

# CLASS STRUGGLE



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25P

FROM GREENHAM TO THE PACIFIC.....

# WOMEN FIGHT NUCLEAR POWERS...



The women at Greenham Common have been sticking it out through freezing weather, days and nights. Four gates of the base are being covered. The women are active in harrasing the Cruise convoy when it is out, and harrasing inside the base when it is in.

Since Christmas, the convoy has been taken out every two weeks... No exercise ever goes well and therefore has to be repeated

Many of the women join Cruisewatch activity along the routes and on Salisbury Plain the convoys are stopped by many and various means... from blockading with cars, cutting brake cables on stationary vehicles so they lock on, human sit-downs, and even a huge release of balloons.

The freezing weather has had a more drastic effect on the technology than it has on the women. Launchers have been frozen in raised positions and the troops' port-a-loos have been out of action.

Inside the base, red paint is added in liberal amounts to various notices and bunkers. All new buildings are regularly inspected. No-one should underestimate the toll that this work all takes on the women: the

battle for existence goes on daily against the bailiffs, the cold, wet, isolation and poverty. Several women have recently spent time in Holloway as a result of demonstrations over the summer.

#### TAKING ON THE STATE

Women at Greenham have inspired many others by their determination and persistence in opposing the US military base and the nuclear threat from both superpowers. They have introduced new ways of protesting and have not been afraid to take on the state in the form of police, bailiffs, courts and even prison.

Important links have been made between women involved in the

struggle against imperialism on different fronts. Working class women from the mining communities went to Greenham during the miners' strike, as did nationalist women from the six occupied counties of the north of Ireland. This kind of mutual solidarity and exchange of experience has broken down barriers.

#### FOR A NUCLEAR FREE PACIFIC

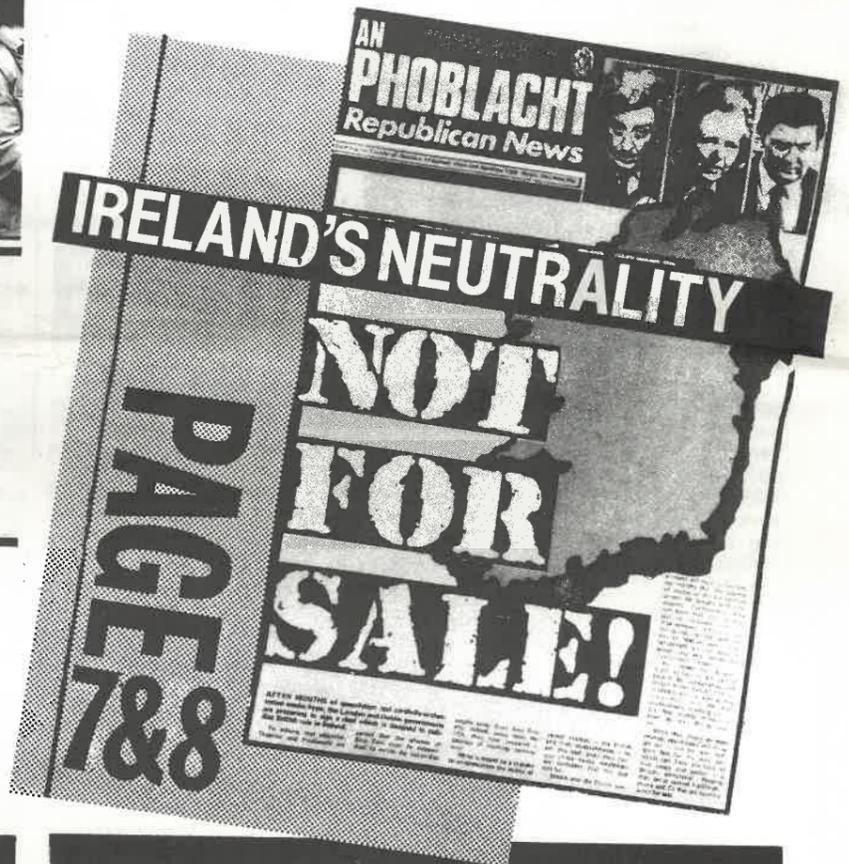
In the course of developing their own struggle, Greenham women have also raised the demand for solidarity with the Third World. They have supported the peoples of the Pacific whose lands, ways of life and own lives have been poisoned and destroyed by nuclear pollution from various imperialist powers, particularly the USA.

This is a theme which should be central to March 8th, International Women's Day - a day of celebration and solidarity with women and oppressed people of the world.



## RED AND GREEN?

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# JAN 24

# WAPPING - AN EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT

As I tried to avoid being trampled by the crowd amidst the glaring lights from the police lines and their repeated baton charges, a thought struck me. Stupid really. But something that you already know in theory, became concrete: the coppers had come equipped for a fight.

Photos of coppers "tooled-up" are commonplace. Also, I've seen them at other demos. But the impact of seeing a mass of shields and batons flaying out, heading for you, really dispels the Dixon of Dock Green image. Yes, there's been skirmishes and attacks on other marches. But what happened yesterday was explosion.

### MASSIVE TURNOUT

The march had begun from near the Strand, in good spirit, generated in part by such a massive turnout. It took fifty minutes for it to pass by from where I stood. There were no incidents along the way, as far as I know, even when we passed the offices of the 'Express' and 'Telegraph'.

I reckon 20,000 on the march. So, Wapping High Road, outside the plant, couldn't possibly accommodate us all. A stage had been set up in the park opposite one of Fortress Wapping's gates. The gates themselves were protected by ranks of "newspaper boys" - the riot police. Behind their ranks, lorries could be seen, waiting in convoy.

Some comrades and I had passed uniformed and riot-equipped reinforcements further up the road. They formed a human roadblock. Behind them, the mounties. Around the corner, down Wapping Lane, were mounted riot police and further police serials.

### "ROMAN" FORMATIONS

A few of us had skirted the main police roadblocks to see out whether any of the warren of roads in Wapping was free of police blocks. The answer, we found, after a long walk, was no. For a year, the police had been strategically placed to ensure passage for Murdoch's papers. Tonight was no different.

We got back to the main gathering after a lorry had been overturned and then removed by the coppers. Most of the marchers were behind the rally in the park. There was a small semi-circle of us facing the riot police. The coppers resembled the Roman formations you learnt about at school, shields interlocking.

A comrade had just finished taking pictures of these serried ranks when snatch squads darted out at the taunting crowd. Thrashing out indiscriminately, the coppers drove up the middle of the right, forcing demonstrators to squish up at the sides. Many were hurt: some were rubbing battered arms; others had blood streaming from head wounds, as they were helped to the back.



Predictably, retaliation was forthcoming. Saplings from the park were torn up, tin cans and anything else to hand rained down on the police shields. Some tried, belatedly, to organise their own weapons to repulse police attacks. Railings were worked loose and used to dig up paving stones. These were smashed and thrown. Terrifying cavalry charges came quickly even while the rally speakers spoke.

### CHANGE IN POLICING

It is hard to recall everything. The police lights were glaring. It was confusing and noisy. The crowd reacted jerkily to each police charge as they tried to gain ground. Each time, people were looking, searching for comrades separated by a police attack.

This was no set battle. In a true sense, the march had been ambushed. Some lashed out, taking the opportunity to hit hard. The police responded to the taunts by banging their batons on their shields. Snatch squads charged, intermittently, into the crowd, each time moving the crowds back, gaining space and initiative.

One of the most militant sections was herded into a virtual cul-de-sac, opposite the gates and hemmed in by fences either side. They sent the horses right into us. I've no idea of the number injured in the hasty retreat of demonstrators. But hundreds of injuries will have resulted from such police recklessness. At one point a rope was strung across at knee level in an attempt to prevent any more

charges. A riot squad went right through it at their next charge.

At no time was there any attempt by the coppers to defuse the situation. O.K., the intimidation was not one-sided. But slogans and insults on one side did not exactly match the weaponry of riot control displayed from the start, with full equipment and training, on the other.

Policing has changed. What happened at Wapping yesterday should not be seen as an exceptional example of state violence. Such a judgement, made in the heat of the moment, is understandable but wrong. Wapping is another instance in a growing list, joining Brixton and Maltby as signposts, landmarks of a system in crisis.



Hospital workers in Tooting

### THE NHS: WHO ARE THE TORIES TRYING TO FOOL?

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

In February, Fowler announced a £40 million spending programme for the NHS. This is to go mainly to the headline-grabbing heart and liver transplant operations. Also, there are to be 100 extra consultants taken on over the next two years

at a cost of £8.6 million. Millions of pounds have also been made available to combat AIDS. Fowler has been filling our TV screens as he jets around the world learning how to combat AIDS.

Noone doubts that these services are needed. But is this the

# N.H.S. - ELECTION TRICKS?

\*\*\* Worcester Health Authority is planning hospital closures because of cash shortages.

\*\*\* 70 people went without major heart surgery at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (Birmingham) because the money ran out.

\*\*\* A specialist children's ward at Stoke Mandeville (Buckinghamshire) will close unless charity appeals raise the money to keep it open.

\*\*\* South Birmingham Health Authority is in danger of a collapse in services unless more money is found. Since 1982, they are £4 million worse off.

\*\*\* Ambulance services in London are at breaking point because of staff shortages. If you dial 999, there is now an extra 14 minutes delay.

### BIGGEST CUT OF ALL

The biggest cut of all is in the number of hospital beds available nationally. More than 36,000 beds have been cut since 1979. That is one in ten of the total.

The latest announcement on the 17th February, giving an extra £25 million to cut hospital waiting lists by 100,000 over the next 12 months, looks very impressive unless you know what it means in practice.

£25 million is only a quarter of the money spent to sell off British Gas. It will still leave over half a million people on the waiting lists. Also, when spread across the country, it is pretty thin. For example, £2,880,000 is to go to the West Midlands. In that area, East Birmingham Hospital went broke last year and had to shut three wards to save £700,000 and Selly Oak Hospital is £4 million worse off compared with 1982. Those are only two examples of the spending cuts in the West Midlands.

That is the truth that Fowler and his Tory friends want to keep hidden. Unless you're rich enough to go private, then there is no right to health care in this country.

whole story? Has it anything to do with the Tories' bad record on the NHS and the possibility of a general election in 1987? How much is it a ploy to try and make us forget the real state of the NHS?

Years of spending cuts, privatisation and new "efficiency management" have cut basic services. The quality of care has suffered and thousands of people left on waiting lists. Up and down the country, a catalogue of problems are building up: sick people are the victims.

\*\*\* Consultants at Highlands Hospital (North London) have had to beg for credit for supplies of artificial hips and other joints because they operated on too many patients and ran out of money.

effects of severe weather. As was apparent to everyone: nothing changed.

Since 1960, there have been ten winters severe enough to cause £100 million worth of damage. This, plus loss of production (and hence profits), is no doubt the only thing that concerns the bosses. However, as usual, it's the old, the poor and the very young that bear the brunt of the state's incompetence.

### PENSIONERS

It should be the right of every pensioner to have a healthy, comfortable, long retirement. But if you are too old to be exploited at work and too poor to buy anything much, the imperialist system leaves you to die.

### BABIES

Babies are only a future workforce and, with high youth unemployment, will not all be needed by the imperialist system.

A new study to be published in

March, reveals that sudden cot deaths are more likely to happen in cold weather. Almost three times as many of Britain's annual cot deaths occur in winter as in summer. Although no-one knows exactly what causes cot deaths, it is clear that not being able to afford adequate heating makes these babies more likely to get ill and be at risk from cot deaths.

### THE POLITICIANS' RESPONSE

Neither major political party has done anything to provide a reasonable standard of living for pensioners and poor families with children.

The Tories increasingly rely on charities to provide some sort of safety net. Their

method of deciding on extra heating payments has been widely exposed as a callous way of avoiding paying anyone.

The Labour party is no better. Those same charities were necessary during Labour governments. Their promise to pay £5 a week throughout the winter if they get elected should be treated with the suspicion it deserves. There is probably going to be an election this year. Anyone who is foolish enough to believe the promises from Labour in Opposition should look closely at Labour's past record of being in government. Particularly the gravestones of pensioners dead from hypothermia during their "socialist" rule.

# THOUSANDS DIE OF COLD!

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

January saw the usual tales of disaster caused by snow. It may well be the worst winter for 40 years. But the problems were not new or unexpected.

Successive governments, both Labour and Tory, had done nothing to prevent the annual problems caused by winter weather. In 1979, the World Meteorological Organisation recommended that every country set up its own national climatic research programme. Britain did nothing. Again in 1986, a report funded by two government organisations warned that bad planning, inadequate information and a lack of coordination between state agencies was increasing the damaging



**PAC new year statement**

We reprint below extracts from the 1987 New Year 'Message to the Azanian People' made by Johnson Phillip Mlambo, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) of Azania.

The statement begins with a summary of events and trends in Azania (South Africa) in 1986. After covering the resignation of Dr. Van Zyl Slabbert, the ill-fated visit of the so-called Eminent Persons Group and the continuation of the genocidal policies of repression of the racist regime, PAC Chairman went on:

"Thousands of our patriots were cut down by enemy fire; but many more arose and rushed forward - like a rising tide that no force on earth could hold back. This growing resistance of the oppressed is a foretaste of what our angry masses will do in the approaching stage of armed struggle. This defiant, self-sacrificing mood is a strong reminder to the racists that we are indeed in the 1980's - 'The Decade of the Azanian Revolution'".

*The statement goes on to mourn the killing of Comrade Samora Machel by the racist regime and calls on the Azanian youth and liberation forces to continue the struggle.*

*The PAC Chairman then re-stated the basic Africanist position of the PAC:*

**AFRICANISTS STAND FOR THE EXPLOITED AND DISINHERITED MILLIONS**

On the nature of our struggle, the Africanists jealously protect the genuine interests and aspirations of the African people and of all other oppressed minorities who are politically oppressed, economically exploited and socially degraded

because only the African can guarantee the establishment of a genuine democracy in which all men will be citizens of a common state and will live and be governed as individuals and not as distinctive sectional groups". We repeat and endorse this non-racial Africanist stand.

**THE HUMAN RACE**

The Africanist position is neither racist, exclusivist nor negritudinal. "The African people are proud of their race, the human race," says the 1959 Africanist Manifesto. During his trial in 1960, Sobukwe was asked how many races there are in South Africa. He replied:

"There is only one race, the human race." Further asked if Europeans and Africans in South Africa belong to that one race, Sobukwe affirmed that they all belong to the one human race.

Further, in his closing address, President Sobukwe said: "We believe in one race only, the human race to which we all belong. The history of that race is a long struggle against all restrictions, physical, mental and spiritual."

"We would have betrayed the human race if we had not done our share .... We stand for equal rights for all individuals. But the whites have to accept allegiance to Africa first; once a truly non-racial democracy exists in South Africa, all individuals whatever their colour or origin will be accepted as Africans..."

*The statement then goes on to talk of the Programme of Action on Nation Building presented in 1949 by Sobukwe. Earlier still, in 1928, the Black Republican Thesis of the Comintern also put a correct position which the PAC Chairman said was still correct today. He spoke of those who suppressed this document.*

"They fear the Africanist standpoint of militant, revolutionary and progressive African nationalism. All of us who desire liberation now must unearth and highlight these subversive ideas, ideas which arouse and inspire the masses and increase their fighting capacity."

*The statement then returns to 1986 and the progress made in the struggle:*

Some small glimmers of progress during 1986: After hailing the birth of COSATU, we welcome the CUSA-AZACTU merger. PAC seizes this opportunity to re-state



Above: Robert Sobukwe, PAC leader.

Right: March to his grave site.



its willingness to co-operate with you and with all the oppressed people's worker organisations. You have the great task of unionising 80% of the black workers who are not yet in the unions. Create conditions that will promote the over-all trade union unity that you sought. Play your role effectively in the national democratic revolution and ensure a smooth transition to our socialist future. Don't be coopted by capital to expand its narrow base. Remember white workers in 1934 betrayed their historic and revolutionary role when they entered the Labour Party - National Party alliance of Creswell and Gen. Hertzog.

To our women, peasants, our youth, our religious and business communities, the PAC recognises your contributions in your respective fronts. You are different battalions in one army of our self-same struggle. Some of you, especially the

non-racial Azania. All our patriotic organisations should restate this as our immediate demand, lest we find ourselves reacting into ethnic and regional schemes such as the Kwa-Natal Indaba Proposals. These are dangerous and divisive. They legitimise the fundamentals of Verwoerdian grand Apartheid. They permanently justify that whites who are 14% of the population should have 87 1/2% of our land.

Our second urgent task is to take education seriously. Seize every opportunity to acquire knowledge, especially through the informal structures of the people. This must go together with the demand for a completely new education system. Although presently, there are thirteen ethnic departments of education - there is really one racist education department, says a leading Azanian patriot. That one education system is permeated through and through with the

Along with this, we demand the unconditional release of PAC President Zeph Mothopeng - founder member in 1943 of the Congress Youth League, President of the Transvaal Africar Teachers Association in 1950-54, PAC founder-member and fighter who is serving his third prison term - since the historic 1960 March 21st PAC-led Anti-Pass Campaign. He led the African teachers' fight against Bantu Education in the 1950's and played a most significant leadership role (behind the scenes) in the 1970's in building up those forces that finally erupted in Soweto on June 16th, 1976. As a result the crisis of the racist minority has escalated in leaps and bounds into the 1980's which PAC proclaimed as the "Decade of the Azanian Revolution".

Along with our demand for the unconditional release of all political prisoners, we demand the release of John Nkosi and Japhta Masemola, the longest life serving prisoners on Robben Island.

Finally, Sons and Daughters of Africa, let us resume the urgent task of nation-building in Azania. Let us build in the true African tradition of Shaka, Moshoeshe, Hintsa, Sekhukhuni - who accepted people from diverse cultures or languages, as long as the newcomers fully identified with the interests and aspirations of their hosts. This beautiful germ from the Africanist past must be properly revived and scientifically developed by our historians and other social scientists to build

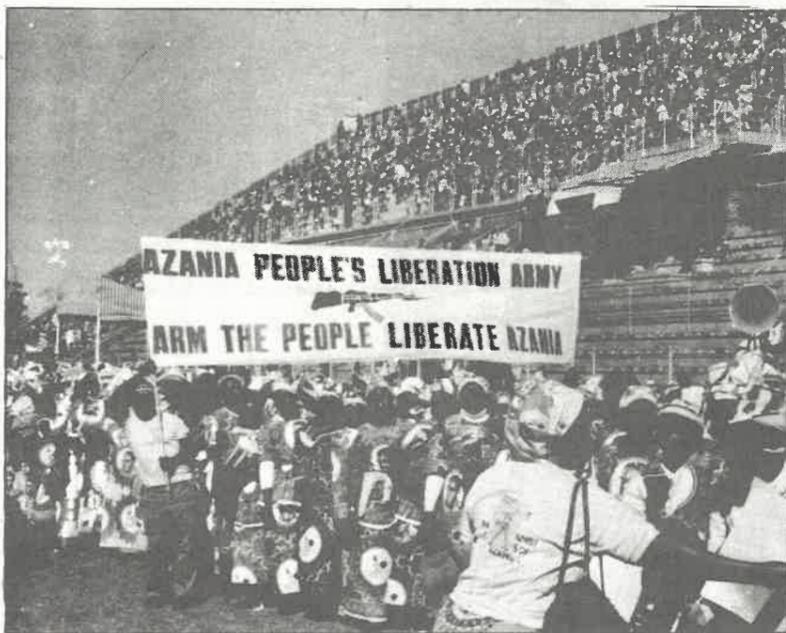
**1980'S: DECADE OF THE AZANIAN REVOLUTION**

by the system of white domination. In our deeply divided racist society, Africanists dismiss as dishonest claims by those who are defeated even before they start to fight; those who speak for all the people of South Africa. There is not in South Africa, a single homogeneous people or community - with a common past, a common present, nor do oppressor and oppressed have a desire for a common future.

Now, as in the past, Africanists stand for the exploited and disinherited millions who yearn and fight for our new non-racial, socialist and Africanist Democracy which will recognise the material, spiritual and intellectual needs of the individual. Occupied Azania belongs to the African people not only historically, but in concrete material terms since we are the tillers of the land and the wage slaves in the mines and factories. It is our labour that has built this immense wealth and beautiful structures. Moreover, we are also the majority.

However, the concrete reality of our situation is that we are a landless, homeless people denied all the milk and honey by an exploitative, oppressive settler community planted on our land by the commercial, and later the industrial capital of Western Europe. Presently, this settler community suffers from the split personality complex. Some even claim to be the white tribe of Africa. Only an Africanist-led national democratic revolution for the seizure of political power will liberate and humanise these present settlers.

PAC founding President Mangaliso Sobukwe, on the liberation of the settler community, says: "We wish to emphasise that the freedom of the African means the freedom of all in South Africa, the European included,



youth have introduced a qualitatively new element in your daily struggles. You have condemned the necklace killing of collaborators and political opponents. We endorse your correct stand. We urge all our patriots to generalise this correct position which would direct our main blow at our real enemy and unleash our whole might against the enemy. Collaborators as such must still pay the price of betrayal."....

**OUR URGENT TASKS FOR 1987.**

The most urgent task is to defeat co-option on the side of the regime, the side of Big Business who want to get certain strata like the so-called Urban Blacks or the black middle class to be junior share-holders in oppressing and exploiting the toiling Azanian millions. The scrapping of the Group Areas Act may be offered as a sop.

Now as in 1960, we demand one person one vote in one undivided

racist ideas of the ruling class. It teaches the white child that he is a superior being, teaches the black child that he is inferior.

Thirdly, our intelligentsia, our psychologists, sociologists, must expose the biased opinion polls and surveys through which the servants of big capital indoctrinate the oppressed with ethnic consciousness, ideas biased in favour of capitalism, and false ideas that portray our country as a country of minorities. So-called scientists apologising for apartheid were partly exposed during the Muldergate scandal. Our own intelligentsia must continuously expose them.

Fourthly, we should support the demand for the immediate release of all children from racist jails. The racists committing genocide by attempting to turn whole generations of youth into criminals.

the new modern nation, in line with the tradition of Bambata, Lembede, Sobukwe, Pokela and Mothopeng. This Africanist historical line is our most powerful weapon against ethnicity and tribalism, the standard instruments of racist-imperialism divide-and-rule - which have been used to fossilise and compartmentalise our people who have already been united by one economy.

But, Sons and Daughters of Africa, we must couple nation-building with our crucially important task of building our Party of Revolution, the PAC and its Army, the Azanian People's Liberation Army. We must take President Zephania Mothopeng's teaching "that a nation without arms is no nation" as our command, and we therefore, declare 1987 as "The Year of Arming the People" - "Arm the People Physically and Mentally".

*The statement went on to point to growing international solidarity with the people of Azania and in turn extended solidarity to "all those fighting for their liberation in all parts of the world. We especially extend our support for and solidarity with the Palestinians under the leadership of Chairman Yasser Arafat and the PLO.*

Compatriots, the time for greater Service, Suffering and Sacrifice has come. The struggle is long but victory is certain.

**DOWN WITH RACIST-SETTLER COLONIALISM IN AZANIA!**

**DOWN WITH ZIONIST-SETTLER COLONIALISM IN PALESTINE!**

**DOWN WITH REFORMISM! MAJORITY RULE NOW!**

**FORWARD WITH THE ARMED STRUGGLE!**

**VIVA PAC! VIVA APLA!**

# SOVIET UNION - A FORCE FOR PEACE?

## Afghanistan

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Over the last 8 years, the armed struggle of Afghan patriots has been intensified and extended to all provinces of the country. Since their invasion, the Soviet forces have held Afghanistan's cities and provincial centres. But they have failed dismally to win "the hearts and minds" of the population. Soviet control has been exerted by depopulating the countryside and by the destruction of villages along main roads as well as around cities and military bases. This creates a "sterile zone" with no cover for guerrillas.

The Soviet forces have learnt some lessons in the last 8 years. Improved battlefield tactics coupled with greater mobility and firepower have led to intensive campaigns in guerrilla areas. Attempts to interrupt the guerrillas' supply routes across Afghanistan's borders have resulted in heavy Soviet assault in those regions.

The Soviet occupation is helped by the fragmentary nature of the Mujahedin, with at least seven main Afghan parties engaging in the minimum of cooperation. Ambushes and the use of rocket attacks remain the guerrillas' principal operational method. While the partisans lack sufficient strength to inflict a decisive defeat upon the occupying forces, they have the ability to make it a costly war for the Soviet army, with 10,000 dead and 25,000 wounded according to modest calculations.

Internationally too, the cost of the SU's Vietnam is high. Afghanistan complicates Soviet relations with China, Islamic states and the Third World generally.

Domestically, divisions in the leadership have not yet emerged openly. But the danger of public dissatisfaction at home



## RESISTANCE REJECTS PEACE MOVES

cannot be discounted. Last December, the Soviet army newspaper printed for the first time an article about draft-dodgers and young men who hoped to use powerful family influence to avoid conscription.

### AN END TO THE WAR?

Hints of a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan of its 115,000 strong army conveniently surfaced prior to the Geneva talks in February. The moves in Kabul to broaden "the political dialogue" led to speculation that Moscow is prepared to accept a coalition government in Afghanistan as part of an internationally guaranteed settlement to the war.

In Afghanistan, Dr Najibullah, who replaced Babrak Karmal as Secretary General last May, announced a unilateral ceasefire from January 15th and the establishment of a "national reconciliation commission" with a pledge to form a coalition government of "national unity".

However, the proposals are little more than Moscow's latest attempt to secure the acceptance and legitimacy which they lack in the eyes of the Afghan masses.

'Pravda' stated the real motives for these recent moves: "The achievement of national reconciliation cannot be accomplished unless some compromises are made, the social base of government broadened and new political allies and friends won over."

Part of the Soviet strategy is to win over sections of the Mujahedin and thus split their ranks. In what one journalist describes as the "classic colonial district officer's approach of winning over the village headman", there are attempts to buy the neutrality of tribal leaders, particularly in the Eastern provinces, where the resistance is strongest.

The seven-group guerrilla alliance rejected Kabul's overtures. "We will not stop fighting as long as there is a single Russian soldier on Afghan soil." was their response.

After eight years of war, the Mujahedin recognise that no-one will donate freedom to the Afghan people.



proved that it is strategically sound despite Western scepticism at its formation in July 1982.

"As patriots, we have to unite not only at present," the Vice-President explained, "but also in the future after the Vietnamese withdrawal from Kampuchea, on the basis of our 8-point national charter."

In March 1986, the CGDK issued their 8-point proposals for a political solution to the Kampuchean problem. It is the three partners' common programme that maps out the rebuilding of Kampuchea. Over 60 countries have formally expressed support for the proposals of Democratic Kampuchea.

Khieu Samphan urged Vietnam to accept the CGDK's magnanimous peace proposals, pointing out that Vietnam "will have nothing to lose. It will only stand to gain". Vietnam stands to gain, he pointed out, from peaceful relations between the two countries of Vietnam and Kampuchea. It would be able to mobilise resources to rebuild Vietnam's economy and improve the living standards



## Kampuchea

### GROWING UNITY IN RESISTANCE

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Since the Christmas invasion of 1978, Vietnamese forces in Kampuchea have faced a national resistance that has gained in strength and taken the fight into the interior of the country after initially being restricted to border areas. Today, the entire Western half of Kampuchea is open to constant attacks by the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) forces, with frequent assaults on army posts and military convoys. Hanoi is forced to scatter its forces and station them in smaller units to try and check CGDK activities.

Smaller units are more vulnerable and, as Khieu Samphan, Vice-President of Democratic Kampuchea, in his New Year message, reported:

"During the whole year (1986), we have succeeded in dismantling more and more Vietnamese administrative centres in the villages and communes."

Khieu Samphan also observed that the Vietnamese "are unable to launch any significant operation at the start of the dry season, because they have not enough forces and their troops have been caught in, and unable to extricate themselves from, our guerrilla networks throughout the country."

Cooperation between the three forces making up the Coalition Government has improved and monthly meetings have been taking place to coordinate military activities.

### VIETNAM IS "POURING WATER INTO A BROKEN BUCKET"

Most commentators would agree with Khieu Samphan who likened Vietnam's putting resources into the occupation of Kampuchea, to "pouring water into a broken bucket". The deterioration of Hanoi's position will continue as the Coalition Government has

of the Vietnamese people. It would also gain from improved international relations, both in South East Asia and world-wide.

Such conciliatory overtures from the CGDK have not been taken up by Hanoi. Diplomatically, the Vietnamese have tried to cause dissension within the CGDK by offering to open talks only with Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, President of Democratic Kampuchea. Such manoeuvres were rebutted in Sihanouk's speech to the United Nations in October 1986:

"For the sake of our survival, we are resolved to persevere in our efforts to always develop and strengthen national unity and to achieve national reconciliation by refusing the elimination of whoever or whatever party."

### VIETNAM MUST WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS

The CGDK has consistently maintained that the root cause of the conflict is Vietnam's denial of self-determination to the people of Kampuchea, in the form of a military occupation of their country. Thus, the January 1987 proposal from Hanoi for talks between Heng Samrin, head of Vietnam's imposed administration and the CGDK, was rejected.

Support for Kampuchea's position comes from around the world. The number of countries condemning Hanoi's occupation increases year by year, with 116 nations supporting the resolution for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops, in the autumn of 1986.



## USA March Against Intimidation and Fear

On January 24th, 1987, a March Against Intimidation and Fear took place in Cumming, Forsyth County, USA. 30,000 people mobilised to protest in the all-white county, against the growing Klu Klux Klan terror campaign there.

Not one Black person has lived in Forsyth County since 1912 when mobs of whites drove out more than 1,000 Black residents who were forced to abandon their land and belongings.

The March Against Intimidation and Fear was called at less than one week's notice after the Klu Klux Klan had attacked a peaceful Brotherhood Walk, attended by 75 white and black people.

The KKK also made their presence felt on January 24th. At dawn, they burned down a church in Forsyth whose congregation includes black families from nearby Fulton County. Later, they taunted the marchers, throwing rocks, stones and at least one incendiary device. Some were armed. Some wore the traditional KKK white hoods and gowns.

But they could do little in the face of the massive and militant turnout that day. The coalition that organised the march succeeded in bringing together



an old and new generation of Civil Rights activists. One organiser said: "The civil rights family has not been together like this since we buried Dr. Martin Luther King."

### POWERFUL MASS RESPONSE

'Unity' reported: "The enormous turnout and militant sentiments in Forsyth parallel the powerful mass response to the recent racist mob attack and murder in Howard Beach, New York..."

"The march symbolised the beginnings of a new and militant civil rights movement in the South. As in the past, the African American community has come forward in overwhelming numbers..."

"While the Civil Rights Movement of 20 years ago focused on destroying Jim Crow segregation, this new movement is adopting some of the same issues and demands, as well as taking on

some new ones, which for the moment are concentrated on Forsyth County.

"One of the main demands is for the return of the lands stolen from Black families in 1912..."

Other demands include issues such as housing, employment, political participation and representation. Others call for action to outlaw the Klan. One organiser said: "If you try to ignore the Klan, they will grow behind your back. You can't deny a cancer like racism."

As Rev. Hosea Williams expressed to 'Unity': "We took our message to Forsyth, but also to this nation and to Ronald Reagan, that we're sick and tired of the supposed-to-be leader of the free world dragging its feet on human rights! Segregation, you will never stick your ugly head up again!"

# IN RED AND GREEN.....

The article printed below, contributed to 'Class Struggle' raises important questions. While we are in agreement with many of the criticisms of the 'Left' mentioned in the article, we also consider that the authors go too far in their criticisms. We have printed the article in order to encourage debate on what we see as fundamental questions of Marxism-Leninism, and welcome further contributions from our readers.

The original has been shortened for reasons of space. Sub-heads are ours. (Ed.)

## IN GREEN AND RED Contributed.

The bombing of Libya and the Chernobyl disaster remind us just how close to catastrophe we actually live. Famine in Africa and the obscenity of apartheid stand before us amongst the most disgusting monuments to our present economic order. Seemingly regardless of the consequences, the industrialised societies of both West and East tear apart the planet's finite resources and alter the whole balance of nature. The continued existence of our planet and its crucial diversity is put at risk. For What?

For both of us (authors:Ed.) our politics until now have been firmly of the Left - though different versions of it. But we have simultaneously become increasingly unhappy with the various left wing answers to the problems of the world - in particular the tendency of the Left to dismiss, marginalise or tokenise struggles of people against racism, sexism and heterosexism - and who further patronise or even humour those who force our attention on the ecological disaster facing our planet.

## GREEN POLITICS AND CLASS CONFLICT

We have also both become increasingly aware of Green politics, and in particular, the realisation that there is more to the Green movement than simply saving whales and cuddly furry animals, eating lentils and having some kind of genteel, passive concern for the environment. We have tried, therefore, to outline below why we think Green politics is not a diversion from the so-called "real" struggle, but is rather complementary to, and perhaps closer to, the essence of the struggle to ultimately liberate all humanity.

The history of society, to date, is the history of class conflict. We still find that a potent analysis. The shape of societies have been more or less determined by the way in which scarce resources have been produced and shared out. And certainly the ownership and control of these resources has lain in the hands of particular classes.

But, whether we like it or not, the world is not neatly divided into two opposing classes, ignoring the differences of race, sex, history, nationality, culture or religion. We don't believe that the world can be solely characterised in terms of a principal contradiction between capital and labour.

Most white males in Western Europe, North America and probably Eastern Europe, regardless of class, believe their interests lie with the maintenance of their present system with its dependence on a ruthless exploitation of the Third World for its survival. We should not be so quick, therefore, to construct a "league table" of oppressions. For example, it is a mistake, and indeed very insulting, to

suggest that the struggle of women to free themselves from man made shackles, now or in history, is somehow less important than, or should be subservient to, the struggles of the industrial working class.

## SOLIDARITY NOT INTERFERENCE

We find that Green politics not only recognises the above but places greater emphasis on the importance of people learning

centralisation. Not only is it undesirable but it won't work. But that doesn't mean that we reject the analysis which shows how tightly the rich and powerful will hang on to their power, wealth and privilege. Far from it. We believe that struggles and confrontations are not only inevitable but not to be dodged for an imaginary "quiet life". The question is what form will that struggle take, who will



and acting on the basis of their own experience and the need for people to have the space they need to conduct their struggle in the way they see fit. Struggles against oppression need solidarity not the paternalistic interference of organisations of the Left.

Our praxis (a good way of talking about political theory and practice combined) needs to do three things. It must explain the world as it is; it must understand how power is wielded; and it must offer a form of organisation which is both subversive of the present order and through its method of activity gives a glimpse of a new culture.

## BEYOND MARXISM

Marxism has helped us both in what understanding we have of the first two. However, so many have restricted themselves to claiming the "Marxist tradition" to the exclusion of all others. We feel we must go beyond Marxism in a liberating and positive way because we don't think that he has told the whole story.

But it is when we come to the third of the areas referred to above that we part company more fundamentally with the Left. Most institutions and organisations reflect present society, accept its values and operate within accepted parameters. The organisations of the Left are in our opinion, no different in essence. By mirroring the forms of organisation of the oppressors, any movement runs the risk of self-defeat - the creation of an equally repressive regime, in which the names, colours and slogans only have changed. We question that it is possible to defeat violence and centralisation by using violence and

be involved and what will be the relationship between the means and the end? Perhaps our struggle could be confrontational yet compassionate; active yet non-violent; principled yet realistic; honest yet aware.

## TRUE SUBVERSION

We see in the Green movement, a politics which is more revolutionary and subversive than the establishmentarian politics of the Left. If subversion is the key, just how subversive are some of our fetishised forms of protest? Are demonstrations, pickets, lobbies, strikes even, really subversive, or have they become integrated with the established scheme of things along with committees, conferences and the manoeuvring of the position seekers? Set against that, the activities of the women of Greenham Common have spawned new forms of struggle which have been really inspirational.

"When the forms of an old culture are dying, the new culture is created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure." Rudolf Bahro (ex-Communist) Green.

....We feel it necessary to point out that in attempting to write this joint paper we have emphasised what is common between us. Many of our differences remain and we celebrate that fact. It was, after all, our frustration with the Left's inability to understand the concept of "equal but different" which was one of our main reasons for being drawn towards Green politics.

# ... IS IT RED?

## THE LEAGUE'S STANDPOINT:

In replying to the article 'In Green and Red', it is necessary from the start to distinguish between two aspects. There is much that is positive in the authors' criticisms of most of the 'left' in Britain and in their subjective intentions. Their perceptual observations will ring a bell with many people. But this is why it is so essential to criticise their conclusions. We do this from a spirit of seeking unity through struggle. Only by drawing sharp lines of demarcation will it be possible to do that.

The authors correctly criticise the 'left' for "marginalising ... struggles of people against racism and sexism..." At the extreme, groups like 'Militant' actually attack such struggles as a diversion, while token support is common from other groups. The authors also recognise that "The history of societies to date is the history of class conflict". However, they point out: "The world is not neatly divided into two opposing classes." This also is true. But there comes the crunch. "We want to go beyond Marxism ... because we don't think that he has told the whole story."

In fact, Marxism is not the same as Marx. Marx laid the foundations of dialectical and historical materialism. But Marxism has developed continuously in the midst of struggles throughout the world. The majority of the 'left' in Britain are not Marxists and know little of Marxism. Attacking them is necessary but cannot be portrayed as criticising Marxism.

Let us take some examples. Lenin never argued that there were just "two opposing classes". He pointed to the need to analyse all classes and strata of society and their interrelation. Mao Zedong analysed the role of the peasantry (various classes), conflicting sections of the bourgeoisie, the character of the national struggle and the alliances of classes that combine at various stages of struggle. The call of Marxism, then, is to analyse all the contradictions in society. But this, the authors do not do.

## NATIONAL AND CLASS OPPRESSION, AND STRUGGLE

In correctly criticising an analysis that constructs a "league table of oppressions", the authors equate oppressions and struggles without analysing them. Marxism-Leninism seeks to understand the dynamics of the class system. Modern imperialism, for example, is essentially based on both the exploitation of the working class at home and of the peoples and nations of the Third World. It is the theft and plunder of the product of labour of the working classes (peasantry and proletariat) that is the source of profit and the reason for its existence. In extending exploitation throughout the globe and subjecting entire nations, it brings forth the response of the national liberation struggles.

The struggle for national liberation is not an "equal struggle" to the class struggle. It is a form that class struggle necessarily takes against imperialism. It is an alliance of classes against an exploiting class.

Racism is something separate. It is an ideology of a class - the imperialist ruling class - to justify imperialism. It lies deep within the working class because of the economics of imperialism and because of the dominance of imperialist ideology in general. The struggle against national oppression and racism, and women's oppression and sexism, are therefore not marginal to the class struggle nor "separate but equal". They are vital components of the struggle against a class system and for a new, truly socialist society.



Zimbabwean people know that the struggles against racism and sexism are component parts of the struggle against imperialism.

## ABANDONING THE FUNDAMENTALS

There is much more to be said and 'Class Struggle' will take up some questions in future issues. Here it is only possible to list some of the other questions:

1. It is necessary to oppose paternalistic "interference" in national, national minority and women's struggles. The answer is to practice the mass line, learn from them and integrate the lessons through the development of Marxism, not to go "beyond Marxism".
2. It is necessary to combat dogmatic "centralism". But democratic centralism and collective co-ordinated action are essential to test ideas, learn lessons and develop analysis, strategy and tactics.
3. The struggle will necessarily be violent, not peaceful, because the imperialist ruling class will never relinquish its power without first unleashing violence on the working people.
4. The rule of the imperialist ruling class must be replaced by the rule of the working class to defend its gains - until the development of communist society eradicates the material basis for the existence of an exploitative class.

We agree therefore that we have much to learn from different movements. In particular, the League has done little work on the question of women or on the question of the environment. We would hold, however, that we have to develop Marxism, to apply it to the concrete conditions in the world, and in Britain, today. But in doing this, we must not abandon the revolutionary essence of Marxism-Leninism on such fundamental points. This would be to follow the road to liquidationism already taken by so many in the Marxist-Leninist movement.

# IRELAND'S NEUTRALITY & REPUBLICANISM

Continued from p.8.

The Cabinet expected to raise 555,000 men in Britain with conscription. Their problem was how could they convince the British public that this effort was necessary and good, when 160,000 potential soldiers in Ireland were not conscripted. Lloyd George commented on the anger that would be felt in Britain if taking "fathers of 45 and upwards to fight the battle of a Catholic nationality on the continent without deep resentment at the spectacle of sturdy young Catholics in Ireland spending their time in increasing the difficulties of this country by drilling and compelling us to keep troops in Ireland."

Any uprising would greatly increase the demands on British troops. The Cabinet agreed that with only 25,000 troops in Ireland, many of these in training, these forces would be incapable of suppressing a rebellion. In addition, it was felt that even with "adequate" military support, it would be almost impossible to enforce conscription. Only the arrival of American troops on the front took some of the pressure off the British. But this created its own inherent difficulties because the Irish national minority in the USA was agitating strongly about conscription calling it genocide. Britain had to keep American public opinion sweet.

Lloyd George had flirted with the idea of offering Home Rule for conscription. But it was too late. The nationalist struggle was too far developed to be stopped or reduced in scope by promises of Home Rule and, of course, the Unionists continued to threaten trouble if Home Rule was introduced. So, Lloyd George's public position became that the two issues could not be linked. However, so strong was the opposition in Ireland that when conscription for Ireland was discussed in Parliament, John Dillon of the constitutionalist Irish Party gave an angry speech saying that Britain would not get a single soldier from Ireland and "all Ireland as one man will rise against you".

A united front of all nationalist forces opposed to conscription was formed. De Valera addressed the bishops of Ireland who then put out a manifesto and pledged to be read at every parish. If conscription was to be forced on the Irish despite their protests then:

**"We consider that conscription forced in this way on Ireland is an oppressive and inhuman law which the Irish have a right to resist by every means that are consonant with the laws of God."**

On April 23rd, 1918, a General Strike was held against conscription for 24 hours. Everywhere was shut down except Belfast. The stage was set for a struggle for surpassing conscription, now Irish freedom was on the agenda. This struggle was based upon the same thing that had made the anti-conscription struggle a success - the Irish people's willingness to use armed force.

## FAILURE TO ESTABLISH THE REPUBLIC

The Irish revolution was part of a world-wide upsurge against imperialism and, as with others, it had some success but was finally driven back. The failure of the Irish revolution has meant that inevitably the forward positions such as neutrality would eventually be up for grabs. Until the national question is finally resolved, there can be no further progress

in Irish politics. The struggle will only be resolved by the political and military strength of the Republican Movement.

## WORLD WAR II

In 1940, Britain opened up negotiations with De Valera proposing a united Ireland in exchange for the Free State dropping its neutrality and joining in the war effort against Germany.

De Valera was trying the impossible, to negotiate a peaceful re-unification of Ireland and to maintain her neutrality. However, even in the face of war, he had nothing to force Britain to change her position. Britain was worried because of military disasters on the continent and was seriously considered that Hitler would invade Ireland as a way of strangling Britain. It was this that caused Britain to raise the question of a united Ireland. It may well have been that Britain saw a "loyal" Ulster inside a united Ireland as a bulwark against any further drift towards Republicanism. Britain wanted a united Ireland at war with Germany, the Treaty ports returned to British use for the duration of the war and Irish troops under allied control. In addition, this united Ireland was to come back into the Commonwealth and give recognition to the King. Really the old offer of Home Rule resurrected.

## Oglaigh na hEireann.

### ENROL UNDER THE GREEN FLAG.

Safeguard your rights and liberties (the few left you).  
Secure more.  
Help your Country to a place among the nations.  
Give her a National Army to keep her there.  
Get a gun and do your part.

### JOIN THE IRISH VOLUNTEERS

(President: EÓIN MAC NEILL.)

Ireland shall no longer remain disarmed and impotent.  
Recruiting poster for Volunteers to defend Home Rule 1913

With the occupied six counties at war with Germany, Ireland could not be said to be truly neutral. By 1940, the British were seriously contemplating an invasion of Ireland to counter the German threat. For their part, the Free State authorities believed that the German threat was very real and De Valera considered asking for British help in repelling an invasion.

## NEW ANTI-CONSCRIPTION STRUGGLE

If the occupied six counties of the north destroyed Ireland's neutrality, the nationalist community of Ulster destroyed Britain's efforts to suppress the neutrality struggle. As in World War I, it was conscription that became the rallying point.

In 1941, a conference of Nationalist MP's from Stormont and Nationalist Senators was held to fight conscription. A pledge was drawn up to be signed by Catholics throughout the North. It denied the right of Britain to enforce conscription on the nationalist people and stated that the struggle against conscription was to be carried out "by the most effective means at our disposal, consonant with the laws of God." Exactly the same as the pledge of World War I. The revolutionary implications were not lost on the British. A British officer reporting to the Cabinet said:

**"Conscription will give new life to the IRA and will attract into its ranks many who today are keeping well clear of it. It will provide it with a new**



Pictorial Parade

strength and prestige which may last a long while after the war is over."

In the North, rallies of over 10,000 people were taking place in Belfast with all taking the pledge. In the South, public opinion was increasingly mobilising around the issue. The British government was worried that the conscription issue would cause disaffection among the Irish troops already serving in the British army. De Valera agreed with all the above, for he knew that if the conscription issue built up, the opposition would be run by the IRA and he would be forced to follow them and support the nationalist community. The IRA, and the Republican Movement in general, cannot be seen simply in their role as defenders of the nationalist people, but that the very existence of the IRA has to be seen at the centre of the issue of Irish neutrality as they are its main defenders.

As in World War I, the pressure from the Irish national minority community in America played an important role in Britain's thinking. The role of the overseas Irish was noted by the British representative at the American office in Eire.

**"So long as he (De Valera) can work his mystique over Irishmen in all parts of the world, Mr De Valera does not worry about the rest of humanity."**

However, De Valera had to worry about the Republican Movement. Its very existence limited his ability to manoeuvre. Because of his apparently "strong stand" on the issue of conscription and neutrality, De Valera was rewarded with re-election in 1944, as the Free State electorate thought he had and would defend Irish neutrality. However, pressure remained strong on the Free State and they were asked to join NATO in 1949 when the US was establishing hegemony over Western Europe. Ireland's strategic position remained important in British thinking as this Commonwealth Relations Office memorandum of 1951, revealed:

**"Historically, Ireland, which has never been able to protect herself from invasion, has been, as she is today, a potential base for attack on the United Kingdom... Failing some firm and satisfactory assurance to the attitude in war of a United Ireland of which the present Republic was a major part, there are strong strategic arguments for the retention of the friendly bastion of the Six Counties."**

## EEC/NATO/IRA

The formation of NATO, and later the EEC, has increased the pressure on Ireland's neutrality. The Irish bourgeois parties are well aware of the potential of the situation. When Eire applied to join the EEC, the then Foreign Minister, Hillery, said:

**"It will involve inevitably a willingness to participate in common action, if the need**

should arise, in the defence of the new Europe. It would be as ridiculous for Ireland as an integral component of this new Europe, not to join, if called upon and if needed, in its own defence, as it would be for us to forestall our present commitment to the defence of our own territory."

The long term goal of the EEC is political unity. Haughey, then Taoiseach, noted that if the EEC became a full political union, that Ireland: "would accept the obligations even if these included defence". All other EEC members are also members of NATO making it difficult for Ireland to resist joining. Even the changing relationship between Western Europe and the USA means that it is quite possible that a form of military unity could be achieved without "formally" joining NATO. Ireland's neutrality is not greatly respected as it is.



It is well known that the American ambassador to Ireland was given a 65 million dollar budget to counter the European Peace Movement's campaign against Cruise and Pershing missiles. A leading British Conservative noted in 1978 that an independent Ulster or a united and neutral Ireland would deprive the western powers of seaports and early warning systems that would leave a "hole" in NATO's defences.

Ireland's political independence from the rest of Europe, and therefore Britain, has already been seriously compromised. Ireland's position as an oppressed nation does not keep her ruling class from wishing for an increased share of the loot taken from the exploited Third World nations by Europe's big powers. They would, self-admittedly, be prepared to sell Ireland's neutrality for a share in the booty. The most celebrated and most recent assertion of Irish political independence

De Valera inspecting Irish troops, 1940's.



was the stand against Britain during the Malvinas War. But this was forced upon the Irish government by the Hunger Strikers and their effect on the Irish populace. Once again, it was the existence and activity of the Republican Movement that was central to the defence of Ireland's independence and neutrality.

Britain would probably not complain too much about a united Ireland as long as it was a bourgeois united Ireland well attached to NATO. However, such an Ireland would not only have to prove her military preparedness by smashing the Republican Movement. In this way, Ireland would become much as Churchill's original vision - in other words an Ireland truly alien to the goals that the Irish people have committed themselves to over the years. It is deeply ironic that whilst the Irish ruling class is seeking to join foreign military alliances for the "protection" of Western Europe, that self same ruling class is having to go to such lengths (Anglo-Irish Agreement, American money) to get help from her "allies" to fight the Republican Movement.

The Republican Movement has much potential to draw on in the anti-imperialist struggle. The deep feelings aroused by the USA and its activities in the Philippines and Nicaragua, the Dunnes store anti-apartheid struggle and the vast courage of the nationalist peoples of

the North, show that anti-imperialism is alive and well amongst the Irish people. The anti-imperialism of the Republican Movement has a specific anti-British dimension but it also has the general characteristics of all anti-imperialist struggles.

One of the most important of these characteristics is the demand for neutrality and the joining of the Non-Aligned Movement. This is highlighted now when Leinster House is on the verge of ratifying the Single European Act. In a world rent and torn by the conflicting ambitions of the superpowers the demand for real neutrality is clearly a revolutionary demand. Only the Republican Movement can seriously put this forward and develop it. It is the IRA, and the whole of the Republican Movement, that underpins Ireland's independence and neutrality and nothing else. Most certainly not the British.

# FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



## Ireland's Neutrality & Irish Republicanism

The following article was written in response to an article in the 'Troops Out Movement' paper and has appeared also in their February issue:

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

The October 1986 edition of 'Troops Out' magazine carried an article by Anthony Coughlan on Irish neutrality. Two serious flaws occur in the article. One is the author's statement that the Irish struggle for liberation cannot become strong enough to eventually rid itself of British rule and the other is the statement that it is "Only the British people themselves, organised politically through Labour" that can change British policy on partition.

The author carries on saying: "Important though the struggle in Ireland is, it is the struggle in Britain for a change in government policy which will be the decisive one." This stands history and the present struggle on its head, reversing the true importance of the Republican Movement, both in the struggle for independence and in the struggle for neutrality. As will be shown, the two are inextricably linked but it is the question of neutrality that is the focus of this article.

Ireland's struggle for national independence and neutrality are inseparably linked. To trace all the roots would involve a lengthy article. But some discussion of historical events reveals the truth of this position.

Larkin and Connolly, struggling to develop fighting unions in Ireland, were constantly frustrated by the British trade unions, who were agents of imperialism, stopping fights just as they got started. Larkin and Connolly wanted trade unions that pursued both the class and national demands of the Irish working class. Only separate Irish unions were capable of this and so they formed the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. This union fought the great Dublin Lockout of 1913, saw the formation of the Irish Citizens' Army made up of union members and the disgusting treachery of the British TUC, when they sold the Irish workers down the river.

With the outbreak of World War I, protest began to develop but without a strong focal point. Great damage was done to the national cause by the bourgeois nationalist Redmond. On September 20th, 1915, he offered up the Irish Volunteers for the use of the English army. This was to split the Volunteers, leaving a revolutionary core, and eventually destroying Redmond as a political force.

On September 25th, Asquith came to Dublin on a recruiting drive. He held a public meeting at the Mansion House which was surrounded by police. Connolly, Larkin, P.T. Daly and Countess Markiewicz led 100 Citizens' Army men in a procession from Liberty Hall to Stephen's Green. The ICA men carried rifles with fixed bayonets. This echo of 1913 brought a huge cheer from the 10,000 Dubliners which drowned out Asquith's speech. The British authorities only got six recruits that night.

Connolly continued to struggle against the war and Irish participation in it. His slogan of "Neither King nor Kaiser" reflects his deep anti-imperialist understanding of the nature of the war and the road that the Irish revolution would have to follow for success.

Connolly stated: "We have no foreign enemy except the treacherous government of England -

## Irish Republicanism



James Connolly



Bobby Sands: first hunger striker: 1981.



1916 Easter Rising: Citizens' Army

a government that even whilst it is calling on us to die for it, refuses to give a straight answer to our own demand for Home Rule ... We want Ireland not for peers, or the nominees of peers, but Ireland for the Irish."

However, pre-1916, the British did manage to get a fair number of volunteers from Ireland. What should be recognised was that much of this was economic "conscription". Young men seeking to escape the poverty of Ireland joined up for a regular wage.

This picture was radically changed by the Easter Rising of 1916. Never again would Irish history be the same.

### CONSCRIPTION

Although the Rising was crushed, it gave a massive impetus to Irish nationalism. This found expression in many forms but the rallying point that was to take the struggle forward again was the issue of conscription.

The British were experiencing a series of disasters on the war front. From October to December 1916, the average

amount of tonnage sunk was 300,000 per month. On the battlefronts, the fearful slaughter of the Somme, the Dardanelles and Jutland put heavy pressure on British imperialism. The War Cabinet estimated that conscription would net her 160,000 men from Ireland but virtually all the advisers in Ireland were sharply opposed to it. After 1916, the situation was drastically changed in Ireland and the Cabinet was told that any attempt to introduce conscription would cause too much political trouble to be worthwhile. By 1917, recruiting in Ireland had dropped to 80 men a week.

In the hope of pacifying the situation somewhat the British released 800 political prisoners who had been interned in England since the Rising. Among those released were Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith. Both became heavily involved in the anti-conscription issue and their influence rapidly increased because of this.

The first political test of their strength was an election in North Roscommon. Count Plunkett, father of the dead Irish hero, Joseph Plunkett,

stood for election campaigning on an anti-conscription ticket. A Catholic priest, Father Michael O'Flanagan, supporting his campaign, argued that those who died for Ireland in Easter week died to keep young Irishmen from being conscripted with the army of "the only enemy Ireland has had for the past one thousand years". Plunkett won and refused to take his seat. In another election shortly afterwards, in South Longford, Sinn Fein won the seat with an anti-conscription stand.

The importance of this should not be underestimated. The drive of the Irish people for national independence was directly linked to anti-conscription. What underwrote this position was the potential for another uprising. Even when, in 1917, it looked like Britain might lose the war and was desperate for more troops, the idea of enforcing conscription on Ireland was received with such trepidation that the Cabinet balked at the idea. Even the arch-reactionary Edward Carson stated "with great regret" that conscription in Ireland would cause so much bloodshed as not to be worth pursuing.

Continued on p.7.



## EVENTS

1987 WOMEN'S DELEGATION TO IRELAND

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