISM EXPOSED

In the course of the long struggle, the true nature of US imperialism was exposed. The lessons were learnt not only by the people of Indochina who suffered most directly but by people around the world.

In the first place, people in the Third World were inspired by the heroic struggles of the people of Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam. But also people in other countries including the US itself, began to see for themselves the true nature of imperialism.



The lessons apply to the situation in Nicaragua today. Again, the US is threatening to invade another country in the name of freedom. Whatever the US tries, we can be confident that in the end the people of Nicaragua will win. In the Philippines, the mass movement against the US and Marcos continues to grow in strength. The New People's Army is seen as the greatest threat to the Marcos regime. But increased repression cannot stop the resistance. The nationalist people of Ireland are fighting against British imperialism in another people's war. 16 years of occupation by the British army have not been able to prevent the growing fightback of



Irish people to British imperialism.

OCCUPATION OF KAMPUCHEA

There is another lesson from developments over the last ten years in Indochina, which has caused much confusion among progressive people. Since 1975, contradictions between Vietnam and Kampuchea have become antagonistic and led to a situation where the Vietnam has invaded and continues to occupy neighbouring Kampuchea. Vietnam, which for so many years fought such a heroic struggle against imperialism for its national independence and freedom, is now attempting to suppress the struggle of the Kampuchean people for their national independence and freedom.

Historically, there have been many differences between the two countries as well as unity in the common struggle against US imperialism. In the past there have been fears of Vietnamese domination of the smaller nations of Indochina. There are major economic problems to settle such as the use of the Mekong River and the exploitation of oil in disputed territories. There are border problems left over from colonial days, and more complicated questions of different strategies in the war of liberation from the US.

However such questions could have been settled in a non-antagonistic way if it had not been for the role of the Soviet Union. Vietnam has now become a proxy for Soviet policy, in its strategy in Southeast Asia. The process by which this took place is difficult to understand well without more detailed study of the history of the Vietnam Workers' Party and the growth of revisionism within it. The occupation of Kampuchea and domination of Laos are the most extreme signs of this. Other signs are the dependence of Vietnam on the Soviet Union for military and economic backing; its membership of COMECON; the export of workers to Eastern Europe and the Soviet

Union; the flight of many Chinese and Vietnamese people from the country - the so-called boat people - who are clearly not all merchants as is alleged; and the removal of 'Maoist' leaders from the Party such as Hoang Van Hoan and General Chu Van Tai, a member of the Tay national minority in the north of Vietnam.

TWO SUPERPOWERS

After their long struggle to be free of US imperialism, the Vietnamese party has now fallen into the arms of the Soviet Union. And this is the second lesson we can learn from Indochina. Real independence and freedom cannot be won by relying on one superpower against another.

In some parts of the world, the Soviet Union has now become the main enemy. The people of Afghanistan, for example, are fighting a people's war against the Soviet Union. Once again, they face a superpower armed with powerful weapons and huge armies. But they have already shown that they will not be defeated.

In Eritrea and Tigray, the people face an army of the Ethiopian regime, armed with Soviet weapons and advised by Soviet technicians. Meanwhile the US and other Western imperialist powers continue to prop up the regime, plotting their return to dominate Ethiopia some time in the future. The victories won by the people in Eritrea and Tigray have been won by relying on their own people and not on any outside power.

These lessons are most immediate for the people in the Third World and in Ireland. But they are lessons for us, too. British imperialism is fond of boasting of its "special relationship" with the USA and we should have no illusions that in fighting for real social change in this country, we will face the power of the US. But we should have no illusions either, that the Soviet Union is a friend in this struggle.

WE REMEMBER THE HUNGER STRIKERS

Spirit of freedom



Like the lark I too have fought for my freedom, not only in captivity where I now languish, but also while on the outside where my country is held captive. I have been captured and imprisoned but like the lark I too have seen the outside of the wire cage.

I am now in H-Block where I refuse to change to suit the people who oppress, torture and imprison me, and who wish to de-humanise me. Like the lark I need no changing.

It is my political ideology and principles that my captors wish to change. They have suppressed my body and attacked my dignity. If I were an ordinary prisoner they would pay little if any attention to me, knowing that I would conform to their institutional whims.

Bobby Sands died four years ago on May 5th. Following him, Francis Hughes, Patsy O'Hara and seven more young men died on hunger strike. They died because the British government was determined to treat Irish freedom fighters as criminals, and indeed, to criminalise the whole struggle of Ireland for national liberation. Their five demands were rejected by the Conservative government, and when Labour spokesperson Concannon came to see the dying Bobby Sands, it was not with a message of solidarity, however hypocritical, but an appeal to give up. Bobby Sands did not give up, and nine more brave men died after him before the hunger strike ended.

They did not win their demands, but they shook British imperialist rule in Ireland. British governments had always claimed that the IRA/INLA were "cowardly terrorists", but the courage of the hunger strikers nailed that lie for the whole world to see. Their sacrifice placed Ireland's struggle in the spotlight of world attention. International solidarity with Ireland's fight rose to levels not seen before. Britain claimed publicly that the Republicans had no popular support, and that was why they did not contest elections. Bobby Sands stood for election in the Fermanagh and South Tyrone bye-election and won, with over 30,000 votes. Not only had the nationalist people voted for a candidate who was a declared Republican, but one who had been imprisoned by Britain as a "convicted terrorist", showing that they accepted the legitimacy of the armed struggle to free Ireland and were ready to stand by those who waged it.

The RCL remembers and honours Ireland's martyrs, and pledges to continue to work in solidarity with Ireland's struggle and the Republican revolutionaries who lead it.

Ho Chi Minh "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom."

It would not be right to remember the great victory of the Vietnamese people without paying tribute to their leader for many years, Comrade Ho Chi Minh. Ho Chi Minh, who died in 1969, was one of the great revolutionary leaders of the twentieth century, who not only led his own people in revolutionary struggle but was an inspiration to millions around the world.

Ho Chi Minh was known to his people as Uncle Ho. He was a man who remained close to the people, famous for his simple and thrifty lifestyle. In his last Testament, he wrote: "All my life, I have served the Fatherland, the revolution and the people with all my heart and strength. If I should now depart from this world, I would have nothing to regret, except not being able to serve longer and more."

Ho Chi Minh became a Communist as a young man, living and working in Europe. He was greatly inspired by the October Revolution and became convinced that Marxism-Leninism showed the way forward to the people of the 'colonial' countries.

He returned to Indochina and worked underground for a long time. He spent many years working with revolutionaries in China and spent time in prison in China and in British prisons in Hongkong. He returned to his country to take part in the great struggles against the Japanese, French and Americans.

Ho Chi Minh's early writings expose the nature of French colonial rule in Indochina and describe the terrible sufferings of the people. As the struggle developed, he clarifies the different tasks and policies for the many different stages of struggle of the Vietnamese revolution. In particular, he advocated that Vietnam would go through a national democratic revolution to free itself from foreign rule before it could advance to the stage of socialism.

Although the concrete conditions in Britain today are different from those facing the Vietnamese people at the time, there are general lessons we can learn from his writings. Ho Chi Minh stressed that victories were the result of the unity and heroism of the people, organised and led by their Communist Party. In particular, he stressed the role of the party, armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism and building close ties with the people. He also pointed to the need to build a United Front as a method of uniting the people. Another point emphasised, which still applies in many parts of the world today, is the need for a firm alliance between the workers and peasants, who make up the main force of the revolution.

He always talked of the need for unity within the socialist camp. It is, of course, speculation to ask what would have happened to the Vietnamese Workers' Party if Ho Chi Minh had lived longer. But he often talked of the unity between the Chinese and Vietnamese struggles and his writings drew attention to the need to mobilise both Chinese and other national minorities living within Vietnam, on an equal basis. It is difficult to believe that Ho Chi Minh would have allowed contradictions with China and Kampuchea to develop the way they now have.



Ho Chi Minh

Writing of the debates in the communist movement in the 1920's in Paris, Ho Chi Minh explained how he first approached them: "If you do not condemn colonialism, if you do not side with the colonial peoples, what kind of revolution are you then waging?"

The questions he posed to European Communist at that time, are as valid today as they were then. In a speech made in Moscow in 1924, he said:

"According to Lenin, the victory of the revolution in Western Europe depends on its close contact with the national liberation movement against imperialism in the colonies and dependent countries; the national question, as Lenin taught us, forms a part of the general problem of proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship.

"What have the bourgeoisie in the colonialist countries done in order to keep the colonial masses under their oppressive rule? Everything. Besides using all the means given them by their State administrative machine, they have carried out an intense propaganda. They have crammed the heads of the people of the metropolitan countries with colonialist ideas through speeches, films, newspapers, exhibitions ...

"As for our Communist Parties in Great Britain, Holland, Belgium and other countries whose bourgeoisie have invaded the colonies, what have they done? What have they done since the day they assimilated Lenin's theses in order to educate the proletariat of their countries in the spirit of genuine proletarian internationalism and close contact with the toiling masses in the colonies? What our Parties have done in this domain amounts to almost nothing. As for me, born in a French colony and a member of the French Communist Party, I am sorry to say that our Party has done very little for the colonies."

There are countless stories of the heroic resistance of the men, women and children of Indochina to the giant American war machine - the struggle of the grasshopper and the elephant as Ho Chi Minh called it.

The Vietnamese people drew on a centuries-old tradition of struggle against foreign invaders - the Mongols, the imperial Chinese armies, the Thais, the British and the French. But in the US, they met the most powerful and modern army that the world had ever seen.

After the Second World War, the French with British help, tried to take back Indochina. With American support they fought a war with the Viet Minh - a liberation army built up in the fight against the Japanese - which the Vietnamese won with their dramatic victory at the siege of Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

GENEVA AGREEMENTS

The Geneva Agreements of 1954, between the French and the Vietnamese, guaranteed elections in 1956 and temporarily divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel.

The US deliberately set out to ensure that the Geneva Agreements were never kept. President Eisenhower said, in his memoirs: "I have never talked or corresponded with a person knowledgeable in Indochinese affairs who did not agree that should elections have been held ... possibly

80 percent of the population would have voted for the Communist Ho Chi Minh."

Instead the US chose to bring death and destruction to the land and people of Indochina on a scale far greater than in the whole of the world during the Second World War. The neutral governments of Laos and Kampuchea were subverted and the war extended to these countries. The Philippines, Thailand, Japan and the south of Korea became base areas for the US involvement. The indirect effects of the war reached round the world.

INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

The twentieth century had seen the rise of the national liberation movements in the colonised countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Resistance to colonialism had always existed but the October Revolution in Russia had inspired a new leadership to these movements. Throughout the 20's and the 30's, the national movements grew, as in India and China and other parts of Asia. During the Second World War these movements grew in strength in the war of resistance against Japan. Following the Second World War, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was set up and the Chinese people won their liberation. The growth of the Viet Minh, under the leadership of the (then) Indochinese Communist Party, was part of this great international trend.

The US emerged the most powerful

imperialist power in the world. In spite of setbacks in China and Korea, it was determined to maintain and develop its control and exploitation of large areas of the world. It was in Vietnam that the US took a stand. Its defeat there, was a defeat of world-wide significance.

In the first place, the motives were economic. Arguing for support for France in an earlier period, President Eisenhower said: "If Indochina goes, several things happen right away... The tin and tungsten that we so greatly value from that area, would cease to come. So, when the United States votes 400 million dollars to help that war, we are not voting a give-away programme. We are voting for the cheapest way that we can, to prevent the occurrence of something that would be of the most terrible significance to the USA, our security, our power and ability to get certain things from the Indochinese territory and Southeast Asia."

COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY WAR

As time went on, the war became more expensive for the USA, in terms of military and economic costs and in terms of American lives. It was clear that the Vietnam War had become a test of strength and symbol of American power round the world. Its defeat was a signal to the people of the world that the "invincible" elephant could be crushed.

American policy and methods in Vietnam, and in Indochina as a whole, shared many features with other counter-revolutionary wars fought by other imperialist countries. Britain had fought a long war in Malaya to suppress the revolution there. France lost in Indochina but went on to try and suppress the Algerian revolution. But the US had the most sophisticated and powerful strategy - both politically and militarily -

and residents said they were angry, their tone carried no anger, and little anti-American reaction was discernible. Rather the people were confused, hurt and bewildered that such a disaster should befall them, and especially that it could be caused by an ally."

His view of US policy in Kampuchea was expressed in a report at the time of the evacuation of Americans from Phnom Penh: "After five years of helping a feuding government it scorned and fighting a war it knew was hopeless, the United States had nothing to show for it except a sad evacuation in which the Ambassador carried out the American flag in one hand and his Samsonite suitcase in the other."

His viewpoint was clearly that of a reporter critical of some aspects of US policy but not questioning the basic assumptions of US imperialism. Even less, could he be expected to express the viewpoint of the national resistance to the US.

The film follows these views closely. It shows the bombing of Neak Luong by the US Air Force "by accident" in some detail but by omission does not touch on the devastation of the countryside and its people by bombing, defoliation and chemical warfare.

In the film, Sydney Schanberg attributes the "barbarity and insanity" of the Khmer Rouge (liberation forces) to the scale of the US bombing. However the balance of the film which concentrates on the "atrocities" of the Khmer Rouge does not even deal in any detail with

ever used against a risen people.

The US did not try to colonise Vietnam directly. It was clear by then that the old policy of direct colonialism had failed. Instead, the US carried out essentially the same policy in its new form - that of neo-colonialism. This avoided direct US rule and substituted a local elite who would serve US interests. The local elite benefited from US aid at the expense of the masses of people.

The neutral governments of Laos and Kampuchea did not serve US interests in the area. They were overthrown by pro-US elements, backed by the CIA. For example, in 1958 elections were held in Laos which returned a 'Government of National Union' in which a majority of seats were won by forces either neutral or on the left. This government was overthrown by the CIA in 1959, replaced with their candidate who proceeded to hold rigged elections in 1960 and approve of American bombing of his country.

This strategy was kept up till the end. It essentially failed because the pro-US forces were isolated by the revolutionary and patriotic people. Their only strength was their powers of repression, thanks to the US, which in turn only led to more resistance.

AMERICAN WAR MACHINE

When political means failed, the US relied on its superior firepower. The Americans used every weapon of modern warfare they possessed, apart from nuclear weapons because they feared the political reaction around the world and possible military retaliation from China and the Soviet Union.

The war took different forms under different US Presidents as the situation changed. Some-

this limited view which puts the main blame on the US.



DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

The period that followed the liberation of Phnom Penh, when Kampuchea was under the control of the liberation forces, is the main target of the film. Through the experiences of Dith Pran, it presents a picture of total madness and barbarity with a "fascist" regime determined to reduce Kampuchea to "primitive communism".

It would take more than a short film review to show how simplistic and misleading this picture is. While it would be wrong to deny that there were serious errors leading to mass killings and distorted policies with disastrous results in some areas, this is no more the total picture than is Sydney Schanberg's view of US policy.

Samir Amin puts these questions in perspective, in his article "The Struggle for National Independence and Socialism in Kampuchea".



times it was official policy, at other times the war was "off the record", as in the case of the secret bombing of Laos and Kampuchea. Every counter-revolutionary method of war was tried.

The local elite was given massive military aid and American advisers. Special Forces like the notorious Green Berets were sent by Kennedy. Half a million GI's were based in Vietnam alone in the late '60s. The policy of

"The excesses, which cannot be denied, are those which we know from the entire history of peasant revolts. They are of the same nature and represent the same character... Let me simply point out that through an extremely well orchestrated propaganda, the Vietnamese government has succeeded, in alliance with reactionaries from the whole world, to use this deviation as an argument to condemn the peasant revolution. All reactionaries in all countries and at all times have always used the excesses of the peasant revolution...."

(It is worth pointing out too, that it is not only peasant revolutionaries who have at times taken things into their own hands and gone "too far". In France, after the defeat of German fascism in the Second World War, thousands of collaborators were killed in spontaneous outburst of violence.)

THE EVACUATION OF PHNOM PENH

To come back to Kampuchea, and this film's version of history, it is worth examining one incident in some detail in order to show that many questions can be raised about the film which should lead us to question the picture of Democratic Kampuchea presented in later parts of the film.

The film shows the evacuation of Phnom Penh as a tragic and senseless event, part of the insane policy of the Khmer Rouge.

In real life, Sydney Schanberg was responsible for reports from Phnom Penh at the time,



Film Review Vietnam's Vietnam

'The Killing Fields' tells the story of the friendship between an American reporter and a Kampuchean working with him in the context of the last months of the Lon Nol government in Phnom Penh in 1975; the fall of the city to the liberation forces in April of that year and the following period when the country was controlled by the 'Khmer Rouge', the liberation forces. The film ends at a time of renewed fighting between Vietnam and Kampuchea in 1979.

The film has received many awards and much publicity. It is technically a well-made film and claims to be a "true story" based on the experiences of Sydney Schanberg and his Kampuchean co-worker, Dith Pran.

For all these reasons, the film will have a wide impact and to many people, may seem to be the 'truth' about the history of the recent period in Kampuchea. The fact that it takes an anti-war stand, critical of the US role in Kampuchea, only adds to its credibility and shows the need to analyse more concretely the issues raised in the film, look critically at its view of history and the implications of this view for the present.

PARTIAL VIEW

What makes the film more dangerous is that it is not a complete fabrication. It

probably presents quite accurately a view of Kampuchean history and events as seen by an American reporter and certain Kampuchean. But by presenting this view with the full resources of modern filmmaking - full technicolour, fine acting, emotional music etc. - it stakes a claim to represent the "whole truth". History, however, looks different depending on whether seen from the viewpoint of the oppressed or the oppressors.

Sydney Schanberg was a reporter for the 'New York Times' based in Southeast Asia, who was critical of US policy. Having failed to undermine the neutrality of the Sihanouk government, the US organised the Lon Nol coup in 1970. The ensuing invasion by the US in 1970 and the intensive bombing killed about one million people and made millions into refugees. At the same time, this escalation of the war led to the rapid growth of the liberation forces based on a united front including both Sihanouk and the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) - the National United Front of Kampuchea (NUFK).

The film shows Sydney Schanberg, together with Dith Pran, visiting the scene of an American bombing and his subsequent reporting carried in the 'New York Times'. The conclusion to the actual printed article was: "Though several soldiers

people's War!



targets and guide the bombers for example, of the Ho Chi Minh trail. Anti-personnel weapons were widely used, specifically designed to wound and maim rather than to kill, in order to destroy morale.

The vast resources of the American state and war machine were mobilised against the three small countries of Indochina. Books have been written about their war crimes.

These crimes did not result simply from the scale of destruction rained on Indochina. They were part of a strategy of counter-revolutionary war, which, whatever public statements were made, the American policy-makers knew that they were fighting a whole people. They knew that the only way to defeat the liberation armies, was to wipe out the people who gave them support.

In the course of the war, certain incidents became widely known as atrocities such as the massacre of villagers at My Lai or at Song My. Although these incidents were certainly atrocities, it is misleading to isolate them from the general conduct of the war which inevitably led to many My Lai's and Song My's.

STRATEGIC HAMLETS

Policies such as that of removing the people into 'strategic hamlets' or the 'Phoenix Program' are part of this counter-revolutionary strategy. Many had been used before. Sir Robert Thompson, a British 'expert' on counter-insurgency warfare from his experience in Malaya, was an adviser to the Americans. The policy of 'strategic hamlets' was tested in Malaya and is now being implemented in the Philippines. Similarly, progressive forces in the Philippines today, suspect that many recent killings by government forces there, are part of a systematic programme

which appeared in the 'New York Times' and began the massive anti-communist hysterical coverage that was carried in the Western media. The 'Washington Star' labelled the evacuation "a monstrosity of epic proportions"; while another American columnist Jack Anderson pronounced it "the greatest atrocity since the Nazis herded the Jews into the gas chambers." However some sources have looked at the whole incident in a different light. One American book, for example, wrote that Sydney Schanberg's article "was a weak foundation for the massive historical judgement rendered by the news media." This view did not get much coverage.

Major epidemics and other health problems were a real danger and could be handled more effectively in the countryside with the basic health service built up in the liberated areas during the war of resistance to the US.

Both the US and the Soviet Union had supported the Lon Nol regime. When their embassies were forced to leave during liberation, they left behind a network of agents who were preparing to use the unrest they hoped would be generated by these basic problems to undermine the new government.

Finally, the cities of Indochina had often in the past proved to be targets of US bombing, particularly when they fell to liberation forces. The city of Hue was bombed to rubble by the Americans after it had been taken by liberation forces in the great Tet offensive of 1968. The Americans did, in fact, continue bombing Kampuchea after they left Phnom Penh, as in the case of the bombing of the town of Siem Reap in 1976.

From an outline of these points, it is clear that there were rational and practical reasons for the evacuation. There are also accounts of the way it was carried out, for example an account by a Benedictine priest, Father Jacques Engelmann, who witnessed the event himself, which contradicts the "cruel and fanatical" version shown in the film.

We can assume therefore that the version of later events in the film is equally one-sided although it no doubt represents a partial view. This view is not only hysterically anti-

developed by the US modelled on the Phoenix Program.

The widespread bombing and burning of villages and the defoliating of the land was aimed also at driving people from the land and making them into refugees in the cities where they could be more easily controlled. It is well-known that in such attacks, the guerrilla forces are better organised to defend themselves and it is ordinary peasants who suffer most.

'Operation Phoenix' carried out in 1968 after the great Tet offensive by the liberation forces, was supposed to destroy the 'Viet Cong' infrastructure. It is estimated that over 18,000 were killed in this one operation with 35,000 being captured. As one writer said: "The majority of those arrested are merely low-level propagandists, supply agents and others who are part-time helpers in the NLF ranks..." and "The victims are the people of South Vietnam, who must suffer yet another intensification of the terror which they have come to associate with the police."

The massive bombing of North Vietnam was not, as officially claimed, aimed at military targets, but at destroying people's will to resist. Hospitals and schools were frequent targets. The irrigation system was hit to cause problems with food supply.

In Laos, after the US-backed coup, the people were organised by the Pathet Lao to resist American aggression. Many of these people lived in villages in the Plain of Jars. In a 'secret' operation, the US Air Force bombed flat everything in this area in what was probably the most intensive bombardment ever known in history. One account reports: "You cannot imagine what it is like in the headquarters of these people. Never is there any halt in the bombing. Not at night. Not by day. One

communist but in particular relies on a deep thread of racism which sees the Asian people of Indochina as having an 'indifference to death' and many other racist stereotypes which, in the final analysis, were used to justify US aggression.

The film does not even touch on the fact that Dith Pran, the man whose story it claims to tell, worked for the US in 1960 with the "Military Assistance" group. Or that after the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea and before his eventual escape to Thailand, he worked for the Vietnamese, first as the Mayor of Siem Reap and later as the Mayor's adviser on security. Such a record of serving foreign powers would hardly have led to a balanced view of the patriotic forces!

THE FILM JUSTIFIES INVASION

This brings us to the main question about the film - What purpose does it serve at the present time?

The film notes that tragically, Kampuchea continues to be torn apart by war. Towards the end, it shows Vietnamese tanks and an attack on a village. In its only comment on Vietnam's role, a Khmer Rouge cadre says that the Khmer Rouge are fighting Vietnam to regain ancient territory. The implication is clearly that the present war is the result of Kampuchean aggression.

Objectively, the film covers up and justifies aggression by Vietnam, backed by the Soviet Union, against Kampuchea. Even if the account given of life in Democratic Kampuchea were

the way we were in the cave. The bombing went on and on. The toilet was in another cave only 20 yards away. We could not leave. We could not even run the 20 yards. It was too dangerous."

PEOPLE'S WAR

All such policies failed in the end. They failed because the people of Indochina fought a just, people's war against imperialism and were determined to withstand any hardship to win their independence and freedom.

They learnt quickly that imperialism depends on violence and that the only way to victory was through armed struggle. After the Japanese surrender, the Vietnamese were prepared to negotiate with France and prepared to fight if necessary. France only backed down after being defeated at Dien Bien Phu, nine years later. After the Geneva Agreements, the Vietnamese put much trust in the coming elections. They were prepared to negotiate and carry out the letter of the Agreements. It was only when the US backed the repressive policies of the Diem regime which was trying to wipe out the progressive forces in the South, that the people in South Vietnam began to fight back.



The nature of the war fought by the Vietnamese was based in the first place on guerrilla struggle. As the US knew well, the strength of the guerrillas of the National Liberation Front (NLF) lay in their support among the people. This support was based not only in their armed strength. At the beginning of the struggle, they had few arms and depended on taking weapons from the reactionary troops and police. The support of the people depended on a whole range of political and social reforms, in particular the policy of land reform implemented during the resistance to the French.

It was this basic fact that American propaganda consistently denied. The war against the people of Indochina was portrayed as a war against the Communists of North Vietnam trying to impose their control over the whole of Indochina. Opposition to the war within the US grew and became an important political force as people gradually discovered more of the truth about the war: that it was a war against the people of Indochina.

Ten years after the victory of the Vietnamese and Kampuchean people in throwing the US out of their countries, history is being forgotten and Reagan is once again advocating the need to defend 'freedom' from communism, in Central America, this time. The fact that in recent history, Vietnam has indeed become a proxy for the Soviet Union in Indochina was not inevitable and cannot be used to justify the war in the first place. If anything, the US helped bring this about by prolonging the war. The Vietnamese people did not fight for their independence and freedom to be slaves to either of the superpowers. In time, they will rise up against their new masters. In the meantime the true lessons of Vietnam have been learnt around the world. The liberation forces in Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Eritrea, the Philippines, in Ireland and many other countries of the world know well that imperialism is a powerful enemy to be reckoned with, but that it can never win against a united people.

accurate (which it isn't), it would not justify one country occupying another and denying its people national independence and freedom.

In spite of widespread reporting in the Western media, Vietnam itself has never claimed officially that it invaded Kampuchea in order to rescue the Kampuchean people from the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge. The reasons given have been different.

Imperialism will never publicise the achievements of liberation struggles, particularly those that pursue a line of self-reliance and independence. In some situations, one superpower will give limited support and publicity to a liberation struggle aimed at the other superpower, as, for example, in Afghanistan or in Central America.

There are some cases, as with Kampuchea, where neither of the superpowers has an interest in giving even limited support. The struggles in Eritrea and Tigray, and indeed in the north of Ireland, face this propaganda

blockade. In Kampuchea, both the US and the Soviet Union have a direct interest in using the "crimes of Pol Pot" to cover up their own responsibility in the area. The film does this job well for them.

Malcolm Caldwell, who had studied Southeast Asia deeply and supported the liberation struggles of its peoples, was a more reliable source of information. He stressed the wide support given to the Kampuchean people in their struggle against Vietnamese aggression, by non-aligned countries such as Yugoslavia and Rumania, by the socialist countries of China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and by Communist Parties of Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and the Philippines, among others.

We also should give our support to the Kampuchean people in their just struggle against the Vietnamese occupation, and do what we can do to demolish the powerful myths spread around by this film.

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Zed Press, 213pp, £5.95 + 46p P&P

MASS PROTESTS CONTINUE, MARCOS ISOLATED.

The deputy representative in Europe of the National Democratic Front (NDF) of the Philippines recently paid a brief visit to Britain, during which 'Class Struggle' interviewed him. His visit came in the aftermath of the national elections last May, which Marcos hoped would serve to legitimise the regime. In fact, a broad Anti-Dictatorship Front took shape, the majority of which wanted a successful boycott campaign, while a minority took part and inflicted some big setbacks on the government, despite ballot rigging by Marcos. 'Class Struggle' began by asking what had happened to the opposition coalition which had grown up during the election campaign.

CS: Have the various opposition coalitions and the forces that grew during the election campaign, remained together?

NDF: Basically they have remained together in the sense that they remain united in the political objective of dismantling the US-Marcos dictatorship. That was what had united them before the elections into what is known now as the Anti-Dictatorship Front, which emerged after the Aquino assassination. Despite the elections which saw a section opting for boycott and another part opting for participation, that did not detract from the basic unity of working towards ending the dictatorship. It was more a difference in tactics, rather than in the basic objective.

UNITY OF PROGRESSIVE FORCES

After the elections, the oppositionists who won seats in the parliament, initially had entertained hopes that they would be able to successfully work for genuine changes with the House of Parliament. But then they were soon disappointed and frustrated by the moves of Marcos to block them in every way. They had hoped to introduce proposals to repeal Amendment No.6, which is the constitutional amendment which authorises the President to continue exercising his autocratic powers, even after the lifting of martial law in 1981. They were also hoping to initiate impeachment proceedings against Marcos. They had other things in mind to initiate in the Parliament. But they have all been frustrated in those attempts.

So some of them have actually moved closer, after that experience, to what is now known as the Parliament of the Streets, which is actually the militant section of the Anti-Dictatorship Front, which opted for boycott and which, after the elections, continued with its mass protests. In this militant section, are the national democratic forces and the new opposition forces which emerged after the Aquino assassination, consisting of former traditional politicians. They have continued their mass protests, especially after the elections when Marcos first increased the prices of gasoline which set off a chain reaction in prices, and then devalued the peso in obedience to the International Monetary Fund. So it sent the economy again into a downward spiral affecting especially the lower sector of society. Then after that there were bigger, mass protests on national, political issues. The militant section of the Anti-Dictatorship Front have remained steadfast in that path of militant, mass protests.

Now, some members of the more traditional politicians who opted for participation - Marcos has refused to give them any substantial concession, and whatever concession has been given to them, they have not been satisfied. So while the US continues to promote an option of reconciliation with them, for them to be given a share of power, that has not materialised.

WINNING OVER THE MIDDLE FORCES

On the other hand, the militant forces, including the revolutionary forces, the national democratic forces, have continued to strengthen themselves

and broaden their ranks.

The new opposition, advocating what is sometimes called 'popular democracy', based on the mass organisations and mass protest, have continued to strengthen their anti-fascist, as well as anti-imperialist positions.

So we can say that after the elections, these various political forces which altogether form the broad Anti-Dictatorship Front, remain basically united

the Philippines. But not known to others, continuing to maintain his position as Chief of the Intelligence Agency, the National Intelligence and Security Administration, the NISA.

But there also came out a full page advertisement in the newspapers signed by several generals, but noticeably not signed by other generals, including General Ramos. Even some of the generals who were reported as having signed, later disclaimed that they knew anything about it.

The split also has its reflection in the civilian bureaucracy because Enrile, the Defence Minister, has also been mentioned as being part of that group of Ramos, as against the group of Ver, and Marcos and Imelda... So some of these divisions within the ruling circle are being exposed. Part of it is the inception of a power struggle within the ruling circle because they are aware, of course, of the physi-

US to support such a move by the military just now. It would result in more instability. What the US needs right now is to promote stability in the Philippines. That is what it's trying to build. It is now scouting, trying to develop the links with the moderate opposition, especially those who participated in the elections. It is trying to draw them into a parliamentary path, away from the revolutionary path of struggle.

The revolutionary movement is watching these developments very carefully and also preparing itself. It is basically continuing to strengthen its ranks, broadening its influence and showing the people the correct methods of fighting the dictatorship, of ending the US-Marcos dictatorship and establishing a democratic coalition government; and that the people cannot rely on one or the other group of politicians - whether it be in the ruling circle or whether it be among the trad-

relation to the dispersal of peaceful demonstrations. There was a transport strike in Manila on January 28th when many people were arrested, and a number of them declared missing and a number injured. Among those arrested, detained and charged, were film-maker Lino Brocka whose film 'Bayan Ko' won a film award here in Britain, and the other progressive film-maker Behn Cervantes, who up to this moment remain in jail.

There was the camp-in of several hundred peasants before the premises of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. It started several days before that as a march of five thousand peasants from different areas in Central Luzon. They marched to Manila and then went to the Ministry demanding a rollback of fertiliser prices to October 1983 levels. Their demand was not met so they decided to camp in front of the Ministry. They stayed there for several days while they continued to press for their demands. Then suddenly one morning the riot police came and dispersed them violently, and arrested some people including student leader, Leandro Alejandro and also Jose Bautista of the Nationalist Alliance, and Jimmy Tadeo, the President of the Peasants' Organisation.

All of this constitutes a certain alarming pattern, which some had predicted would happen, especially after the elections. Some say that it has the appearance of something the US implemented in Vietnam, as part of its counter-insurgency strategy - Operation Phoenix, which was designed to dismantle the political infrastructure of the 'Vietcong' and resulted in around 20,000 people killed, most of them innocent civilians. This falls under the general counter-insurgency plan known as Operation Plan Stability which appears to have been designed by the US or some of its counter-insurgency experts, with several components. Of course, there's the military component. And then there's also a civic action component and the so-called economic development component. But this has been a failure to the present, because the military have always, inevitably, committed abuses against the civilians.

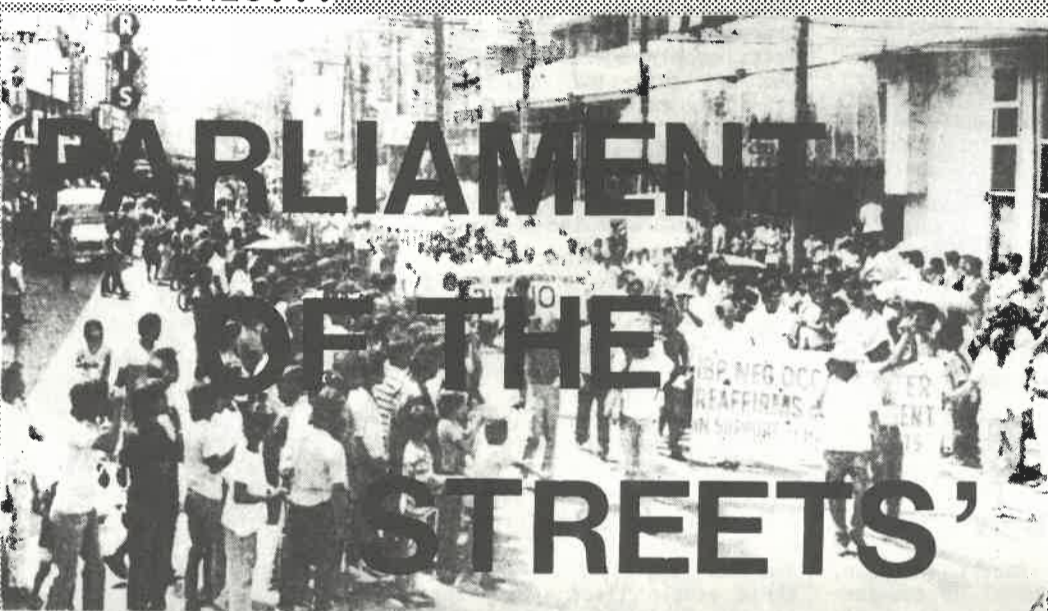
The economic component has failed because of the general economic crisis and the civic action is exposed to the people as part of the counter-insurgency campaign.

REPRESSION BREEDS RESISTANCE

These incidents, then, have happened after the elections, as had been feared. But it is still within the context of the fact that Marcos is in an isolated position. If he were not in such an isolated position and therefore politically defensive, he would really have gone all out to crush the revolutionary movement which is now considered as the main threat to the existence of the dictatorship and is also causing concern in Washington.

In a sense, the repression, all of these killings, while they have been brutal, is still in the context of the fact that the dictatorship is politically isolated. Evidence of this is the fact that the mass movement has been able to fight back. Each act of repression has been answered by the mass movement with more protest actions. It has not stopped - on the contrary, it has fed the mass movement. It has its brutal side but it also has its limitations politically. In this sense, the repression itself builds the resistance.

PHILIPPINES...



on that political objective - of dismantling the dictatorship. There are differences in terms of methodology, of how to achieve this, in terms of who the real enemy is. Because some of the more traditional politicians would view only Marcos as the enemy. They don't view US imperialism as the enemy. Although the new opposition has taken up a much stronger anti-imperialist position to the extent that they have demanded the removal of US bases, for instance. So that has been the situation after the elections. There is a continuing attempt to try to settle these differences. But the basic unity remains.

SPLITS AMONG THE ENEMY FORCES

CS: That seems to be in contrast to what's happening in the Marcos camp.

NDF: Yes. In the Marcos camp, we see evidence of splits. First, after the elections, there was the Agrava Report, (The Agrava Commission was established by Marcos under popular pressure, to investigate the 1984 murder of Senator Aquino.) wherein the majority indicted General Ver, General Olivas and General Custodio, as well as several other soldiers belonging to the Security Command, for being involved in a wide-ranging military conspiracy to kill Aquino.

The militant forces in the Anti-Dictatorship Front were not satisfied with the findings. They knew who the real mastermind was. But even then, even under those limitations, it was a blow to the dictatorship. It weakened the dictatorship. It put it in a more isolated position, domestically as well as internationally.

But it also revealed a split within the military, that being between Ver on the one hand, and his group, and Ramos on the other. After the Agrava Report, Ver went into 'leave of absence' allowed by Marcos, thereby vacating his post as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of

cal as well as political condition of Marcos.

While the other political forces, like the traditional politicians, who are more for the US, would, for their part also be trying to prepare themselves to take a share of power in a post-Marcos scenario. There is, also, always the possibility of a military coup, although right now, the main option that is being pursued by the US is to put pressure on Marcos to loosen up his hold on political and economic power to accommodate the traditional politicians especially the reformist-minded ones; to establish a coalition of the Marcos ruling circle and this group of politicians in what is sometimes called, a remodelled dictatorship. In other words, to broaden the political base of the dictatorship, to make it more presentable.

THE US OPTIONS AND THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE

The developments against this happening have been growing more than the factors that favour it. Like the fact that Marcos refuses to give substantial concessions, as I mentioned earlier. Or that the traditional politicians are not satisfied with the concessions that have been made. And that the revolutionary movement has been successful in establishing its leadership and steering a correct path through all these manoeuvrings, and successful in drawing to its side the new opposition rather than it going over to the traditional politicians which would be more in the plan of the US and the dictatorship. That is the situation as far as the succession is concerned.

CS: From the US point of view, is a military coup a last resort?

NDF: The US still maintains a coup as an option. It does not rule it out. But it's not its main option right now, to promote that. I think it would be counter-productive for the

ditional politicians; that they should rely on their own efforts, therefore to organise themselves along the basic democratic and national lines, in line with the revolutionary objectives of the national democratic revolution.

STEPPING UP STATE TERROR

CS: One of the things that was said before the elections, was that the regime was planning to step up the killings of the opposition, if it got the result it wanted. What's happened?

NDF: We've seen such developments actually take place. A number of opposition figures, especially in Mindanao, have been killed. There was the newspaper editor Amatong, of an opposition paper in Mindanao, together with a human rights lawyer, Zorro Aguilar. Then there was another newspaper man Alexander Orcullo who was the editor of an opposition newspaper in Davao who was killed in front of his family... Then there was Mayor Cesar Climaco in Zamboanga, who had actually won a seat but had refused to assume his position in protest, and who had been consistently opposed to the military. He was killed.... So those were some of the more brazen killings of opposition figures.

Among the workers, there was the violence on the picket line, like the strike at Artex. There were film clips which showed police and military aiming their automatic rifles at people who were running from a footbridge in the slum area where the Artex strike was declared. Several other strikes have taken place where the police and military opened fire and shot and killed people. Of course they were not known personalities. But they were nonetheless trade union leaders or simply trade union members who were picketing in support of economic demands. In the field of arrests and detentions, of course, this has continued, especially in



Enver Hoxha (1908-1985)

Just outside Tirana, capital of Albania, is the cemetery of the Martyrs of the Nation, where partisans who fell fighting Italian and German fascism in the Second World War lie. On April 15th, Enver Hoxha, Albania's leader for 40 years, was buried there among his old comrades.

Enver Hoxha was born in the southern Albanian town of Gjirocastra on October 16th, 1908. The young Hoxha saw his country ravaged by foreign armies - first, during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, when Albania became independent of the Ottoman Empire, and then during the First World War, when armies of the two power blocs fought in Albanian territory. He was soon involved in activities against foreign intervention and against the corrupt Albanian government, and in the 1930's he became a communist.

Italian fascists, who had occupied Albania in April 1939, and then the German fascists, who replaced them. A National Liberation Army was formed to fight the occupier. Although



Enver Hoxha was responsible for building a strong communist organisation in Tirana under conditions of severe repression. He led a struggle to unite the fragmented communist movement which was crowned with success in November 1941.

LIBERATION WAR

The new Communist Party of Albania (which later changed its name to the Party of Labour of Albania), joined with genuine nationalists in the National Liberation Front to fight the

Albania was a small country with a population of only a million, it made a valuable contribution to the Allied war effort against Nazi Germany and its cohorts. 70,000 enemy troops were killed, wounded or taken prisoner by Albanian forces, and hundreds of thousands pinned down trying to defeat the resistance.

In November 1944, Albania achieved something no other occupied country in Europe managed. It liberated itself without any allied troops sett-

ing foot on its territory, and it did so with a minimum of material aid, though the Albanians have always acknowledged the role of the Allied, especially Soviet, armies in smashing the European fascist regimes.

PEOPLE'S POWER

At the end of the war, the new people's government set about the task of re-building and re-shaping a shattered economy and creating a new society.

It soon had to contend with intervention by the Greek fascist regime, interference by Britain and the US, and sabotage by counter-revolutionary groups, as well as conflict with Yugoslavia. Under the leadership of Enver Hoxha and the Party, Albania was able to overcome all these challenges.

When Enver Hoxha died, the western press claimed that he left a poverty stricken country. Yet the truth is that the Albanian people have made great strides forward. In 1938, life expectancy was 35 years: now it is comparable to that in Britain, and health care is free for all. Before liberation, 85% of Albania's people were illiterate. Now there is an eight-grade school system for all children and Albania has the first university in its history. In 1970, Albania became the first country in Europe to provide every

single one of its villages with electricity. These are just a few indications of Albania's achievements.

While Albania received aid from the Soviet Union under Stalin, and later, generous Chinese aid, it basically stuck to a policy of self reliance: the social progress of the people was made possible by the vigorous growth of Albanian state industry and agriculture, and collective agriculture.

AGAINST SOVIET REVISIONISM

In the early 1960's, the Party of Labour of Albania, together with the Communist Party of China, opposed the revisionist policies of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which tried to impose its own line on the whole international communist movement. The CPSU preached that socialism could generally be won peacefully, that the problem of colonialism was basically resolved, and people who used armed struggle to win liberation threatened world peace and peaceful co-existence between the socialist and capitalist camps. The PLA fought the CPSU's anti-Marxist position, playing an important role in defending revolutionary communism.

Enver Hoxha must be associated with Albania's achievements, but also with the PLA's serious errors. Hoxha defended Stalin's record uncritically, not accepting that he made errors

of great nation chauvinism and failed to recognise the existence of contradictions among the people. The latter error was carried over into the PLA's policies: those who embraced a political position which was rejected by the PLA leadership were seen as counter-revolutionaries, not as comrades who held a mistaken line. Thus, Mehmet Shehu, who fought side by side with Enver Hoxha from the days of the liberation war, was killed in mysterious circumstances several years ago and branded as a long-standing enemy agent.

Furthermore, the same stance has been applied in foreign relations, with the PLA attacking the 'Three Worlds Theory' of the Chinese Party, and going further by abusing the life and work of Mao Zedong and much of the historical record of the Communist Party of China.

Differences among communists are normal: sometimes they may even lead to serious splits, but it is a desertion of the Marxist stand to fail to analyse individuals or parties in terms both of what is positive and what is negative about them and their record, whichever way the balance of judgement is ultimately tilted.

Enver Hoxha made significant errors, especially in the last years of his life, but deserves to be remembered as a great revolutionary.



ETHIOPIA BOMBS TIGRAYAN RELIEF CENTRES

News Release from the Tigray People's Liberation Front Information Centre.

6 April 1985: Planes of the Ethiopian regime are bombarding villages and transit camps for thousands of drought victims in the liberated area of Tigray. In the last few days, they attacked the villages of Tirkaka and Workamba in central Tigray as well as Zelazele and Takeze in western Tigray. Transit centres for thousands of famine victims had been set up at Zelazele (a camp of 6,000 victims) and the area around the river Tekeze. The heavy bombardment is also related to the concentration of the regime's troops in Tigray. Recently, several brigades from central Ethiopia and Eritrea were brought to Tigray and a military campaign in central Tigray is expected shortly.

The aim of the campaign is: taking advantage of the famine situation, to round up people for the so-called re-settlement program of the regime, to disrupt feeding centres and food supply routes in order to starve the people to submission as well as to destroy civilian installations and properties.

The TPLF calls on the international community to seriously take up the inhuman and barbarous military activities of the Ethiopian military regime and to take all possible concrete measures against it.

MILITARY SUCCESS

In another development, on March 22, 1985, TPLF forces have successfully ambushed the 30th Mechanised Brigade of the Junta at Zebul, in southern Tigray. After fierce fighting of seven hours and heavy losses, the troops of the regime dispersed in disarray. It took them two days to gather their remaining force in Kobo-a town on the main Addis-Makalle highway.

In this battle:

- * At least 115 soldiers of the regime were killed. Among those killed were Captain Girma, Commander of the 303rd Battalion and several other officers.

- * Over 140 soldiers of the regime including two officers were wounded.

- * 26 soldiers were taken prisoner.

- * 66 automatic rifles and machine guns with over 10,000 rounds of ammunition; 3 RPG-7 anti-tank weapons and other war materials were confiscated by the TPLF forces.

TIGRAY RESISTS

WAR, FAMINE AND REVOLUTION

Tigray was one of the least developed areas of Ethiopia under the Haile Selassie regime. It was ravaged by famine shortly before Selassie's overthrow, and is now in the grip of a new famine. But the years between the two disasters have seen the rise of the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) which controls 85% of Tigray. The TPLF has set up schools and a medical service for the

whole people and helped the peasants to set up democratic village councils to transform rural society.

The drought in Ethiopia was a natural occurrence: the famine is not. The Ethiopian government, supported by the Soviet Union, has tried to use the drought to starve out the Tigrayan revolution, blocking aid to the people, destroying crops and killing livestock in liberated areas.

The TPLF seeks self-determination for Tigray, preferably within an Ethiopian state based on the voluntary union of the different nationalities. A TPLF Central Committee member will speak about the Tigrayan revolution in London on 11th May, when the Tigray Solidarity Campaign is organising a day conference entitled "Tigray - War, Famine and Revolution". It should prove a very informative event. (For details, see 'Diary of Events p.8.)

Confident of Victory (Cont. from p.8.)



Gerry Adams delivers the oration

At the commemoration ceremony in Belfast, the Easter Statement was followed by a speech by Gerry Adams:

"On every front the British are being opposed and exposed. On the streets in simple acts of defiance, culturally by the renaissance of our language and culture, in the prisons by the undaunted ingenuity of our prisoners, at their own ballot boxes with the support for Sinn Fein and in the actions of the soldiers of the IRA.

"The development of an open, popular and relevant political party is as important as the continued resistance of the IRA. The IRA are political soldiers who use armed means to resist armed aggression. To consolidate that resistance, to politicise and republicanise it, is a mighty task. It is also a necessary and urgent one....

"We will only be sold-out, if we, or our supporters, are unclear or immature, if we allow confusion or a lack of clarity to mislead us. We need a commitment to, and a deep understanding of, republicanism and republican objectives.

"Sinn Fein is continuing with the awesome tasks before us. We need to build a strong thirty-two-countywide political movement. In this regard the

this struggle through to a peaceful conclusion.

"Last October in Brighton, British prime minister Margaret Thatcher received a token of the price to be paid for the occupation of our country. The British government cannot defeat the Irish Republican Army - our struggle has shown that.

"But we can and will outlast British support for loyalism and we will be victorious.

Beidh bua ag Oglai na Eireann.

Beidh bua ag muintir na hEireann.

Beidh an bua againn uilig. Victory to the Irish people.

Victory to the Irish Republican Army. "

twenty-six counties is as important, if not more so, than the six counties, and the building of republican and nationalist opinion there is a paramount priority.

"We should not have an inflated sense of our own importance or an elitist sense of our relevancy. Such defects lead to self-inflicted isolation and subsequent defeat. The people are all-important. Without them we are nothing. Thus the local government elections in both the six and twenty-six counties must be used as recruiting and organisational campaigns.

"We will not maximise our vote in this election. That is not our objective. But we will build a better and more coherent organisation so that the eventual defeat of our political opponents will have a deeper basis and an irreversible and longer-term effect.

Congratulating the people for their continued resistance to every aspect of British repression. Adams concluded his oration saying:

"As you applaud the memory of Pearse and Connolly and their comrades, as you honour our martyred dead, as you extend solidarity to the IRA or Sinn Fein, applaud yourselves also. You are the people. You are unbeatable. You shall be free."

FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



CONFIDENT OF VICTORY



Throughout Ireland, north and south, the Republican movement took to the streets on the anniversary of the Easter Uprising. They marched to commemorate their dead and pledge themselves to continue the struggle until victory. It is now 69 years since the Easter Uprising. It is 69 years since the proclamation of the Irish Republic; 69 years since the heroic battle that led to the death of James Connolly, Padraigh Pearse and other heroes of the Rising. The creation of a United Irish socialist Republic remains a vision, but it is a vision of a reality that is the only solution for the Irish people. Only victory in the struggle will end the oppression, the exploitation and the vicious sectarianism that accompany British imperialism's division and domination of Ireland.

Today the Republican Movement is undefeated. It continues to fight on every front. The armed struggle goes on unabated. Political and social campaigning is consolidating support among the poor and oppressed. Victory may not yet be in sight, but the forces that will bring victory continue to grow.

In this issue we reprint (extracts of) the Easter statement published in 'An Phoblacht/Republican News', and the speech of Gerry Adams, President Sinn Fein:

"The leadership of the Republican Movement, on this the 69th anniversary of the 1916 Rising, recalls with pride the memory of our fallen dead and extends to the families of our dead comrades our support and sympathy.

"Without the sacrifices of these courageous Volunteers no advancement of the cause of freedom could have been made ...

"From their sacrifices we draw a strength which every single day drives our struggle forward and which will most certainly tip the scales against the British government and its forces...

"We represent the oppressed people of Ireland and our struggle will not cease until we have forced Britain to give up its imperial hold on our country and allow all the people of Ireland to nationally determine this island's political future. This includes the people of the twenty-six counties, the nationalist people of the North, and those

presently tied to the disastrous philosophy of sectarian superiority known as loyalism.

"British interests, loyalist supremacy and Free Stateism coincide on the maintenance of partition and it is partition which is the cause of the bloodshed and many other ills in Ireland. But it is the British government which is the major factor in maintaining the status quo and it is against that government and its forces that we direct our resources.

ANALYSIS

"Against the Dublin government and its attempts to channel politics into a truncated twenty-six county nationalism, we direct not physical force, as they falsely allege, but the republican analysis which they suppress and are afraid to debate.

"Successive Dublin governments know that diplomacy and appeals to Britain will not succeed in achieving any major breakthrough and have not even wrung any minor concessions which they can package as progress

being made....

"However the enduring nature of our struggle and the political successes of Sinn Fein in bringing to the people the message of republicanism will increasingly force changes in Free State politics. We congratulate Sinn Fein in its efforts despite censorship and repression and we fully support the strategies as adopted at ard-fheiseanna....

"The leadership of the Republican Movement takes this opportunity to send revolutionary greetings to our imprisoned comrades in jails in Ireland, Britain and America and a special word of mention to our sisters in Armagh Prison, where the regime there attempts to humiliate them through strip-searching.

"Just as we will not tolerate the repression of our people on the streets, we have also recently shown that we are not prepared to accept brutality against defenceless prisoners. The administrators of Armagh should take note of this.

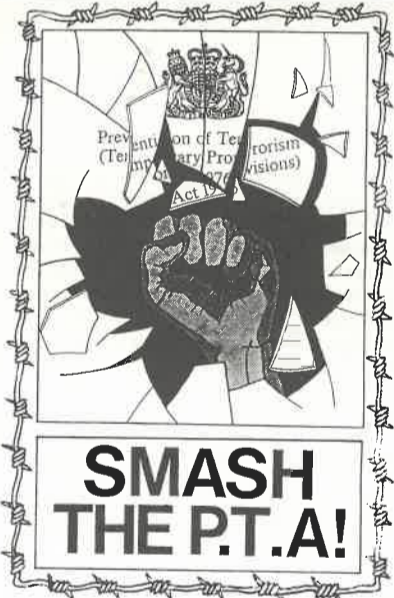
"Finally, we congratulate republican solidarity groups throughout the world for their ongoing support for our just struggle. We thank our friends in the United States, Canada, Australia, Britain and Europe for their defence of our cause. In 1916, a handful of visionaries took over the GPO in Dublin and declared the Irish Republic. After a week of bloody fighting they were defeated. In 1985, the revolutionary Irish Republican Army, organised, active and confident of victory, will see (Cont. p.7.)



Photo AP/RN

PTA HARASSMENT...

APRIL 19th, STRANRAER, Scotland: A party of 16 children from Ardoyne, aged 6 to 14, on their way to a weekend holiday, were nearly stranded as they left the ferry from northern Ireland when all 3 adults accompanying them were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The children were about to be sent into care, but were rescued when one of their hosts from the Glasgow branch of Sinn Fein's POW Department arrived and collected them. The three women detained, Mary Bradford, Linda Maguire and Jackie Quinn, were held in a filthy cell which contained three mattresses on the ground and three blankets. There was no privacy and they had to urinate in a toilet in the corner. On the first night, Linda Maguire had severe stomach cramps and started bleeding heavily. Hours later, she was given sanitary protection, but despite her stained clothing none of the three was allowed washing facilities. Mary Bradford was released and effectively stranded in Stranraer on Saturday evening and Linda Maguire and Jackie Quinn on Sunday night. None were charged, and there was clearly no intention to do so. If there had been they could have been picked up as they boarded the ferry in Belfast. This is yet another example of the PTA being used to harass Irish people exercising their right to travel, and is in particular an aspect of the harassment of prisoners' families.



candidate for Lower Falls, in the coming council elections. After being told that the five were being held for 48 hours detention under the PTA, Sinn Fein Councillor Sean McKnight commented: "These arrests are another in a long line of arrests of Sinn Fein activists in an attempt to harass and intimidate Sinn Fein members in the run-up to the local council elections."

TRIAL LATEST...

William Gallagher, another of the 'Liverpool 6' was released in April and all charges dropped. He had been held for over three months, as a high security 'Category A' prisoner, although being held only on remand. Despite his suffering and that of his family and friends, and the severe disruption to his life, he will receive no compensation.

Committal proceedings in the trial of the remaining Liverpool defendants are due to start on May 10th. Applications for bail are expected from some of those charged, and campaigns in their support will continue.

CAMPAIGN MEETING...

The development of campaigning against the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) took another step forward at a meeting in Leeds on Sunday, April 21st. The meeting had been called as a follow-up to the February meeting in Birmingham, to discuss and agree the political objectives and principles of a campaign uniting a number of local active organisations.

The campaign will oppose the PTA and its use to harass Irish people in general, and specifically those active in the struggle for Irish unity and independence, and also people in Britain active in solidarity work. It will support all those detained under the Act, and particularly those arrested in Liverpool over the Christmas period.

The agreed objectives recognise the leading role of Irish organisations, and particularly the Irish in Britain Representation Group. In the context of the racism and racist legislation of the British state (of which the PTA is a part) the campaign will develop links, on a reciprocal basis, between struggles against different forms of racism.

The campaign seeks to unite all who agree to its basic aims, and intends to win support through active, local campaigns, and on this basis to struggle for backing from MP's, Councillors, trade unions, etc. It will support the development of any national campaign emerging from initiatives of the August 18th campaign. The campaign will also unite with activities organised by the Maire O'Shea and Peter Lynch Support Committees.

The meeting was attended by activists from Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester and Oxford and included members or repres-

entatives of the Birmingham Campaign Against the PTA, the Manchester PTA Arrests Campaign, the Leeds Irish in Britain Representation Group, the Labour Committee on Ireland, Leeds Troops Out Movement, ISM (Leeds and Manchester), Leeds IFM. A message of support from the Campaign for a Free Ireland (London) was read out.

A further meeting will take place in Birmingham on Saturday May 18th to set up a national delegate structure for the campaign.

The conference agreed that the demonstration against the PTA and Strip-Searches, to take place in Birmingham on May 11th, organised by the May 11 Organising Committee, was the main immediate priority for work.

Birmingham Campaign against the PTA, c/o The Peace Centre, 18 Moor St, Ringway, Birmingham 4.

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On Thursday 18th April, the Maire O'Shea Support Committee held a national day of action. Pickets took place in Birmingham, Leeds, London and other cities. 65-year old Maire O'Shea was one of the six arrested under the PTA in Liverpool over the Christmas period. She was released on bail after spending five weeks in prison. Maire has been refused legal aid and has already amassed a legal bill of over £4,000. As well as demanding that the charges against her be dropped, the campaign is launching a legal defence fund to help her in her struggle. The West Midlands regional committee of her union, the ASTMS, is supporting the campaign. The Maire O'Shea Support Committee can be contacted: c/o 448, Stratford Road, Birmingham B11.

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DIARY OF EVENTS

FRIDAY MAY 3rd, 12.00 midday.
DEMONSTRATE IN SUPPORT OF
JACKIE BERKELEY
MANCHESTER
Assemble Whitworth Park.

SATURDAY MAY 11th,
DEMONSTRATE AGAINST THE PTA
AND THE STRIP SEARCHES
BIRMINGHAM
ASSEMBLE HANDSWORTH PARK

SATURDAY MAY 11th,
DAY CONFERENCE
TIGRAY,
WAR, FAMINE AND REVOLUTION
Cathedral Hall, Westminster
Cathedral, Ambrosden Avenue,
London SW1
(nearest tube station Victoria)
Organised by Tigray Solidarity
Campaign.

SATURDAY MAY 11th.
FESTIVAL OF LIBERATION
From 10 a.m. at the Main Hall,
Bradford University.

SUNDAY JUNE 16th,
NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION
STOP THE KILLINGS!
SANCTIONS NOW!
Organised in London by the Anti-
Apartheid Movement.

STOP PRESS

As "CS" goes to press, news has come of the arrest of 30 people taking part in a march to support the Newham Seven. Arrests were made when the march stopped outside a local police station. The marchers refused to continue on their way before those held were released. The police said they'd release their prisoners without charge, but they went ahead and charged them anyway, brought in re-inforcements, and arrested more people. Many demonstrators were beaten by police in unprovoked violence.