

CLASS STRUGGLE

Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

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**Sri Lankan
Woman Act-
ivist Rajani
Thiranagama
Murdered
independent
inquiry
demanded**

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history in song

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CLASS STRUGGLE

EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL...EDITORIAL

Some people claim the release of the Guildford Four as a triumph for British justice because the truth came out in the end. The opposite is the case. The Guildford Four stand as a condemnation of the legal system and its officers.

It is good to see the corruption, violence and dishonesty of the police decisively proved in such an important case. The emerging scandal of the West Midlands police is yet more proof of how ordinary people are framed by the police machine. As the state begins its cover-up and its damage limitation, we must be aware that Guildford and West Midlands only reveal the tip of the iceberg. Police power in class society is about control of the oppressed and there are no rules except expediency for the oppressors.

We must also point out that it is not just the fault of low-level police officers. Conspiracy starts higher up. Sir Peter Imbert, now boss of the Met, was in the Bomb Squad in 1974 and deeply involved in the investigation. He has already started his cover-up. And it was not just police. Sir Michael Havers, Attorney General and Sir Normal Skillcome, Director of Public Prosecutions, both participated in the dishonest concealment of alibi evidence from the defence.

The Four were convicted in a wave of chauvinism and anti-Irish feeling, just like the Birmingham Six. They were in the dock because they were Irish. There is a clear parallel with the Broadwater Farm convictions of three black people, another case of false confessions and police torture.

The same wave of anti-Irish racism had brought in the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The Four were held under the Act and the time was used to fabricate the confessions.

Supposed to be temporary, the PTA is still there after 15 years. The European Court has ruled that it contravenes the Convention on Human Rights and has ordered Britain to change it to allow prompt production before a court. The government has no intention of complying. It is ironic that this refusal can only be justified "in time of war or other public emergency". Yet the government says that it is not at war with the IRA.

Finally, we must distinguish between support for the Irish prisoners unjustly accused and convicted and our support for the Irish national struggle and its prisoners of war. As well as fighting for the release of those who have been framed, we support the right of the Republican prisoners to be treated as political prisoners, their demands for repatriation and their right to use armed struggle for Ireland's freedom.

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SAFE, QUALITY, CHILDCARE

Since October 9th, childcare workers at the thirteen day nurseries in Islington, London, have been on strike. 'Class Struggle' interviewed a striking NALGO member about the dispute.

'Class Struggle': What is the background to this strike?

NALGO Member: About four years ago, during a previous strike by childcare workers, a staff to child ratio of one to four was reluctantly agreed to by the Council. They weren't happy about that. And now they have focused on the issue of the ratio as a means of saving money and increasing the image of Islington as a "caring borough" by seeming to increase childcare provision.

They have already saved money in salaries by not replacing workers who have left. That's about thirty people in the last two years. But besides reducing staff, they want to increase the number of places on offer by one hundred.

The CDC - Children's Day Centre - organisers were suspended without pay for not taking in extra children. And the CDC workers came out in support.

If we accepted the Council's increase in the number of children at the centres, it would have gone beyond the DHSS's guide of a one to four ratio for children between the ages of two to five. This would be intolerable. I've worked at a CDC for about twenty months. When I first went there, there were four workers to fifteen children. Since then, three workers have left and not been replaced. We're relying on temporary agency workers. I've had five different agency staff in six months. There is no continuity to the care and is very unsettling for children and staff alike.

CS: Has the Council offered any reassurance about maintaining safe staff /child ratio?

NALGO Member: There has been some talk about not including the CDC Organiser and Deputy in calculating the ratio. But they are management and not available to look after the children any way. The Council is saying that it will still be a safe environment. They argue that not all the children come into the centre that are supposed to - they say there is something like a 20 per cent sick rate amongst the children, so we should increase the number of places allocated by 20 per cent.

They aren't making any allowance for what will happen if all the children do attend. Normally, just looking after children is stressful and draining enough. How we are supposed to cope with



such an increase in numbers is crazy. What about staff sickness, training, holidays, meetings with social workers, etc.? The Council doesn't say how we are supposed to cover for such things.

With only thirteen CDCs, Islington is regarded as one of the best London boroughs for childcare provision. But there is a lot of pressure for places. A high percentage are taken up by social services allocation, so there are added factors to the job.

We can't provide a safe environment, let alone a stimulating and supportive one under these proposals that the Council are trying to force through.

'CS: The Labour Council leader, Margaret Hodge, has accused you of "selfish action directed at innocent children" that only serves to give trade unionism a bad name". What's your response to such a charge?

NALGO Member: I think we are acting as responsible childcare workers in trying to maintain a safe service. Our organisers were victimised by the Council for not taking on the extra quotas. So we came out in support which is responsible trade unionism.

The Council is trying a guilt-trip on us. It's not like we're out for ourselves, but standing up to ensure that there is a relatively safe place for children. The parents, while inconvenienced, have supported us. So they don't think ours is a selfish act.

The Council targeted a provision that they thought wouldn't get much support because we are small in number - about 130 in the borough - mainly women workers, providing services for individual families.

But we have been preparing the parents for months, letting them know what happening. They could see the state of the nurseries, watch the conditions deteriorate as staff weren't replaced. So when the strike came, the parents came out in support even though, in some cases, they have been forced to give up jobs to look after their children. They understand that safety comes first.

CS: The dispute seems more about the quality of service and the safety and well-being of children.

Has this made a difference to the way that the dispute has been organised?

NALGO Member: The resistance has really surprised the Council. They didn't expect us to be as organised or active. They didn't think the parents would be behind us. They saw a small number of women workers in what's regarded as a low-status job, even though it's very essential for the community. The Council didn't take us very seriously.

It came as quite a shock when the dispute was widened. Neighbourhood Offices - that's the decentralised setup that social services is organised in - refused to undermine the CDC workers. They voted overwhelmingly in favour of a one-day strike by NALGO members in support of the CDC workers on October 24th.

We've picketed the Social Service headquarters each morning, leafleted and involved the communities we serve. The parents have set up their own action committee to support us. It's been good for our morale to have parents support the lobbying of councillors in large numbers. The Social Services Committee was lobbied by about 150 parents and fifty under-fives, much to their annoyance. They chanted: "Margaret Thatcher, Margaret Hodge, what's the difference? - Not a lot."

They also picketed Margaret Hodge's house in support of us, had letters published in the local paper and paid for an advert expressing their support.

Even those parents not active that I see in the street, say they want the strike to end but they aren't hostile. They see the issue.

CS: You're three weeks into the strike. Can the momentum be maintained?

NALGO Member: We've prepared for a long dispute - three or four months. We've endured the cuts at work for a long time. It was getting so difficult, so frantic and stressful that no-one wants to return to that. So the strike's been quite solid. It's an official dispute, so we get £50 strike pay. It's not much but helps. Work was that difficult that the strike came almost as a relief. You feel the reasons every day why you need to strike. It's tiring work to be on strike. But we'll keep it up. We need to take a stand. Would Margaret Hodge have her private childminder looking after eight other kids? It's not good enough for hers. It's not good enough for ours.

Send donations and messages of support to: Islington NALGO, c/o 2 Orlestone Road, London N7 8LH.

SERIOUS CRIMES OF WEST MIDLANDS POLICE

CS CORRESPONDENT

"False confessions have been endemic in the West Midlands police force as far back as anyone can remember.

There is a conspiracy against people who are arrested. Not all police officers would make up a confession, but the majority have tunnel vision. They keep on walking down the corridor.

The brains behind fitting someone up never come to court as a prosecution witness. The searching officer who plants the drugs on someone does not appear in the inquiry. The officer who makes up the confession will not be the investigating officer in the case."

These were the words of a Birmingham barrister with long experience in criminal trials, speaking to a public meeting about the West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad. The meeting was in response to the dramatic intervention by West Midlands Chief Constable Geoffrey Dear against the officers from this elite squad. Dear found that he could no longer sweep the widespread corruption under the carpet when a series of prosecutions collapsed after allegations of fabricated confessions and even judges started to make surprised noises.

FALSE CONFESSIONS

It was a lucky accident that led to the freeing of Paul Dandy, a Ladywood man who had been held on remand in Winson Green as a category H prisoner for nine months. Dandy was charged with armed robbery and the case against him rested on notes of an interview with him in which he was attributed with an admission. A new forensic technique, developed in Birmingham University, was applied to Dandy's interview notes and showed that the sentence amounting to an admission had been put in afterwards - no doubt after Dandy had read over and signed the notes.

Earlier, four men had been acquitted by Wolverhampton Crown Court on a robbery charge when an officer was challenged on how long it had taken him to write up the notes of the interview. According to the record, he had taken 14 minutes. Asked to write the notes up in court, the officer took over 21 minutes.

In June this year, Hertfordshire card dealer, Ronald Bolden was acquitted on armed robbery charges in Birmingham. The case rested on false confessions. In July, Keith Parchment was freed by the Court of Appeal from a five-year sentence when handwriting experts proved that a detective's notes of a "confession" had not been written at the time when the detective was conducting the interview.

Dear disbanded the squad in June, but he claimed that there was no dishonesty, only sloppy practices. In August, events forced his hand. It was found that in two cases under investigation by the Police Complaints Authority, key documents - "confessions or similar" - had been removed from the files. Dear suspended two officers and moved 48 ex-Serious Crimes Squad men into administrative jobs.

The Police Complaints Authority was called in to conduct an inquiry into all cases handled by the squad from the beginning of 1986. Clearly such an inquiry is woefully inadequate. Calling for an independent inquiry, Ladywood MP, Clare Short, said that it was not acceptable to limit the inquiry to two years nor for the public not to know the result of the inquiry. She pointed out that two controversial cases should also be investigated - the Birmingham pub bombing case of 1974 and the Carl Bridgwater murder of 1979. Officers later to join the Serious Crimes Squad, against whom corruption charges have been made, were involved in both cases.

NO FAITH IN INQUIRY

The mother of one of the men convicted of the Carl Bridgwater murder, Ann Whelan, also criticised the inquiry. She said there had already been four secret police inquiries into the case. It was wrong for the police to be allowed to investigate themselves. It was no surprise that they did not make their findings public, because the police were a secret society. The officer who had procured the false witnesses against the Bridgwater defendants, Det. Sergeant Hornley, had complaints against him going back to 1974. But she had no faith in the Police Complaints Authority. Out of 5,000 complaints, only 700 had resulted in any kind of action and only in 41 cases had criminal charges been brought against police officers.

BIRMINGHAM SIX

The Serious Crimes Squad scandal naturally leads to demands for another review of the case of the Birmingham Six. Last year, the Court of Appeal flew in the face of clear and obvious evidence that the Six had been framed by false confessions beaten out of them by the West Midlands police. A prison officer has recently come forward to corroborate this further, admitting that he was involved in beating up the Six in Winson Green, but making it clear that they had already been badly injured by the police.

One of the officers who obtained these confessions joined the Serious Crimes Squad and is now under investigation. The recent dramatic climbdown by the legal establishment



Paul Dandy

in the Guildford Four case also points to the innocence of the Birmingham Six. A crucial factor in showing that the Guildford confessions were made up was the detention sheets. These showed big differences from the details officers had written in the interview records. In the Birmingham case, detention sheets were not filled in at all. But what did come to light was a schedule of interviews with the Six. Not only did this contain conflicts with interview records, but it had no purpose except as a framework to guide the police in their lies to the court. Superintendent Read, who prepared the schedule, was asked what it was for. He told the Court of Appeal: "I can't explain now. I can't. It's as simple as that due to the lapse of time." There is no innocent explanation of it.

The abject failure of the Court of Appeal to accept even the most obvious evidence of innocence in the Birmingham Six and Carl Bridgwater cases is typical of the weakness of the whole system of criminal justice. The Court will not even look at a case except in the most extreme circumstances if there is new evidence or if the trial judge has told the jury the law wrong. A defendant can even be ordered to serve extra time if the Court thinks he had no good grounds to ask to appeal. And when they do hear a case, the judges restrict their own powers to overturn a conviction as narrowly as they possibly can. It is not surprising. They are the guardians of the law, and the law cannot be seen to be wrong.

The whole pompous edifice of which lawyers and judges are so proud has always rested on a foundation of ordinary people, usually poor, always oppressed and often black, stitched up by corrupt policemen, false evidence, intimidation, threats and violence. This is the law. It has nothing to do with justice.

THE LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

by Joe Steel

CHANGING LABOUR?

The so-called left wing trend in British politics spends a lot of time and energy trying to make the Labour Party adopt socialist policies. They came away from its latest conference feeling that they had lost the battle again; which, of course, they had.

The Labour Party is an alternative to the Tories, but only as a party that advocates a different strategy for the survival of British imperialism, not as a socialist alternative to imperialism.

It has never been that socialist alternative and it never will be. Working within it, or supporting it, only diverts efforts away from the much harder task of building a real mass movement to overthrow imperialism. Building that mass movement is the only option for anyone serious about getting rid of imperialism. Imperialism cannot be reformed out of existence; it has to be overthrown.

Even the so-called left wing will admit that Labour's record is not very progressive. But it will not face up to the logical conclusion of that record. Even the argument that it is the lesser evil compared with the Tories does not stand up to a serious examination of history.

FOREIGN POLICY

Labour government foreign policy has always served British imperialism in its plunder of the world's people. British troops have murdered and terrorised equally well under both Labour and Tory. Even in opposition, they have continued that support (e.g. Ireland, the Malvinas). None of their economic policies have been aimed at undermining the exploitation and oppression of the world's people. They have never threatened the interests of British-based transnational companies.

THE ECONOMY

Domestically, their policy has been one of expanding the state's involvement in the economy. That state is not independent of class; it is the bosses' state. Involvement of the state in the economy is an inevitable part of the development of capitalism into imperialism. State intervention is the means by which the system tries to stabilise the system; it has nothing to do with building a socialist alternative within the system. Billions of pounds of workers' taxes have been used to bail out failed capitalist companies. Nationalised industries have always been as exploitative and anti-worker as any private company.

Coupled with this has been the ongoing attempts to incorporate the trade unions at all levels, within the economy and state.



Blurring who the real enemy is. Dividing activists from the membership. Thus weakening them ready for any more obvious attacks by the Tories. And, remember, when that failed, it was the Labour government that used troops to break the firemen's strike a few years ago.

Labour always tries to limit and contain progressive movements (peace, anti-nuclear, environmental, etc.). Women have never got a good deal from Labour. Also, remember, that it was Labour that drafted the racist Nationality Act, that the Tories brought in.

WELFARE STATE

Even Labour's claim about its role in developing the welfare state, in health and education, has to be looked at critically. In so much as that sector has been progressive that was because of mass pressure outside of parliament. It has not been just under Labour that the expansion has occurred. Also, Labour governments have been as ready as Tory ones to bring in public spending cuts, when the system needed them. The expansion of the welfare state had more to do with the changing needs of the imperialist system than with any real socialist inroads into the system. It would not have been possible at all, without the massive exploitation of the Third World. The services provided by the welfare state are bureaucratic and have always fallen well short of meeting the real needs of ordinary people. In many aspects, they play the role of social control; individualise collective problems, whilst blunting and hiding the harsher realities of the imperialist system.

Despite all this evidence the "left-wing" view is still to argue that the way forward is to change the Labour Party.

It was clear that the recent party conference reflected a continuing trend of going for policies that will win votes. Socialist-sounding policies are being dropped.

The reality is, of course, that to change the Labour Party into a truly anti-imperialist socialist party would mean the destruction of the Labour Party as it is now.

The Labour Party is a product of a society that is part of the centre of the world imperialist system. It is a product of the exploitation and oppression of the Third World, which funded the ability of the ruling class to concede limited reforms. Being in the heartland of the imperialist system means that even the standard of living of the mass of ordinary people is above the bare minimum. This is the base on which a party that promises reforms can win the leadership of the working class and progressive movements. It is on this base that parliamentary based limited democratic choices can divert people into choosing very limited options within a basically anti-people system.

Parliament, however, is only one small part of the bosses' state. A part that can be discarded if it outlives its useful diversionary role. We should be under no illusions about the true nature of the ruling class. It will use the full power of its state apparatus if necessary to maintain its rule. It will not stand by and let itself be voted out of existence by any parliamentary based party. Anyone who doubts the ruling class's true nature, has only to look to the North of Ireland, the miners' strike or the attacks on the black national minority communities.

The enemy is formidable but can be beaten. To struggle within the Labour Party only uses up progressive people in a deadend struggle that cannot be won.

BUILD A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

Any truly mass revolutionary movement has to be built where the anti-imperialist forces can be strongest, that is, amongst the mass of ordinary people, taking into account the real problems they face. The policies have to be worked out in light of the reality of living in an imperialist heartland. Part of building that movement has to be winning over people to realising that the limited options offered in parliamentary-based politics are not the real issues.

Obviously, to face up to that reality and to organise to do something about it, is a lot harder, and needs a different political style, from that needed to take part in the political manoeuvring within the Labour Party. That however is the only real option for those who really want to see imperialism destroyed and replaced by a superior socialist system.



BEYOND CONCEPTION

The New Politics of Reproduction

I thought that this book, 'Beyond Conception', would be about infertility and testtube babies. But this was only a tiny bit of the tale. Pat Spallone, a member of the Reproductive Rights Campaign, has nothing good to say about the new reproductive technology. The technology she is considering includes the fertilisation of human eggs outside the body and the growing of such embryos for research and for re-implantation - so-called testtube babies, or in-vitro fertilisation (IVF). It also includes sex determination of embryos and testing embryos for genetic diseases such as Down's syndrome or muscular dystrophy before putting them back in the womb. She does not go into any detail of the technology but traces the development and the future of it, from a solid feminist and international perspective.

Pat Spallone's main concern is that medical scientists, with the backing of the state, are proceeding with reproductive engineering projects without accountability to women. In order to perform their research, they require women's bodies, or bits of them, to experiment on and such women undergo multiple surgical and hormonal treatments with little apparent consideration given to risks to women's health. Often it is perfectly healthy fertile women who undergo all the treatment because of sub-fertility in their partners. Women are being denied the choice of abortion, whilst at the same time, scientists are allowed to handle embryos experimentally and discard them.

Another concern is that the technology has put forward the embryo, at only a few days old, as a separate entity to the woman who did and will bear it. On the back of this, we are seeing growing legislation which is repressive to women. This is an example of how the technology affects all women, not just the few who are directly involved. Women are increasingly being taken to court for "fetal neglect", for example, drinking alcohol whilst pregnant, refusing surgical procedures or medical advice in pregnancy. This separation of embryo from woman, from almost the day of

conception, is also being used by the anti-abortion lobby.

CONCEPT OF MOTHERHOOD

Allied to this is the whole concept of motherhood. A good mother is being defined by the technology as being married, and as carrying a genetically "perfect" baby. Robert Edwards, the IVF expert and pioneer, has said: "Any child born after a conception in-vitro must be normal and delivered into a loving family." It has also created categories of motherhood, for example, biological mother, carrying mother, social mother. These are a denial of women's integrity and the reality of pregnancy and childbirth. To quote Robert Edwards again, about surrogate mothers: "The surrogate is transitory, unrelated, a temporary incubator." The book is full of such quotes.

EUGENICS

Of central importance to Pat Spallone's polemic against the new reproductive technology is that it is a tool of eugenics. Eugenics is the breeding of human stock to be "perfect", when "perfect" is defined by one group of people who are historically, and at present, white, ruling class and male. Many eminent scientists have offered suggestions for eugenic breeding programmes which presume that scientists decide who is fit to breed.

Sex determination and the abortion of female foetuses are already widespread. Women in India, for example, are exposing the practice and campaigning against it. Genetic engineering of embryos and foetuses is seen by Pat Spallone as another

imposition on women's reproduction by medical science, and another imposition on the disabled. Genetic abnormalities are seen as something which should be "fixed" with no discussion of obvious questions about normality and abnormality.

The Warnock Committee, who reported to the government on the whole of this sphere a few years ago, did not invite any women's groups to submit evidence. Another example of genetic thinking is that it is said in IVF circles that the technology must be mainly used in normal fertile couples who already have two children to "balance" its use by the infertile and genetically handicapped.

The book disappointed me because it is very one-sided. Pat Spallone does not address, to any extent, the contradiction for women between the technology actually giving some women what they desperately want - a baby, and the undoubted repression which it is throwing at all of us.

Similarly, with its use in the prevention of genetic disease, there is good and bad, to my mind. The book does not start with women's own experiences and show what is hidden behind the facade but is written on a rather theoretical

plane. Pat Spallone's scientists are all men, and evil men at that... and after reading the book, it would be a brave young woman indeed who felt up to changing that situation.

INFORMATIVE

However, I found the book very informative and it provided food for thought without being difficult to read. It showed very clearly that as the new reproductive technologies are being used, at the moment, they are indeed eugenic, racist and sexist. The author calls for social protest as a power base for change and promotes FINNRAE (Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive Technology and Genetic Engineering). The book ends with this paragraph:

"To change our relationship to science and technology in the most woman-respecting, life-respecting way, we must start from the recognition that we are our bodies, we are ourselves. We do not have to accept the man-made paradoxes and the splitting up of women into parts (eggs, embryos, wombs, placentas) which has been so ingrained as to seem natural. We can overturn the dualities of mind/body, rational/emotional, science (what men do), and not science (what women do); and the ancient conceptual split of embryo and woman. Knowledge of women's fertility and procreative powers must have to do with our bodies, and be grounded in experiences in the world, in feeling and doing (which also includes thinking and observing), not what scientists find out for us in laboratories after they have taken our insides out."

The next session of Parliament will see the government introduce the Warnock Bill, covering the complex questions of Artificial Insemination by Donor (AID); In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF); research on human embryos and other related matters.

The issues will be further complicated and even further removed from most women's experience by the fact that a clause reducing the time limit for abortions is likely to be put to the Bill.

At its annual conference in early October, SPUC (The Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) announced its intention of putting an 18-week time limit to abortions, as an amendment to the Bill.

It now seems that the government will forestall SPUC's amendment by producing its own amendment, lowering the time limit. Either way, women are unlikely to benefit and the fact that the amendment will be part of a Bill makes it more difficult to defeat. We hope to carry a more detailed article on this in the next issue.

Mandy's Diary

Sept. 26th: I am suprised how often there is a survey or a piece of research produced in order to state the obvious. For example, in a recent survey in the Midlands, three out of five working mothers said they could not survive without their additional incomes. One in four working women said they could not afford to leave their jobs and have children because of financial pressures. Half the mothers questioned said they intended to return to work after the baby's birth because they needed the money. Three quarters of the women said everyone should have the right to return to work after maternity leave, and 96 per cent said they felt men should have the right to paternity leave.

October 15th: I have been reading an article in 'Everywoman' about the sexual harassment of women in the House of Commons. It sounds horrific. The article is written by Lesley Abdela, whose book 'Women with X Appeal' is published this month. It seems a fairly common occurrence for women MPs to be subjected to personal verbal abuse by a handful of male, mainly Conservative, colleagues.

For example, Teresa Gorman, who had been advocating Hormone Replacement Therapy for post-menopausal women, was astonished to hear a male MP shout:

"You're not a real woman! You're all PLASTIC! Which bits of you are real and which aren't?"

She was even more astonished because this man is a qualified doctor.

During the Alton debate on abortion, a Conservative MP shouted at a Labour women:

"Stag! Of course, you would vote for abortions!"

A woman MP said: "They come in and form a group, shouting ribald suggestions. On parental leave, they'll shout: 'We don't want men staying at home'. And when Joan Ruddock brought up the wretched business of police strip searches at Greenham Common, they shouted: 'Cor! We'd love to strip search you.'"

There are still only 42 women in the House of Commons. They are outnumbered 14 to 1 by the men. Women MPs soon discover a strong men's club atmosphere.

This type of crude and threatening behaviour is designed deliberately to insult women and intimidate them from introducing what precious little progressive legislation there is, on women's issues. Many of these encounters take place at night when the men have had too much to drink. There



are no less than 17 bars in the Houses of Parliament.

It is possible that the plans to televise proceedings in the House of Commons may have some effect on the men's behaviour. If not, let's hope that their constituents see what louts they are.

October 22nd: Still on the subject of MPs, Edwina Currie is slowly emerging again. She has written a book, some of which is being serialised in the 'Sunday Times' review on the subject of women's health. As Junior Health Minister, she made some inquiries into the main causes of death in women, nearly half are due to heart disease and nearly one quarter to cancer. In younger women, cancer is three times more common than heart disease as a cause of death, and it is not until women reach their late 60's that deaths from heart disease begin to catch up. The pattern is totally different for men. By the time they reach their late 30's, heart disease is already racing ahead. It would have been interesting to know why this is, but unfortunately there was no explanation. Do men eat more and richer food than women, in general? Do women get more exercise with all the work they do? It is well known that on average, men die younger than women.

Of the women who die of cancer

in this country, the largest group have breast cancer, the cause of about 13,000 deaths a year. The second largest is lung cancer, which causes 10,000 women's deaths a year.

Disappointingly, there was no new information about prevention of breast cancer, beyond stressing the importance of early detection and regular self-examination.

One of Edwina Currie's responses to these figures has been to advise women not to smoke. It sounds fine in theory. But it does not show any understanding of the pressures on women to smoke, or make any attempt to counteract them. In typical capitalist style, it is put over as a question of individual choice. Tobacco companies are still making huge profits. One of their means of advertising is by sponsoring sports events. Young people are still getting the message that it is a cool and sophisticated thing to do. To make any real inroads into the problem would involve making changes which neither the Tories, nor any other capitalist party, is prepared to make. It is cheaper and easier to blame women for their own health problems.

October 27th: They didn't take any notice of that survey, did they? They have frozen Child Benefit again, for the third year running.



WAR AGAINST DRUGS



'Operation Kingfisher' was the name of the carefully planned police attack on Broadwater Farm Estate in Tottenham, London, on 29th September.

Four hundred police, many in riot gear, from Scotland Yard's specialist "rapid entry" team, PT18, arrived in unmarked trucks and rapidly occupied the estate. Some had sledgehammers and axes and they were accompanied by civilians with heavy-duty cutting equipment. Drug squads officers were present, as were a large force of "territorial support group" officers. Access roads to the estate were all blocked, closing an area of Tottenham one mile across.

The police claimed that this military-type operation was aimed at drug-dealers. In the event, there were thirty arrests with more than one third being charged with public order offences. At first, the police were remarkably reticent about the amount of hard drugs seized in the raid. When it emerged that less than two grammes of cocaine was the amount, they let it be known that the dealers must have been "tipped off".

Many people believe that drugs were only the excuse used for the raid. They point out that the raid occurred a week before the fourth anniversary of the 1985 uprising on the estate, when in the words of Bernie Grant, the police "got a bloody good hiding".

The raid also took place just a few days after the police had announced that Det. Chief Supt. Graham Melvin was to face a disciplinary hearing over the inquiry into the 1985 events.

POLICE ATTACKS

Whatever the immediate cause or pretext for the raid, it can be seen as part of the ongoing war being waged against the black community in the name of the war against drugs.

In the July/August issue of 'Class Struggle', we reported on the "cordon of racist terror" drawn by Wolverhampton police round the Heath Town estate in May. As the chairman of the local tenants' association said at the time:

"I am not defending the drug-pushers. ...But don't tell me there is any justification in sending the police in riot gear to arrest twenty people."

Similarly, the Birmingham police used the pretext of the "war against drugs" to launch the attack which sparked off the battles in Handsworth in the summer of 1985.

Recent statements by senior police officers and government spokespeople have emphasised that the fight against drugs will be central to the fight against all crime in the coming period. "Drugs" is now the key word being used to strengthen police powers and to justify more repression.

Many people may feel that although regrettable, such measures are necessary in the light of the threat from hard drugs, particularly to young people.

In dealing with the question of drugs, it is important to make a distinction between drugs such as cannabis or grass, which many people would argue are less harmful than tobacco or alcohol, and hard drugs such as heroin, cocaine or 'crack'.

But experience shows, both here and in other countries, that the forces of the state have no genuine interest in fighting drugs.

OTHER COUNTRIES

In the USA, Bush's famous war against drugs closely parallels what is happening here, not surprisingly as there has been close co-operation between police here and in the USA, especially since the 1981 uprisings.

No-one familiar with the effects of hard drugs will deny the harmful effects. In an article in the 18th September issue of 'Unity', (paper of the League of Revolutionary Struggle); the effects of the new drug 'crack' are described:

"Since the emergence of crack cocaine on the streets of America's inner cities, African American communities have been besieged by a rise in crime and violence which has transformed many neighbourhoods into war zones. The toll on families has been equally severe, as addicted parents are no longer able to care for their children or themselves, and young people are increasingly lured to dealing drugs due to a lack of employment and educational opportunities. Because of this, African Americans have been among the first to demand a national response to the drug crisis."

Although crack is probably less widespread here than in the USA, there are indications that it is spreading and there is no question of the spread of heroin in different communities. What is in question is the motive behind the present campaign by the government against drugs.

Historically, British governments are in no position to take a moral stand on drugs, having partly built its Empire on the enforced export of opium to China (see article in next issue).

To the extent that there is genuine concern, it probably reflects the spread of drugs. A Black Panther Party pamphlet made this point as long ago as the early '70s:

"Drug addiction in the colonized ghettos of America has constituted a major problem for over 15 years.... Its use is so widespread that it can be termed "a plague".... But it has only been within the last few years that the racist US government has considered drug addiction "a matter of grave concern". It is interesting to note that this growing concern is proportionate to the spread of the plague into the inner sanctums of the White middle and upper-class communities."

FIGHT POVERTY AS WELL AS DRUGS

The 'Unity' article quoted above makes the point that any "war against drugs" is useless without carrying out a war against poverty which causes people to take drugs in the first place. The \$7.9 billion allocated by Bush to law enforcement and building new prisons will mean a war on the black community without touching the real profiteers of the drug trade. **"The real kingpins are the bankers, businessmen and politicians who never touch the drugs, never collect the money from the hands of the users, and who, in some cases**

are leading the charge in this hypocritical war."

In Britain too, it is clear that the establishment does not have any new-found concern with the well-being of the black community or working class youth. It is, in fact, black people themselves, who know only too well the effects of drugs, who are leading the fight against them.

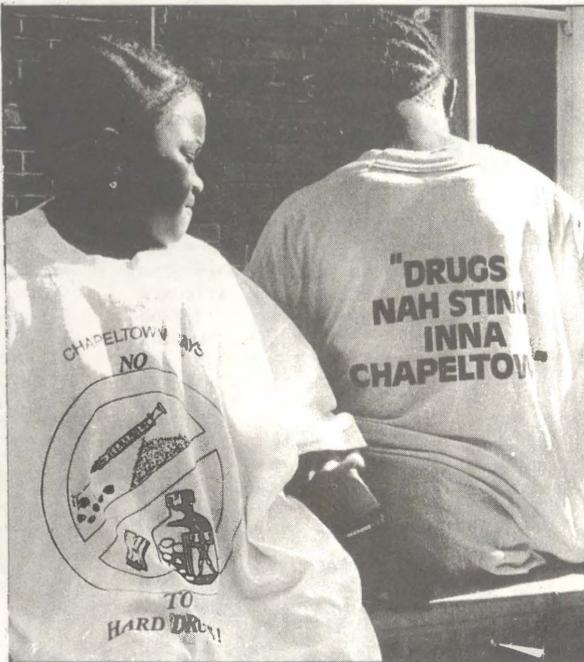
In a letter to the newspapers on 5th October, the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign pointed out:

"... Dealing in drugs, particularly hard drugs, is not an activity condoned by any of the community organisations on the estate. Indeed, the Broadwater Farm Youth Association has expressed its concern to the police on a number of occasions, and in August 1989 went so far as to close the youth centre for some time in an effort to stop dealers congregating there."

In Chapeltown, Leeds, pirate radio station, WYBC, (West Yorkshire Broadcasting Corporation or, if you prefer it, We're Young, Black and Conscious) broadcasts a range of music, with the active support of DJs, spreading the anti-drug message:

"Cocaine will blow my brain
Leave me insane"

and



in Dublin supported by thousands of people, adults and children. One speaker at the rally explained:

"Drug-pushers, the scourge of Dublin at present, take away people's rights. They kill our children, destroy our communities, contaminate them and intimidate our people."

The purpose of the march was to highlight the inability or unwilling-

The CPAD, however, was not prepared simply to protest at government and gardai (police) inaction. They have organised campaigns of mass action to drive drug-dealers out of their communities. Meetings are organised to discuss the situation and identify drug-pushers. Known drug-dealers are asked to leave the area, and if persuasion does not succeed, pickets are held outside their houses, evictions and occupations are organised. CPAD have also concerned itself with treatment and cures for addicts.

These methods, which clearly have the support and active participation of the majority of people in the community, have earned hostility from the gardai, the media and the establishment in general.

From the beginning, CPAD had a policy of non-cooperation with the gardai, making it a point of principle not to hand over any information collected. At the same time, CPAD said:

"We do not seek confrontation with the gardai or the courts but we will not be intimidated by drug-pushers and those who support them."

The media has warned people not to join CPAD, labelled its members "vigilantes" and dismissed it as a "Provo Front". (Sinn Fein members are active in CPAD.)

The gardai and courts have kept

OR WAR AGAINST PEOPLE?

"Coke me no sniff
Coke me no smoke
From you take it
There's no hope."

At the Carnival in Chapeltown in August of this year, T-shirts with the message 'Drugs Nah Sting Inna Chapeltown' were prominent and a packed meeting at the Mandela Centre, held at the end of September, heard an anti-drugs activist from Washington DC, USA, warn:

"Poverty forces us into illegal hustling. But when illegal hustling starts to hurt our own people, it's time to start thinking...."

"...But you can't stop the problem in the ghetto... We are fighting something international and monstrous in size and proportion... Unless you are prepared to expose everybody in it - all the way to the top, you're not serious about fighting hard drugs."

ORGANISING AGAINST DRUGS IN DUBLIN

Working class communities in the South of Ireland have also found out that those who preach the loudest about the war against drugs are not always sincere.

The Concerned Parents Against Drugs (CPAD) is a group of people who got together in 1983 out of desperation at the spread of heroin, particularly on working class estates in Dublin.

In 1987, CPAD organised a march

ness of successive Dublin governments to take on the drug-pushers:

"The government never really cared about the young people who became heroin addicts in the early 80's because they were working class kids from working class areas and as long as the problem remains confined to those areas, the establishment parties will never care."



up a long campaign of harassment and intimidation of CPAD, with many arrests. In the summer of this year, they succeeded in convicting members of CPAD, John Humphries and Hughie Cahill who received prison sentences of one year. Their case had been tried in a no-jury court. (It was widely believed that no court with a jury would convict the two men.) The chief witness against them was a known drug-pusher who had fled to England, been convicted here of possession of £60,000 worth of heroin and mysteriously managed to escape from Pentonville Prison. In this case, it seemed, Scotland Yard was not seeking extradition.

In June of this year, following the men's conviction, four hundred people marched to demand their release. Meanwhile, the people continue their battle against drugs in their communities.

In Britain, as well as in the USA and in the south of Ireland, a serious fightback against the evil of hard drugs in our communities will have to rely on the strengths of ordinary working people and be prepared to take on the whole of the establishment. For all their rhetoric, the politicians and the police have no genuine interest in getting rid of those really responsible for, and profiting from the drugs trade.

'I have no more tears, Sister!'

The article below is a reprint of a leaflet from the **South Asia Solidarity Group**:

On Thursday, 21st September, Rajani Thiranagama was shot dead while on her way home from the University of Jaffna. Rajani was one of the founders of the University Teachers for Human Rights and was one of the few people active in exposing human rights violations by the Indian Peace-Keeping Force (IPKF), which now controls the North and East of Sri Lanka; the Tamil paramilitary groups which the Indian Army had infiltrated, armed and brought under its control, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The situation in northern Sri Lanka is so confused that although one can say why Rajani was assassinated, we cannot place the blame on only one quarter. In the past few months, she had received threats and her home had been repeatedly raided by armed men who had taken away documents which described these atrocities. In letters written in the weeks and days before she was killed, she constantly referred to harassment from the

IPKF. A few days before she died, she wrote: "The local army officer in charge is trying to trap me."

Since June 1989, the IPKF have instituted mass conscription to compel civilians to join armed groups under their control in anticipation of a planned withdrawal of Indian troops in December. Recently, three young Tamil women who tried to escape this conscription were beaten to death. It is possible that Rajani's killer was acting on instructions from the IPKF or the Research and Analysis Wing - RAW (the Indian secret service). However, it may also be the work of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam which since the recent truce with the IPKF is trying to eliminate all those who have dared to criticise them.

The LTTE and IPKF controlled groups are now blaming each other for Rajani's murder. As she herself had written - in this atmosphere of lies and terror even people's deaths are cynically manipulated to gain credit.

STANDING FOR JUSTICE AND FREEDOM

Rajani stood up for justice and freedom for ordinary people during the Sri Lankan government's campaign of terror and repression against the Tamil community. But she also subsequently witnessed and spoke out against the degeneration of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the group which emerged dominant in the struggle for a separate state but declined into a purely militaristic organisation

with a callous disregard for the lives of the people. She was in Jaffna in July 1987 when the Indian Armed Forces were welcomed in as peace-makers, and during the "October War" a few months later when she lived through the onslaught by the same "peace-makers" on civilian targets including Jaffna hospital (where she had been a doctor), refugee camps and villages.



At times of war, women pay



Rajani lived in Britain for three years while writing her Ph.D. thesis in anatomy which was informed by a critique of imperialist anthropology. Nobody who knew her can forget her dynamism and sensitivity or her urge to fight oppression wherever she was. In Britain, she helped to set up the Tamil Refugee Action Group and was one of the founders of South Asia Solidarity Group.

Identifying with the struggles of other black women in this country,

she was involved in fighting racism at many different levels. Her commitment to fighting women's oppression was central to all her political activities: after returning to Jaffna, she was one of very few people who focused attention upon the horror of women's experience of the war. Recently she had produced and acted in a play which dealt with rape and violence against women in this context. Among her reports and analysis which were to be published in a book, was one which she titled 'I have no more tears, sister'. It specifically documented the atrocities and physical and psychological damage suffered by Tamil women.

Rajani was 35 and had two young daughters. Her many friends in this country are demanding an independent inquiry into the circumstances surrounding her death. Independent monitoring organisations including Amnesty International have repeatedly been refused admission to the Indian-controlled regions of Sri Lanka.

We are calling on individuals and organisations to send telegrams to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Lok Sabha, New Delhi, India; and to the Chief Minister, Provincial Government, Northern and Eastern Province, Trincomalee, Sri Lanka; making the following demands:

*** We condemn the brutal murder of human rights activist Rajani Thiranagama on September 21st, in Jaffna, Sri Lanka.

*** We demand that you (1) permit an immediate enquiry into the incident by international human rights organisations (2) conduct a public enquiry into the activities of the Indian Armed Forces and other military and paramilitary organisations associated with them in Sri Lanka (3) provide an explanation of this atrocity on Indian-controlled soil (4) allow human rights organisations open access to the North and East of Sri Lanka.

We also urgently need funds to publish and distribute the book written by Rajani, which for the first time documents and analyses the Indian intervention in Sri Lanka.

Please send donations to:
Rajani Thiranagama Memorial Fund,
c/o South Asia Solidarity Group,
173 Archway Road,
London N6 5BL.
or Tel: 01 267 0212.

Rajani Thiranagama's killers must be brought to justice!

Demand an independent enquiry!

THE DEPOSED DICTATOR IS DEAD - THE REPRESSION LIVES ON

Ferdinand Marcos, the deposed Philippine dictator, died on Sept. 28th.

It is very doubtful that Marcos' corpse has any 'malignant power', as Cory Aquino suggested when she vetoed the return of the body for burial in the Philippines. But then she has survived five coup attempts, two linked to Marcos' loyalists, since succeeding him as President.

Marcos fled in a hasty helicopter evacuation in February 1986 and took refuge in Hawaii.

In September 1972, after a series of bombings in Manila blamed on the communists, but carried out by his own supporters, Marcos imposed martial law in order to continue in office.

Under martial law, the Philippines had the highest murder rate in the world, gross violation of human rights, and the torture and killing of hundreds of opposition activists. But in 1981 George Bush toasted Marcos on his fixed 're-election' with the words: 'We love your adherence to democratic principle and the democratic processes'.

Marcos was an agent, and beneficiary, of American policy: the Americans wanted their strategically important bases in the Philippines, and Marcos invoked the communist threat to support their presence. In doing so, Marcos assured himself of the support of the 68,000 jobs the base provided; the biggest employer after the government, at the cost of surrendering national sovereignty and national pride.

During Marcos' rule, the deteriorating human rights situation was accompanied by growing poverty and deepening debt, while Marcos headed a corruption that saw him amass a personal fortune of an estimated ten billion dollars. Marcos diverted US and Japanese financial aid through companies run by his cronies, and plundered the national treasury for his shopping trips: Imelda left behind 600 pairs of shoes when they fled Manila, in an obscene testimony to the luxury and extravagance they enjoyed at the expense of the Filipino people.

The outrageous excesses of Marcos' rule caused sections of the bourgeoisie to move against him. The murder of the exiled opposition politician Benigno Aquino at Manila

Airport in 1983 unified a coalition of forces.

Marcos had weakened the power of the old Spanish linked landowners through the government's sugar and coconut monopolies, but not decisively enough to face up to the bourgeois opposition led by Benigno's widow, Corazon Aquino.

Cory Aquino has the support of the US administration and is expected to renew the leases on Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base which expire in 1991. The US is satisfied that she is a worthy successor to Ferdinand Marcos.

At first Cory played the 'land reform' card as had Marcos in 1972. But it had little substance. Aquino is a product of the traditional elite, which is why, after

violation of human rights provisions and political detentions take place as the Cory government pursues a counter-insurgency strategy similar to that of Marcos.

The legal left that mushroomed with the overthrow of Marcos has been forced underground in the face of Cory's policies. The early truce negotiations with the National Democratic Front identified some of its leaders. Some have been killed by the military, others intimidated from 'legal activity' as the space for manoeuvre narrowed, and the promise of change evaporated.

In late July Cory Aquino authorised the bounty of 2.3 million dollars in reward for the capture of 45 named alleged members of the Communist Party of the Philippines.



the promise of agrarian reform, - a key measure to rectify the social crisis, - some 75% of agricultural land is classified as unavailable for redistribution to tenant farm workers.

As well as betraying the people's hopes, Cory has followed Marcos in other policies. The low intensity conflict continues against the New People's Army, but the definition of 'subversive' is elastic, covering the clergy and human rights investigators. In 1988, the Philippines held the worst record for human rights monitors killed.

The use of vigilantes and terror gangs (now numbering over 200) to assist the military, the growing

The named are all leaders of the banned NDF. Four of those named reside legally in the Netherlands. The bounty money is an incentive for political murder beyond Philippine shores.

The deposed dictator is dead.

The repression lives on.

Information on repression in the Philippines can be obtained from: Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, Human Rights Update, on subscription at 12 dollars for 6 issues, from: TFDP, Sisters Formation Institute Building, 214 N. Domingo Street, 1111, Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines

FREEDOM FOR IRELAND

In this issue, we print brief summaries of the aims and practice of three Irish solidarity groups in Britain. Each is written by a member of the group. The Troops Out Movement is a relatively large, national organisation. The other two are small, locally-based groups. Troops Out represents a broad movement for British withdrawal. The Irish Hunger Strike Commemoration Committee and the Campaign for a Free Ireland are both based on overt support for the Republican Movement. Troops Out and IHSCC both aim to change people's views on Ireland. CFI concentrates on the practical side of solidarity work.

In England, we are part of an oppressor nation and it is our role only to support the Irish national liberation struggle, not to determine how it should be waged. As communists, we recogn-

ise the right of the Irish nation to self-determination, and we support the Irish people's right to fight for liberation by any means necessary, including the armed struggle. This means giving unconditional support to the Republican Movement, who are the spearhead of the liberation struggle.

As communists, we also see that struggles can only be won by uniting all who can be united, and using all and any of the contradictions which can assist the struggle. This means trying to work with and to win over more and more people to support British withdrawal, even if they only do so because they do not want any more British lives to be lost. Only the broadest and most widely-supported movement can give the Irish people real political assistance in their struggle for the withdrawal of British imperialism.

IRISH SOLIDARITY

CAMPAIGN FOR A FREE IRELAND

Mention the Campaign for a Free Ireland (CFI) in Strabane, and people will point to a mini-bus used by relatives of Republican prisoners to visit their loved ones. CFI has made two donations of £2,000 towards the cost of the mini-bus, and the Sinn Féin local council of Strabane (a town with one of the highest unemployment rates in Europe) presented CFI with a plaque bearing the town's coat-of-arms.

CFI is not a propagandist group, like other strands in the Irish Solidarity movement. Its own pro-Republican stand is well-known. But for CFI members, actions speak louder than words, and they consciously restrict CFI's activity to practical work. CFI has now worked in North London for five years in support of the relatives of Republican prisoners.

Fund-raising activities include socials and car boot sales, as well as providing catering services at Republican and other Irish meetings.

CFI does not compete with other solidarity organisations. Individual members support other initiatives on Ireland. They recognise that a unified solidarity movement would be beneficial to the Irish struggle but that is still far off. In the meantime, CFI must continue its work, a practical contribution to the Irish people's struggle.

Campaign For a Free Ireland,
c/o 203 Seven Sisters Road,
London N4 3NG.

TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT

The Troops Out Movement believes that the only responsible contribution Britain can possibly make towards ending the conflict in the North of Ireland, is to withdraw its troops immediately. It further believes that Britain has no right to govern any part of Ireland, the Irish people alone, and as a whole, have the right to determine the future of their country, free from British interference. The movement's two demands are, therefore: "Troops Out Now" and "Self-Determination for the Irish People as a Whole!"

The current role of TOM is to campaign for these two demands and to help people better understand what Britain is doing in Ireland. For this purpose the movement produces a wide range of information and material, such as leaflets on policing strategies and strip-searching as well as exhibitions. There is also a monthly paper 'Troops Out' which covers the news that the mainstream media ignore or distort. A wide range of videos and books can also be obtained through the national office.

TOM has also taken part in many "single issue" campaigns, such as those against plastic bullets and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, working alongside those who do not necessarily share our two demands but are nevertheless prepared to take a stand on certain of the issues.

Nationally, the movement has organised major annual demonstrations for British withdrawal from Ireland.

It organises the annual August delegation to the North of Ireland. This enables people to see British rule in Ireland for themselves. It also shows the troops that not everyone in Britain sees them as peace-keepers.

The backbone of TOM is its branches which organise local pickets, meetings, film show and lobbie. TOM is also publishing an important new book on Ireland to mark the 20th anniversary of the re-deployment of British troops in the North of Ireland. It will be called 'An Obstacle to Peace-Britain's Role in Ireland 69-89'.

Troops Out Movement, PO Box 353,
London NW5 4NH.

THE IRISH HUNGER-STRIKE COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE

The Irish Hunger-Strike Commemoration Committee (IHSCC), Birmingham, was set up five years ago following an initiative by the Birmingham branch of the Irish in Britain Representation Group.

It was formed to fill the need to hold an annual commemoration of the twelve Republican freedom fighters who died on hunger-strike.

Membership is open to those who accept unconditional support for the Republican Movement. The IHSCC is an overt solidarity organisation in which Irish people give the leadership.

Although the main focus of its work is the annual commemoration (of which there have been four so far), it also supports the Republican POW Campaign's prison pickets and the pickets of Durham gaol on International Women's Day.

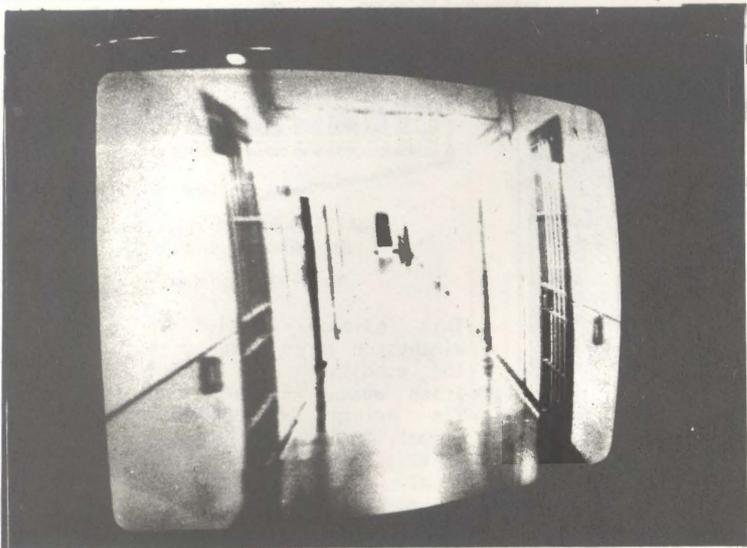
The committee has always actively supported campaigns and demonstrations organised by broader organisations, calling for British withdrawal from Ireland.

The IHSCC is an essentially Irish organisation. But this does not exclude people and organisations of other nationalities. The black national minorities have given the committee its most consistent support. There is support from a small number of English organisations but in the main such organisations choose to do their Irish solidarity work on broader-sounding and often pro-Labour Party campaigns.

The IHSCC is a legitimate part of the broad spectrum of organisations fighting for the rights of the Irish people. Its role complements the attempts to build a broader-based campaign.

English organisations in particular must respect the right of the Irish people in Britain to set up solidarity organisations such as the IHSCC.

P&P: Irish Hunger Strike Commemoration
Committee (Birmingham), PO Box
540, Sparkhill, Birmingham, B11 4AU



LETTER from a PRISONER

When I was finally allocated to a 'dispersal' prison after my 14-year sentence in 1986, I was sent to Long Lartin, in Worcestershire, because that is the nearest top-security prison for visits from my family and from many of my friends who are 'approved' by the Home Office. My mother is well into her 80's and cannot possibly travel long distances. I had a visit booked in Long Lartin for my mother to be brought to visit me on Wednesday, 9th August. I had not seen her for a few months because she had a bad fall and broke her arm and kneecap, and was in hospital for operations.

At teatime, after we had collected our food from the servery, we have to take it to our own cell and the door is locked (electronically). At 5 pm on Monday, 7th August, I had taken my tea to my cell and closed the door and I heard the other cell doors being automatically locked. But instead of my lock clicking shut, the door was burst open and I saw a squad of screws in the corridor. Several of them, led by a huge Security Governor, came into my cell and the SG said: "**You're coming with us, down to the Segregation Unit**". (Punishment block).

I asked why and he said: "**You're being moved to another prison.**" (Category A prisoners are never told exactly when or where they are being moved to). I told him I hadn't finished my tea and he said I could have a couple of minutes.

After a time, he said "**Hurry up**" and when I'd finished, I said I wanted to see the Duty Governor. In theory, it is a prisoner's right to see whichever of the governing staff is doing "Duty Governor" but, in fact, most prisons do not put this right into practice. The SG said: "**I am the Duty Governor**" but I doubt that this was true.

Prisoners are continually told lies because it is often impossible for us to check and the screws and the Governor know this. I told the SG that I had asked to

see the DG to explain that I had the visit from my mother fixed for Wednesday, and that I insisted on that visit taking place as arranged in Long Lartin.

I got up from the table by my window and sat on my bed with my back to the wall, and said I did not intend to move. The SG then told the squad "**Get him**". I think it was six screws who jumped at me, - certainly there was a screw to each arm and leg and there were also one or two others grabbing me. The two screws holding my arms had them locked in such a way that my hands were also held in a tight grip and were being bent forcefully forwards and downwards. It was extremely painful and I screamed out to them to stop trying to break my wrists, because that's what would have happened if they'd kept bending my hands. The SG yelled at me to "**Stand up**", but I repeated that I was not going voluntarily to move from my cell. The SG told the screws to "**Get him off that bed**".

The screw holding my left arm and hand then proceeded to jerk my hand even more viciously downwards, and I was screaming in agony and saying "**You're breaking my wrist**", and it really did feel like that. When I managed to get a glimpse of the screw holding my left hand and arm, I could see that he was quite clearly enjoying himself. He had a kind of smirky grin as he continued jerking and bending my hand.

But it now seems clear to me that the methods they were using were part of a well-learned drill and I have no hesitation in describing it as **legalised torture**.

They continued to drag me out of my cell and along the corridor to the top of two flights of stairs, and all the time the pressure on my hands and wrists was being kept at such a level that I was in complete agony and yelling at them that my wrist was being broken. But they took no notice and any time they were forced to a halt they immediately increased the pressure on my hand and wrist,

forcing me to move forward, or else have my wrist broken.

The screws seemed to get a bit fed up with the slow progress and they started to catch hold of my legs and around my body as well, to carry me along. But the SG said to them: "**No, don't carry him. Make him walk.**"

So the pressure was re-applied and in this way I was half-dragged and half-forced to shuffle forward by the continued jerking pressure on my wrists to avoid having my wrists broken - down the steps and along corridors, to the Segregation Unit.

In there, I was forced face downwards onto the floor in the special 'strip cell'. My clothes were ripped off me and I was left in there naked. The cell is empty and has no windows. I was left there for at least an hour and then moved to a 'normal' segregation cell.

A medical orderly was brought to see me and when I showed him my already badly swelling left wrist, he merely said he would look at it the next morning. Presumably, he already knew that I would be in the prison van and on my way to the new prison by 7.30 on Tuesday and I never saw him again.

My left wrist had swollen even more by Tuesday morning and I asked to be handcuffed to my escorting officer by my right wrist. But this was refused and I was handcuffed by my swollen left wrist. It took just over three hours non-stop to reach my new prison, Full Sutton. I was only told that destination after we had been travelling for two hours.

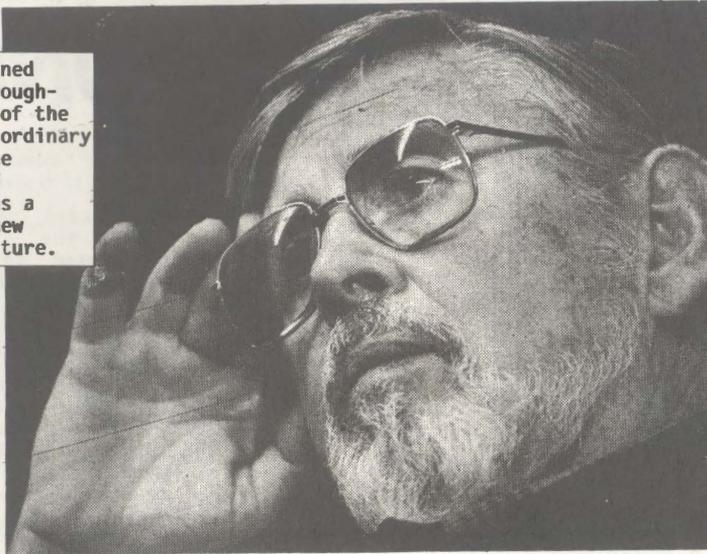
Full Sutton is the furthest away prison from my family, apart from Frankland. I am refusing to issue any visiting orders from here because I know that my mother couldn't possibly manage the long journey and I'm not expecting the rest of my family to have to travel so far for a couple of hours' visit.

Let me make it clear that I fully realise that my Republican comrades, and other falsely convicted Irish friends, have suffered and continue to suffer treatment besides which my experience is insignificant. This also applies to all political prisoners, especially those whose stand is anti-imperialist. Prisoners' demands, such as repatriation to serve sentences and abolition of non-determinate sentences, should be vigorously supported.

Pete Jordan.

Ewan MacColl (1915~89)

MacColl remained convinced throughout his life of the potential in ordinary people and the importance of their lives as a source of a new socialist culture.



Ewan MacColl's death following major heart surgery, on Sunday October 22nd, ended his long career as political playwright, folk singer-songwriter and political activist. The son of a Scots iron moulder, and often blacklisted active trade unionist, he never lost his working class roots and the need to struggle for social justice. Socialist revolution was the way to the future. And the need to develop a socialist cultural movement was an important part of that struggle. His life's work played a major role in trying to develop that movement.

Ewan's pioneer work with political theatre stretched back to his first theatre group, the Red Megaphones, founded in 1931, in Salford. His early work with Joan Littlewood through to later work with Charles Parker and Peggy Seeger and others has been an inspiration and example to political theatre since.

With Charles Parker and Peggy Seeger, he produced the Radio Ballad series, which were documentaries on the lives of fishermen, miners, travellers and others. These were unique in the way they used the actual lives, songs and words of ordinary people to express in drama and song the living history of ordinary people's lives and work: living people's history, not the dry stuff of history books written by outsiders.

With Bert Lloyd, Ewan was responsible for the revival of folk music in this country. Their work led to a mushrooming of many new singers and a rediscovery that the ordinary people throughout history had a rich culture of song that gave a real record of their history and lives.

Theatre and song were not something for the privileged few, in Ewan's view. Indeed, art that did not flow out of the experiences of the people and was not actively used by them was poor and shallow. It had to be relevant to people and used by them.

Ewan's song 'Manchester Rambler' was part of the 1932 mass trespass movement which led to the opening up of the countryside for ordinary people to enjoy. He himself was an enthusiastic walker and climber throughout his life. The quality of life was very important to him.

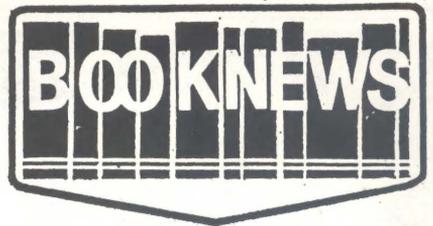
Ewan was active in supporting the miners' strike of 1984. Shortly before his death, he was writing songs for the anti-poll tax campaign.

Ewan had a clear internationalist stand and was heavily involved in solidarity with the Vietnamese people's struggle against US imperialism. He is widely known for his songs in support of the Azanian people, some of which have been translated and used by the Azanians in their struggle.

He considered himself a Marxist-Leninist and this caused him to break with the Soviet Union in the 1960's and become a strong supporter of the Chinese revolution and to advocate the need to apply its lessons to other revolutionary movements.

Much more could be said about Ewan's contribution, particularly about his long collaboration with Peggy Seeger, as perhaps this is where most people will have met his work: through their concerts together.

However, perhaps his major contribution is that he stuck to his principles and put them into practice, throughout his life. His conviction of the potential in ordinary people; their lives as a source of building a new, socialist culture is an important lesson to remember and build on. It is an important part of the revolutionary movement that ordinary people are actively involved in developing a new type of culture, one that they could control and develop for themselves. One that could enrich their lives and help them struggle to build a better world - a socialist world.



**WAITING FOR JUSTICE?
One Woman's Story**
Martina Shanahan

This 63-page booklet from the Winchester Three Campaign highlights the conditions in which a young Irish woman was kept on remand. (in prison unconvicted of any crime), for thirteen months. To keep her secure until she reached trial, charged with conspiracy to murder Tom King, the British state used measures that were clearly designed to "break" her, that were designed to prevent her being able to defend herself at trial. The pamphlet also looks at the tenuous nature of the evidence concluding that "the only conspiracy pointed to by the evidence, was a conspiracy to dispense with the requirements of justice and find them guilty, no matter what.

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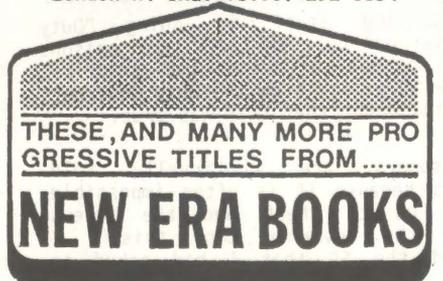
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LETTERS

Dear Editor,

I read with interest your recent article on the problems of building an Irish solidarity movement.

Obviously there is no easy way to build such a movement. English society is riddled with racism which can be traced back to the days of the British Empire. Irish people are also on the receiving end of racism. This limits any movement.

What slogans to build around is important. We need to build the maximum support for the Irish struggle, no matter the reason why people are drawn to that position. Broad demands such as 'Troops Out'; 'Self-determination for the Irish People'; and 'Britain Out of Ireland' seem to me to be correct.

Why there is so much disagreement about the correct slogans is not, I think, mainly about what slogans but more to do with who is calling for them.

Over the years I have worked in various campaigns on Ireland and nearly always problems have arisen because organisations and individuals are using the campaign for their own ends and not really to help the Irish people's struggle. They see "Ireland work" as a way to build their own organisation or to give the Labour Party a "left face" ■

A Birmingham reader.

Dear Editor,

Recently, the 'National Front News' re-printed an article which came originally from the 'Daily Express'. This was followed by 'The Sun' printing a very similar article headlined "Send Us Back, Say Britain's Blacks". Compare this with 'National Front News' own front page's "Blacks Back Repatriation".

These reports were based on a survey of 1,500 black people misrepresented to foster the idea that black people would back the call for repatriation if the money to do that was there.

Both 'The Sun' and 'National Front News' fuelled the myth that treats all black people as immigrants when the racist immigration controls stop entry and split families by deporting one of the parents.

'The Sun' helps foster the racist climate by providing a wider platform for racist ideas and politics than fascist organisations could, by reaching to millions more readers than the fascists. It gives credence to all those who voice such sentiments. If racist arguments are common currency of debate, then the practice of fascist thugs becomes more commonplace. In an insidious manner, the racist

propaganda of the "respectable" media makes attacks on black people, by either fascist or state forces, more acceptable. In addition, 'The Sun' gives support to right-wing causes, irrespective it seems of the organisations involved.



Juliet Alexander, a newsreader from London Weekend Television, was horrified to find her picture splashed all over the front of a recent edition of 'National Front News'. Headed "Blacks Back Repatriation! Over Two Thirds Say Yes!", it shows her sitting, smiling on a trunk - apparently happy to be going "home". "It's a hideous misrepresentation," she said. "The photo was taken to illustrate a Radio 4 programme on the continuing links between black people here and Caribbean culture." The article, taken from a poll conducted for the 'Daily Express' was also picked up by 'The Sun' who ran a story headed "Send Us Back, Say Britain's Blacks". Arguing that many black people would support a total immigration ban and that Asian people are more opposed to intermarriage than white people, the article trotted out the familiar racist myths that: "whites are not solely to blame for intolerance" and that black people in Britain are "immigrants".

When the Gerry Adams fringe meeting, held at the Labour Party conference, was disrupted by fascists, one of those involved was Tina Wingfield, a well-known member of the National Front. On reporting this, 'The Sun' completely ignored her membership of a fascist organisation, calling her an angry housewife.

With reportage like this, the National Front could not wish for better coverage.

No wonder 'The Sun' is also nicknamed 'The Scum' ■

An East London reader.

Dear Editor,

No-one really expected the government to do anything to tighten up the law on preventing food-poisoning. But you would have thought they would have, at least, pretended to do something substantial. They have proposed an 'Independent Committee' to deal with the issue. However, when you look at who is on the committee, they have a strange idea of who is independent:

Dr. Baird-Parker: a micro-biologist working for Unilever.

Mr D. Clarke who works for Trusthouse Forte.

Prof. Norris from Cadbury-Schweppes.

Dr. Spencer from Sainsbury

Mr J.E. Moffit, a farmer ■

A Birmingham reader.

DIARY OF EVENTS

HISTORY WORKSHOP 23
Salford University,
3-5 November

Among a wide variety of workshops on a variety of subjects related to working class history, women's history etc., the **Revolutionary Education Development** will be giving workshops on six topics on the history of black people in Britain.

COMMUNITIES OF RESISTANCE: CONFERENCE

1992 and IMPLICATIONS FOR BLACK PEOPLE, REFUGEES & MIGRANTS

Saturday, 11th November,
Hackney Town Hall, London.

ANTI-FASCIST ACTION

STOP THE NATIONAL FRONT'S REMEMBRANCE DAY MARCH

Assemble: 12 noon at the Junction of Victoria Street and Bressenden Place, London SW1.
AFA, PO Box 273, London E7.

POLITICAL ECONOMY STUDY GROUP CONFERENCE

HISTORY OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL 1919-1943

Saturday, 25 November, 12.00
Sunday 26 November, 11.00.
Caxton House, 129 St Johns Way
Archway, London N19.

JOINT COMMITTEE FOR PALESTINE MARCH

SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTIFADAH

Assemble: Hyde Park, London.
1.00.
SATURDAY 9th DECEMBER

THIRD WORLD FAIR

Saturday, 9th December,
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
London WC1.

WHERE WE STAND

The wealth and power of British imperialism has always rested on the exploitation of other nations as well as that of the working class. Since the end of the Second World War, Britain has fought a series of wars against the oppressed peoples fighting for national independence and liberation including Malaya, Kenya, Cyprus and Yemen. In most cases, Britain has been forced to concede formal independence, while attempting to find new ways to continue its exploitation.

But in the six counties of the North of Ireland, Britain maintains direct colonial control. Ireland was England's oldest colony and generations of Irish nationalists have resisted English rule from the time when Cromwell completed the bloody conquest of Ireland in the 17th century.

The national struggle of the Irish people has taken many different forms, reflecting the different class alliances and forces active in the struggle. There have been parliamentary struggles such as for Home Rule; struggles round the land, such as the late 19th century Land League's movement against evictions; and great trade union struggles such as the Dublin Lockout of 1913, as well as ongoing forms of cultural and religious opposition.

But there has been a consistent thread of armed insurrection against England's rule, marked by the highpoints of the 1798 United Irishmen Rising; the Fenian Rising of 1867; the Easter Rising of 1916, led by the great Irish socialist James Connolly and the subsequent War of National Independence from 1917-1921.

The present phase of the national liberation struggle, seen by the Republican Movement as its final phase, is a continuation of that heroic tradition.

The Irish War of Independence ended in the Truce of 1921 and the division of Ireland into the 26 counties of the South (Eire) and the six counties of the North (Northern Ireland). Partition represented a tactical withdrawal by Britain from the south of Ireland in order to consolidate its hold over the whole of Ireland by the creation of the sectarian state of Ulster. An end to partition and its creation, the sectarian state of Ulster, remains the target of the present phase of the struggle, which remains at the stage of national democratic struggle for independence from Britain. Those who criticise this strategy, as dividing the Catholic and Protestant working class in the North, do not understand that it is precisely the British rule that promotes conflict and that until this rule is ended, there will be no solution to the divisions.

In 1968 the Civil Rights Movement fought for equal rights for Catholics within the sectarian state. The movement soon escalated into a struggle for national freedom when Britain sent in troops to prop up their sectarian state, re-instated direct rule and brought in the full range of counter-insurgency measures against the nationalist people.

The struggle also led to a split between the 'Official' and 'Provisional' IRA. The Provisionals came forward to defend the people against the armed violence and

repression of the British army and sectarian forces of the Ulster state. Alongside this military struggle, there also developed a political campaign, which particularly after the Hunger-Strikes of 1981, developed broad support on a range of social, political and economic issues, under the leadership of Sinn Fein.

The central demand of both the political and military campaigns remains the withdrawal of British troops in order that the Irish people can determine their own future.

Over the last twenty years, the armed struggle has developed from a defensive movement to an increasingly sophisticated guerrilla war targeted against the armed forces of the state and economic targets.

It has become clear that there can be no military solution, and no British solution to the war in Ireland. In spite of all their rhetoric, the British state will ultimately be forced to give in to the Irish people's struggle for freedom and self-determination, as they have to other oppressed peoples around the world.

As communists, we have a responsibility to give unconditional support to national liberation movements, including to the Republican Movement in Ireland. We also have to unite with all those who support the demands of 'Troops Out' and 'Self-Determination for the Irish People', as well as those who are prepared to fight against particular aspects of Britain's repression of Irish people, such as the use of plastic bullets, the strip searches and many others.

PUBLICATIONS

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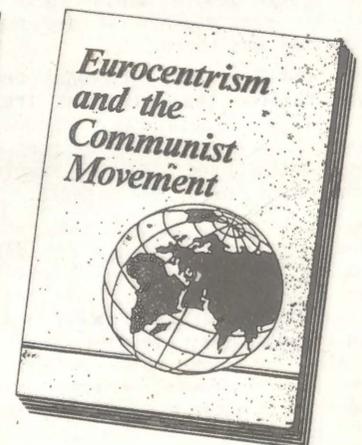
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