

# CLASS STRUGGLE

Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain.

Incorporating

## NEW AGE

PAPER OF COMMUNIST WORKERS' MOVEMENT

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# TROOPS OUT!

By a Class Struggle Correspondent.

Over the week-end of 9-10 August, a delegation of the 'Troops Out Movement' (TOM) went to Belfast to protest at the continued occupation of northern Ireland by British troops and to call for political prisoner status for Republican prisoners. The delegation went on the anniversary of the introduction of internment. Most of the 200 odd delegates had an unforgettable experience and all returned more than ever convinced of the justice of the cause of Irish freedom.

## FRIDAY

During that week-end there were many instances of resistance to the British army and the RUC ranging from stone-throwing at their vehicles to the blowing up of a British soldier in Armagh. In Belfast itself 2 young men were killed by the army on Friday night. One, Michael Donnelly, a 21 year old social worker, was killed by a 'rubber' bullet. Witnesses said this occurred after he was arrested and placed in the back of a Saracen. ('Rubber' bullets are lethal missiles which are, in fact, made of plastic, weigh about half a pound, and cause brutal damage and several deaths without penetrating the skin. They are supposed to be fired to ricochet off the ground. In practice the army shoots indiscriminately straight at faces.)

## SATURDAY - "TROOPS OUT"

On Saturday the TOM delegation marched to denounce the presence of British troops in Ireland. 4 army forts were picketed in west Belfast. Each of these were ramshackle ugly structures made of corrugated iron and wire mesh with heavy gates and limited approaches. The marchers went up to each of the gates in turn banging on the corrugated sheeting and calling to the soldiers to get out of Ireland. On two occasions the army threatened to shoot and at one fort, a British officer emerged and asked to speak to the leader. He was shouted down for several minutes as he made threats and finally withdrew. Several demonstrators noticed that one of the soldiers with him was wearing an NF badge.

## SUNDAY - SUPPORT THE PRISONERS - -force imperialism out -

On Sunday there was a major march called to mark the 9th anniversary of the introduction of internment. The TOM delegation took part alongside over 4000 people who marched down the Falls Rd., accompanied by 4 bands - 2 from Scotland - and rallied in Andersonstown. The speeches and national anthem were solemnly heard by the crowd who burst into wild applause when 3 masked provisional IRA volunteers appeared. Two brandished an M1 carbine and a Colt automatic, while the 3rd man addressed the crowd:

"We publicly bear arms, not to hijack attention away from this march, but to show the world we are a revolutionary people's army. We are your armed representatives - you are our mandate. We bear arms as an act of defiance against British rule and in solidarity with our imprisoned brothers and sisters."

Later Tom Barron of the Ulster Executive of the Provisional Sinn Fein called for support for the provisional IRA. He said the only way the British Army would be forced out of Ireland was when the people decided to force them out. The people were the Anvil and their armed representatives were the hammer between which the occupying army would be crushed. A message from TOM supporting the struggle was read out.

## SOLIDARITY

The TOM delegation was very warmly welcomed and spent one night billeted with Republican families in the area. They were all well treated and fed during their stay. There is no doubt that they made a deep impact on the Irish people. The solidarity shown was warmly received. It was a small indication that the British people do not all support their government's despicable aggression against Ireland, and are prepared to stand up in support of



the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Irish soil and for self-determination for the Irish people.

Below we print extracts from other letters and contributions which have been sent to "Class Struggle". We have received a number of contributions from members of the TOM delegation and do not have space for all of them this time. We will publish more of them in our next issue. The picture painted by these further eye-witness reports is not a picture you will recognise from reading the bosses' press.

« As darkness fell on Friday August 8th, an incident occurred on the waste ground at the back of Leeson Street, Lower Falls, Belfast. Nationalist youths had lit bonfires to commemorate the 9th anniversary of internment. Here a British Saracen drove onto the waste ground, switched off its headlights and tried to run down the youths. They retaliated by stoning the vehicle. Plastic bullets were then fired from the Saracen into the crowd. One hit 15-year-old Anne Marie McMullan in the head.

A neighbour attempted to rush Anne Marie to hospital in his car. A British Army patrol raked the vehicle with gunfire. Narrowly escaping death, the neighbour managed to get Anne Marie to hospital, where she was put on a life-support machine.

Cont. back page.

# OUR FATES ARE INTERLINKED

Nearly sixty years ago, in the bloody and bitter Civil War of 1922-1923, British imperialism and its allies in Ireland imposed Partition on the Irish nation - an arrangement whereby a separate state structure was set up in the six north eastern counties.

The resulting Orange state is by its nature sectarian and undemocratic, and British imperialism's defence of its existence has perpetuated the antagonism between the nationalist and Protestant sections of the Irish people. To end sectarian oppression and to free the northern working and oppressed people, including the Protestant section, from the shackles of sectarian division the British presence must be withdrawn and the Orange state dismantled.

The establishment of the Orange state under the Partition settlement has never been recognised by the majority of the Irish people. Even the ruling bourgeois political party in the Free State, Fianna Fail, has to sustain an appearance of non-recognition of the legitimacy of the Orange state.

However, as Sinn Fein recently commented, British

imperialism can buy the 'republicanism' of Fianna Fail as well as it can sell collaboration to northern 'nationalist' forces like the SDLP (see article on page 5). Down all the years since Partition, only the revolutionary republican struggle has upheld the banner of consistent opposition to British imperialism.

It is thus with heartfelt enthusiasm that in this issue of our paper we are publishing the inspiring news of the warm reception accorded to the recent Troops Out delegation by the republican movement in Belfast. Such events provide a powerful impetus to the work of building Ireland solidarity in Britain -- work which will in turn provide impetus to the development of a revolutionary movement in this country.

Of all the cracks in the state structure of British imperialism's 'United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland', the crack resulting from the blows delivered by the Irish revolutionary republican struggle is the widest and most gaping. Such a factor cannot but have the most central significance to us revolutionaries in Britain, who are called upon to be that structure's eventual demolition squad.

## From our postbag

**STRIKERS AND THE LAW:** From D.P., Yeovil.

With reference to the editorial comment in your last issue on the "six-picket limit." This provision is just one more measure principally aimed at moving public opinion against the struggles of the working class, since, from personal experience, I know that such legal limits (forget the 'codes of conduct' bullshit) already exist, should the police wish to enforce them.

Last year, during the seven weeks' clerical workers' strike at Westland Helicopters Ltd. of Yeovil, the police continually tried to establish an "understanding" (their word) that the maximum picket on each factory gate should be six (by "understanding" they actually meant trying to enforce this).

One worker on the picket-line had a friend who is a police Inspector in Kent. He telephoned this friend, asking what the exact legal position is. The reply was that the Yeovil police had every right to impose this limit. He said that they could even insist on a maximum of two pickets if they wished, even under existing legislation. Furthermore, he added that there were no less than sixty-four counts upon which striking pickets could be picked up. This 'friendly' policeman added that if he was down there in Yeovil, "your feet wouldn't touch the ground"!

Needless to say, we strikers ignored the pressures for an "understanding", and many shouted out, "There aren't enough in the Avon and Somerset Police Force to cart all of us lot away"!

Incidentally, it has been

noised about that the police themselves aren't too keen on fixed legal limits, and 'codes of conduct'. Perhaps they have greater room for manoeuvre against the working class without such restrictions.

**CUTS SAVAGERY:** From "An Irate Nurse".

As a nurse, I find it extremely hypocritical to note when reading various daily newspapers and listening to the news on TV, that whenever there is a mention of hospital workers' action against the cuts, moral blackmail is always brought to bear for any harm that is done to the patients. How does this fit in with the public spending cuts resulting in the closure of hospitals, which is hardly an action of health workers, but rather that of the government and which obviously harms patients?

Two examples of this are Etwell Hospital (Derbyshire) and the Princess Mary Hospital at Margate - both of these hospitals were forcibly closed, despite the protests of the public and the patients. As you can see from this picture, management, the stooges of the government, put the cuts into effect with great viciousness and I ask readers how they would feel if this was one of their relatives!

Our health should not be something for governments to play with. We must fight for a Health Service that is free for all and one where dignity is maintained.

**TUC MISLEADERS:** From a worker in North Wales.

The workers of Britain must be prepared to put their backs

into a marathon rowing session on the Labourite vessel, the good ship "Quasi-Socialism", according to TUC General Secretary Len Murray. This bad advice was quietly secreted into the middle pages of the "Daily Post" a few weeks ago ("forget warfare," etc.).

Communists and progressives must each fight to nail the lie of the false brand of so-called 'socialism' scattered like so much pig-swill about our eyes and ears whilst they keep us cooped up under capitalism.

A personal opinion of mine is that the biggest threat and danger to the proletariat of Britain is not so much from Thatcher and Joseph, Callaghan, Healey and others of that ilk, but from within the structure of our own unions. Certain of the full-time officials among the TUC misleaders are so out of touch that they might as well misdirect operations from the planet Mars as here - the Duffys, Boyds, Chappells, Moss Evans's and Murrays of this world.

We know who and what the first group are. Now we have to remind the masses of the traitorous intentions of the latter group.

**OLYMPICS 1896:** From P.L., Yeovil.

Did you know that in 1896, the year of the first modern Olympic Games, British imperialism had recently launched two invasions of Afghanistan, and had got soundly thrashed and booted out by the Afghan people - twice!

Let 1980 herald the thrashing and booting out of Soviet social-imperialism from Afghanistan, in a likewise ignominious fashion.

## No to Racist Laws

**NASIRA BEGUM WINS HER RIGHT TO STAY - THEN HOME OFFICE THREATENS HER AGAIN**  
**ANWAR DITTA STILL DENIED HER CHILDREN**

A years hard campaigning by the Friends of Nasira Begum apparently succeeded on July 30th when an adjudicator appointed by the Home Office upheld her right to stay in Britain.

The Home Office evidence consisted almost solely of an unsupported statement by Nasira's husband, Afzal, that he was married to a Firdaus Jabeen. (Interestingly they chose to disbelieve another statement by him that he had divorced her.)

In contrast, the defence campaign had taken the hearing much more seriously, going to the extent of getting witnesses from Germany and London, statements from Pakistan and much more evidence. This proved conclusively that Afzal never married Firdaus, but was in fact married to Amina Begum in 1955, only divorcing her in 1976, months before his marriage to Nasira.

All the Home Office lawyer could do was attempt to discredit witnesses in a really racist way but for once this was unsuccessful and he seemed to accept the verdict.

Then, a week later Nasira learnt that she would have to go through it all again. The H.O. are so determined never to lose a case that they automatically appeal against their own adjudicators verdicts when it goes against them.

So the campaign goes on.

Anwar's struggle has followed a similar course. At her appeal she produced vast amounts of evidence and testimonies but the H.O. lawyer simply tried to discredit witnesses and not to counter their evidence. This time the adjudicator accepted the clearly racist implications, in effect that the Asian witnesses were liars. His verdict hardly mentioned the evidence produced supporting Anwar's case, that the three children in Pakistan were in fact her children, just saying that he was 'unable to accept the credibility of the principal witnesses'. He did not seem to feel obliged to explain why Anwar and Shuja should have spent so much time and money supporting the children and trying to get them into Britain. No one but a racist could listen to Anwar talk of her children without believing that she is telling the truth.

Like Nasira, Anwar has conducted an extensive national campaign, and she has exhausted almost all the legal options, but the campaign will continue until she is successful.

How can she ever be expected to give up?

Both these campaigns have given more people heart to fight back against these racist attacks by the state. Only a large scale campaign can force a fair verdict, but what is really needed is a movement capable of challenging these racist immigration laws themselves.

## NEW ERA BOOKS

New Era Books sells progressive books and periodicals from Britain and around the world, including:-

- Why Paul Foot should be a socialist. £1.20 + 25p post.
- The revolutionary press in Britain and what is to be done to rebuild it. 80p + 25p post.
- Ireland her own. An outline history of the Irish struggle. By I.A. Jackson. £1.50 + 50p post.

Address: 203, Seven Sisters Rd., London N4.  
Open Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 7.30).  
Phone 01-272-5894.

# A WORKER'S NOTEBOOK

A BUMPED UP BUDGET OF £45 MILLION is to finance White-law's grand scheme for Civil Defence. Shortly before this was announced, a big London medical equipment company was asked by an Army official whether they could supply screening equipment which could sort out the "hopeless" cases from the "saveable" following a nuclear attack. This of course assumes that they haven't already "screened" us by allotting nuclear-bomb-proof shelters for our rulers and mattresses and kitchen tables for the rest of us.

"WE ARE ENGAGED IN SETTING FREE THE CREATIVE GENIUS of the British people," said Margaret Thatcher on July 19th. The Tories, with the help of the last Labour government, have certainly given the 1.9 million unemployed more free time. It doesn't need a genius, however, to point out that this is a disgraceful waste of the ability of working people.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS RECENTLY RULED that Mr John Beardmore of Walsall was right to regard three policemen who came into his house as trespassers. The police came nearly two hours after a car accident, and when Mr Beardmore refused to take the breath-test, they arrested him. The law lords threw out charges of refusing to take a breath-test. This ruling was widely reported in the bosses' press as upholding the principle that 'an Englishman's home is his castle'. Workers should welcome such a decision, if it really means we can keep the law out of our houses. But does it?.. When Nazir and Munir Ahmed's Manchester shop was raided by plain-clothes police last year, the brothers attempted to dislodge the law because they justifiably thought they were the National Front. But charges of wounding and assault were brought against them. The cases were laughed out of court. But were there any criticisms of the police for going in, or any references to people's homes being their castles? There weren't. Perhaps it was because the Ahmeds were not 'Englishmen'. Or perhaps it was because, unlike Mr Beardmore of Walsall, they weren't chief inspectors of police.

RATS, COCKROACHES AND OTHER VERMIN infest between 60 and 80% of council houses in this country, says a report for Mr Robert Young, Assistant Chief Housing Officer for Hackney, London. Tenants often do not report such infestations because they are ashamed of them, but, says Mr Young, the vermin gain access because of construction faults and bad design, and are not related to tenants' hygiene. So not content with cutting council house building to next to nothing, the authorities are allowing the flats we have got to crawl with more vermin than even the 1930s slums harboured.

"AN EGG SALAD doesn't cost much now, not with lettuce at 10p and a few onions and radishes," said the wife of a redundant steel worker in a "Mirror" report recently. She has to make do on £1.50 per day for food for the family, which includes two teenage sons. Another woman in the same situation said, "I don't know how we'd manage if we didn't go down to my mother's for Sunday lunch."

WELSH LANGUAGE CAMPAIGNERS staged a carefully planned and highly embarrassing ambush of Nicholas Edwards, Secretary for Wales, while he was touring his Pembroke constituency of August 11th. The ambushers, who clearly had accurate advance intelligence, were driving in eight cars, with which they boxed in the startled Cabinet Minister in a remote rural area. They detained him for about half an hour, during which period an official of the Society tackled him about the Government's failure to redeem its election pledge to set up a Welsh TV service. This is the second time this tactic has been successfully used by protestors in Wales in recent weeks.

# H-Block AT DEATH'S DOOR

Martin Meehan, a 35-year-old Ardoyne republican, came extremely close to losing his life towards the end of July. He had been on hunger strike for 66 days, and refused water for six days following a statement from the Northern Irish Office to the effect that he was perfectly healthy and was in fact getting food to eat.

Why did he take his life in his own hands? What is really going on in the H-blocks and the Armagh gaol? Why are the men naked and the men and women's cells covered in their own dirt?

## POLITICAL PRISONERS

In 1968 there were only 727 prisoners in northern Ireland. Today there are some 2848. The majority of these men and women are not in for petty offences but for political actions. The Government accepts this. All that it takes for a man or woman to end up in gaol in northern Ireland is a signed 'confession' and a trial without jury.

The arrested person is taken to Castlereagh where he or she is tortured. This involves being beaten, sexually abused, and being kept awake for long periods. There comes a point when anyone will sign any confession. The arrested person is then taken to a court without a jury and 8 out of 10 people get sent straight to gaol.

It is common, in legal terms, for a political prisoner to get special status, and this happened until 1976 when the government decided that political prisoners were too embarrassing. They now call the republicans 'criminals' and expect them to do the manual labour and wear the prison uniforms worn by common criminals. The prisoners obviously refuse to do this.

The prisoners are left in their cells for 23 hours a day, have no clothes, no furniture and no books. They can only toilet in their own cell, and as they can only sleep on the floor with a blanket, have to put their dirt on the walls rather than sleep in it.

## MEEHAN ON HUNGER STRIKE

Martin Meehan went through this system when he was accused of conspiring to kidnap a local British Army tout. With a case that would have been thrown out of a normal court, Meehan was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment. He used his hunger strike as a means of calling for an independent appeal, and he stopped it when Amnesty International agreed to look into the case.

(Contributed.)

After a lengthy series of talks with different parties in northern Ireland; the British Government has produced a set of proposals for the future government of the north. They are proposing a devolved assembly, which of course would have no control over either security or the financing of northern Ireland. However, they can offer no solution to the problem of who is to be in charge of the assembly.

They put forward two options. The first is for an Executive elected by proportional representation out of the ranks of the assembly. Such an Executive would contain 'representatives' of northern Ireland's Catholics, and so it has been rejected by Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Molyneaux's Official Unionist Party (OUP). The second option is for an Executive representing the inbuilt loyalist majority in the Assembly, counterbalanced by some power-sharing Assembly committees. Naturally this sop is unacceptable even to the collaborationist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). So there is deadlock.

This is not surprising. Most people expected it. So why have the British Government bothered with the exercise? The simple answer is that they are not winning the war in northern Ireland. After their last power-sharing initiative failed in 1973, the British state committed itself to an entirely military policy of wiping out the IRA and crushing republican resistance. The main exponent of this policy was Roy Mason.

## BRITISH STRATEGY

The military policy of Her Majesty's governments since 1973 has had three main features:-

## Poem from H-block

We asked for equality,  
You gave us oppression.  
We asked for justice,  
You gave us torture.  
We asked for freedom,  
You gave us slavery.  
Did you not know,  
You were planting the seeds of  
revolution?

We protested for equality,  
You battered us.  
We protested for justice,  
You interned us.  
We protested for freedom,  
You murdered us.  
Did you not know,  
You were strengthening the  
revolution?

(From "The Fruits of Revolution",  
by Gerry, H-block. Reprinted  
from An Phoblacht/Republican  
News, August 9th 1980.)

# BRITISH INITIAT

**Ulsterisation.** That means building up the local police and loyalist forces to take the main brunt of the fighting. The Ulster Defence Regiment, a haven for loyalist thugs, has been built up to a membership of 20,000.

**Criminalisation.** In 1972 the British had been forced to concede Special Category Status, similar to Prisoner of War Status, to prisoners convicted of political offences. Roy Mason removed this status and using systematic torture and no-jury courts tried to fill the prisons with Republicans branded as ordinary criminals.

**Oppression.** Under this heading can be placed the stepped-up use of SAS murder gangs, intensified surveillance and harassment and connivance at the activities of loyalist murder gangs.

## IRISH RESISTANCE

In fact the resistance in the north is at a higher point than ever before. "Ulsterisation" has failed. Britain still has to keep 15,000 soldiers there, adding to the overall bill of £1 billion for running the province. The demoralisation and rate of desertion



# RACISM RESISTED

From a "Class Struggle"  
correspondent.

Several thousand people marched through the East End of London on 2nd August to show their disgust at the racist murder in Newham 16 days before of Akhtar Ali Beg. He was a 29-year-old accountant and was stabbed in broad daylight on East Ham High Street. Four white teenagers have been charged with murder.

The march followed a very long route to encompass all the main shopping areas of the Borough. There were contingents from a great number of Asian organisations and also from Hackney Campaign Against Racism and Working People Against State Racism. For 4 hours the demonstrat-

# LIVE IN IRELAND

in the Army and local forces is rapidly increasing. A recent British Army paper, captured by the IRA, "Document 37", admitted that the IRA cannot be beaten "in the foreseeable future".

"Criminalisation" has been countered with the heroic protests of the men and women in the Long Kesh H-blocks and Armagh Prison, who have refused all prison duties. They carry on this protest despite having to live naked in their cells surrounded by their own excreta with only a soggy blanket and a mattress facing regular beatings from the screws. And the policy of increased oppression has failed. The streets all over Ireland have been filled by people marching in support of the political prisoners and demanding British withdrawal.

## BRITISH FAILURE

So British policy has failed and the effects of this are being felt outside northern Ireland. In the south the Premier, Charles Haughey, has been forced to say that the question of National Unity is now "the major question of Irish politics". In the United States the "moderate leaders" of the Irish community, the so-

called "Four Horsemen" or "Gang of Four" (Tip O'Neill, Hugh Carey, Daniel Moynihan and Edward Kennedy) have felt obliged to say that "the solution offering the greatest promise of permanent peace is an end to the division of the Irish people". In Europe, the Commission on Human Rights, while not delivering a judgement against the H-blocks, made sharp criticisms of British policy.

In Britain many ordinary people are being won to support of the Troops Out position. Inside the Labour Party the campaign for withdrawal is gaining momentum and it suits Tony Benn (now that Labour is out of office) to say that the Irish question is a major domestic policy issue. This raises the spectre of an end to 'bipartisanship' -- an agreed policy between Labour and Tory. All these forces have their different reasons for opposing British policy - not all of them are friends of the Irish people - but they are all lining up in this way because of the successful resistance in Ireland, which is now starting to cause splits in the ranks of the imperialists.

## COSMETIC POLITICS

So we know why the proposals were made. The next question is what result they are meant to have. The answer is: none.

It is a question of cosmetics. Partition was instituted to divide the Irish people and thus maintain imperialist rule over the entire Irish nation. Britain has always fostered the differences between the two religious communities in Ireland, conferring marginal benefits on the Protestant community, and using them as a garrison force. The situation is still the same today. Over the past ten years the Protestant paramilitaries have been armed and equipped by the UDR and

they have regrouped into a solid loyalist bloc increasingly under the leadership of the not very reverend Ian Paisley.

## DIVIDE AND RULE

Under these circumstances the divisions in Ireland have been reinforced. Despite the considerable state expenditure on northern Ireland, paid for by working people's taxes, the benefits from the considerable Irish market flow into the bosses' bank accounts.

But there is much more to it than that. Above all, the partition of Ireland is a political device to divide the people. Centuries of British colonialism and neo-colonialism have ensured that in both parts of Ireland the ordinary working people live under economic and social conditions that are amongst the worst in western Europe. And there is a revolutionary tradition still alive in Ireland. The British bourgeoisie sees no prospect of containing these forces within a United Ireland. So they will continue their combination of military terror and occasional cosmetics. For them there is no alternative. Defeat in Ireland will not only free the Irish people, but will shake their class rule in Britain and inspire all other peoples still suffering under British imperialism.

## TROOPS OUT NOW

The British bourgeoisie are already using the techniques and tactics they have learned in Ireland on the streets in Britain. Harassment of national minorities, armed police, surveillance and so on are becoming a regular feature of the class struggle in Britain. The Irish people and ourselves are two detachments of the international army of working and oppressed peoples, and we face a common enemy.



ors sang and waved their banners. On two occasions there were sit-down demonstrations, the last time near the spot where Akhtar was attacked. The hordes of police tried their level best to stifle the marchers and made 20 arrests in their endeavours to intimidate people.

The vast majority of shopkeepers on the route had closed their shops in sympathy with the marchers and many people joined the march as it went along. The contingents from the Asian communities were particularly active and spirited in protesting and getting more recruits.

The Newham Youth Movement was born of this murder. It had come into being that same evening and had mobilised a very spirited protest the week before. There were 29 arrests on that occasion.

A fund has been set up to provide assistance to all the arr-



ested people. The London District of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain (RCLB) has contributed £68.45 to this fund -- collected from members and factory workers -- and is trying to raise more money.

Every initiative by black people against racism deserves the support of the whole working class. In particular, racist attacks by the state in the form of racist Immigration Laws, racist Police and judiciary, racism in the NHS and all government institutions, must all be resisted. Only the broadest unity of the working class and with other progressive forces can we overthrow our present rulers.

\* \* \* \*

Contributions to the defence fund should be sent to:

Newham Youth Movement,  
241E High Street North,  
London E 6.

# Soviet presents POISON GAS AND FAMINE

The Soviet social imperialists claim that their aggressive activities abroad are internationalist actions in support of revolution.

If this is the case then they have discovered two new revolutionary weapons - famine and poison gas!

Increasingly the Soviet imperialists are using these two fascist weapons against the peoples of various countries who rise in resistance against them.

## U.S. Report

A recent report issued in the United States documented in detail the use of poison gas in Afghanistan, Laos and Kampuchea. In Afghanistan, "more than 100 were killed and many hospitalised" by a white powder dropped by aircraft, which "took flesh off the victims' legs, leaving only bones."

"In Laos, the information indicates that Vietnamese and Lao forces probably have used lethal chemical agents against tribesmen for years and as many as 700 to 1,000 persons may have died."

Most of the reports from Lao mountain tribesmen speak of yellow gas followed by painful breathing, blurred vision, blistering of the skin, red-coloured diarrhoea lasting for days and, sometimes, death. Defecting Lao pilots have reported that they used the weapons.

A typical report from Kampuchea is that of an incident in Pursat province last October when 83 people, mostly children, pregnant women and the old, were killed by toxic chemicals. "The

chemicals look like an anti-mosquito product, and in contact with skin, it provokes burnings along with high fever and bloody vomiting and then death."

## Appeal from Eritrea

The Eritrean Popular Liberation Front (EPLF) have again appealed to the world to prevent the Soviet Union from deploying and using chemical weapons in Eritrea.

The appeal, which has been issued through the Swiss Committee to support Eritrea, points out that the Soviet Union has recently provided the Ethiopian army with defoliant agents and chemical weapons, in particular enervating gas, which causes death by suffocation.

At present, the appeal adds, the Soviets are making logistic preparations. In the Eritrean capital of Asmara, 40 Soviet Mi-24 helicopters are ready to go into action spreading the gas, as well as the same incapacitating agents used against the Afghan patriots.

The EPLF calls on all forces in the world to make the Soviet Union honour the Geneva Protocol of 1925 for the prohibition of the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gas, and of bacteriological methods of war and the convention of 1972 on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of bacteriological weapons, to which the Soviet Union is a signatory.

## "They bombed our water wells!"

The people of the Ogaden are ethnically Somalis, but owing to the imperialist carve-up of Africa in the last century, they form a part of Ethiopia. Ogaden was incorporated into the Ethiopian empire in 1897 - an annexation backed by Britain, Italy and France who had divided up Somali lands amongst themselves.

In order to defeat the liberation struggle being led by the Western Somali Liberation Front (WSLF), the Cuban and Soviet-backed Ethiopian regime has embarked on a deliberate campaign to drive the population out of the Ogaden.

12,000 Cuban troops are in the Ogaden. As WSLF commander, Mohammed Siyad, explained in an interview,

"It's only the foreign powers that keep the war on our land. If the foreign powers left, the Ethiopian forces would immediately go away."

The Ethiopians have been raping women and machine-gunning cattle herds but their attacks on the water wells have been the most insidious. Over the last 6 months, 200 water wells have been destroyed from the air. Others have been poisoned. For hundreds of years, the nomadic people of the Ogaden have collectively maintained these wells throughout the desert in order to preserve their way of life and livelihood. The deliberate, mass destruction of their wells shows up the Soviet-Cuban policy of depopulation in its true colours.

All this has created a vast refugee problem which is an increasing strain on Somalia, itself a very poor country.

According to "Horn of Africa" magazine, "By December 1979 there were 1.2 million refugees in Somalia. Of these, 474,000 were in camps and about 750,000 had temporarily settled among the local population. The number of refugees has since increased drastically and any estimate is fast becoming obsolete."

About 90% of those fleeing Ogaden at the moment are women and children who arrive at the rate of about 3,800 a day.

Conditions in the camps are appalling. An American doctor, Kevin Cahill, writes,

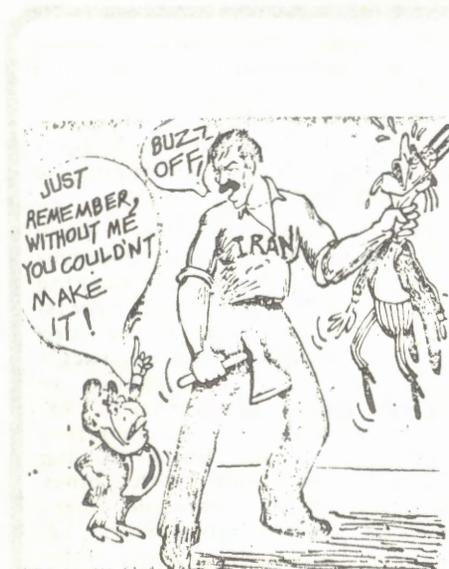
"A single Somali doctor tries to serve up to 50,000 sick, frightened, homeless people. He works with almost no laboratory or surgical equipment, few nurses and grossly inadequate drugs and medical supplies... Infectious diseases, malaria, tuberculosis, hepatitis, dysentery, bronchitis are rife and the potential for truly decimating epidemics and cholera, for example, is frighteningly predictable. The death rate is astronomical; in a camp of 41,000 women and children, there had been 2,000 deaths in the last two weeks..."

For the peoples of the Third World, Soviet policy can be summed up in one word - GENOCIDE!

## SOVIET UNION AND REFUGEES

Wherever the Soviet bear pokes its nose the peoples life becomes intolerable and they are forced to leave. Following is a table of refugees from Soviet social imperialism. Figures given are approximate and are based on available statistics:

Afghanistan...	1 million
Cuba (in last 3 months alone)	
Cuba (in last three months alone)	110,000
Eritrea...	400,000
Ethiopia...	675,000
Kampuchea...	1 million
Laos...	104,000
Vietnam...	700,000



# Anniversary of Czech invasion

## Opposition grows around world



This month marks the twelfth anniversary of the brutal Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. This action showed that the Soviet Union had now stepped onto the world stage as a social imperialist power - that is, one speaking of socialism but practising imperialist aggression and expansion.

The articles on this page show how the Soviet Union tentacles of aggression have reached around the world - and how the peoples of the world are struggling against the Soviet aggressors and their puppets.

### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Peter Uhl is today languishing in Mirov prison. The Czech authorities aim to break this socialist both physically and mentally. Although he suffers from bronchitis, he is made to do hard labour and is fed on an inadequate diet. He is not allowed any written material, and is allowed just one one-hour visit every six to eight months.

Following the Soviet invasion in 1968, Uhl was a founder of the revolutionary Socialist Party and wrote their programme. Arrested in 1969, he served nearly four years in prison. Shortly after release, he and 29 other former political prisoners wrote an open letter to the Union of Czechoslovak Lawyers calling their condemnation of the Chilean junta hypocritical.

"We are linked with progressive Chileans through common ideals, common goals, and frequently a common fate. However, we deny the right to express such solidarity to you gentlemen of the Union of Czechoslovak Lawyers for we are not aware of a single instance in which your union would have come forth in defence of human rights, civil liberties, or adherence to legalities in your own country, Czechoslovakia."

A founder member of Charter 77 and the Committee for the Defence of Unjustly Persecuted Persons, Uhl was sentenced to

### Jokes corner

Question: Why are Soviet troops still in Afganistan?

Answer: They're looking for the person who invited them in.

Q: Why do Czech police always patrol in threes?

A: One to read, one to write, and one to keep watch on the two intellectuals.

five years imprisonment in 1979. As he is a second offender, he has been placed under 'strict regime'!

### POLAND

The Polish working class is continuing its struggles for better wages and working conditions, democratic rights and national independence, that were sparked off by threatened increases in the price of meat in July. Dustmen in the capital, Warsaw, won large pay increases after a six day strike. Water and sewerage workers in Warsaw also went on a one day strike. According to the workers' Self-Defence Committee (KOR) which has been coordinating strike reports, the figure has now surpassed 120 with many others not reported.

### AFGHANISTAN

The armed struggle of the Afghan patriots against the Russian occupiers and their puppets continues to intensify.

Reliable reports say that a Soviet Brigadier-General, with responsibility for espionage on the Pakistan border was executed on July 28th. His car was ambushed at 7 in the morning and he was killed by a single shot in the head.

This is the second killing of senior Soviet officers in Afghanistan. On April 7th, freedom fighters shot down a helicopter, killing two Soviet generals in the eastern Kunar province.

### KAMPUCHEA

With support from the local people, the Kampuchean patriots have even extended their armed attacks into the capital city, Phnom Penh. On July 9th a Vietnamese soldier was shot in the old market and on July 11th grenades were thrown at a barracks killing two Vietnamese and wounding three others.

In the last week of July, 3058 Vietnamese aggressors were killed or wounded. Since the beginning of the rainy season, the Vietnamese have suffered an average of 400 to 450 casualties a day, 30% more than the planned target of the Democratic Kampuchean guerrillas.

### LAOS

Armed struggle against Vietnamese occupation is spreading throughout Laos. In particular, Lao people of various nationalities and from different classes

are uniting under the banner of the Lao National Liberation Front. In late June the guerillas defeated an attempt to deport the populations of several villages. A mopping-up operation conducted by Vietnamese troops in Bau village of Champassak province from July 5th to 12th was defeated with 38 Vietnamese occupation troops killed or wounded.

### VIETNAM

The Vietnamese aggressors also have to face armed opposition from the minority nationalities inside Vietnam. In particular, the Dega Fulro people of the Central Highlands of Southern Vietnam have never reconciled themselves to rule from Hanoi or Saigon and have fought for their national rights from generation to generation. During April they killed or wounded 465 Vietnamese troops and destroyed dozens of barracks and armoured cars.

### TIGRAY

The people of Tigray are one of a number of peoples fighting for the right to national self-determination and against the Soviet-backed fascist regime in Ethiopia. (Tigray is situated in the north-east of the country and borders Eritrea.) The guerillas of the Tigrayan Popular Liberation Front (TPLF) have scored a number of major victories this year, liberating vast areas of the countryside and preventing Ethiopian troops from reaching Eritrea. During a brief occupation of the capital of Axum

recently, the guerillas seized two Russian doctors. The TPLF have carried out extensive social reforms in the liberated areas.

### CHINA

Socialist China recently smashed a Soviet spy ring. At public trials Nicolai Petrovich Zhang was sentenced to seven years imprisonment after he confessed to entering Chinese territory to carry out espionage and sabotage and Wang Jiasheng, who defected to the Soviet Union and was sent back to spy was sentenced to death. Whilst resisting arrest, Wang had shot and killed a Chinese policeman.

China pointed out that these trials were necessary for the security of the country and had dealt a heavy blow to those engaged in subversive and destructive activities against her. "Beijing Review" commented,

"The Soviet social-imperialists always consider Socialist China a great obstacle in their way to achieving world hegemony. That is why they persist in their anti-China policy

ine. It is very possible that if she comes out of her coma she will have severe brain damage. The neighbour's car was impounded by the RUC.

Birmingham people will remember Anne Marie who when she was holidaying here recently took part in two pickets. One was the IWA picket of Whitelaw and the other a picket of the Post and Evening Mail. She also attended TOM (Birmingham Branch) meetings.))

#### A BELFAST COURT

«A member of the TOM delegation was arrested by an army patrol during the march when he was cut off from the rest of the marchers. He was held in prison till the following day when he appeared in court. Many members of the delegation went to hear the case at the Belfast Petty Summons Court.

It was an amazing experience. Armed RUC men with flak jackets were everywhere. There were 52 accused to be dealt with that morning and this could only be achieved by the most expeditious (and arbitrary) despatching of every case. The magistrate was unbelievably ruthless in his sentencing and utterly intolerant of any excuses. One 50-year-old man was charged with urinating in the street and was fined £50 and bound over for 2 years to keep the peace (this in a place with no public conveniences).

A 60-year-old man was also fined £50, ordered to pay £100 as a bond to the court as a guarantee of good behaviour and given a suspended prison sentence. His crime? He had taken a pair of trousers from a stall and had quietly handed them back when the stallholder came after him. He was a frail man of about 7 stone with deep wrinkles who was earning £5 a day on a casual basis working as a builder's labourer.

There were several political cases but the courtroom charade ignored politics. A youth was heavily fined for shouting "Smash the H-blocks" at an Orangemen's march.

Another was fined and given a suspended sentence for throwing stones at RUC vehicles. Many were denied bail and their cases remanded. The magistrate and police very obviously regarded this as an indirect punishment to be applied in case they had to be let off their respective charges.

One young lad, a member of a Scottish band, entered the dock with his right arm in a sling. It had been broken after the army had arrested him and before they handed him over to the RUC. But the boy wanted to get back to Scotland and his counsel had nothing to say about army brutality in his case. Only one accused defiantly shouted out "Up the blanketmen" and was led out by four warders.

One thing was very clear. The courts do not mete out justice -- only retribution to Catholics and imprisonment to the defiant. Most



of the state's brutality remains covered up by manipulation, connivance, intimidation and expediency. In judging republican resistance, people should remember that only one out of a hundred cases of state violence are ever publicised.))

"Having just returned from visiting Belfast I feel I have to write of my impressions and inform people of the absolute bias of the press over here.

There is no way the Provisional IRA can be described as a bunch of terrorists without the support of the people. I was fortunate enough to spend the weekend in the Falls Rd area of Belfast where the Provisionals undoubtedly have the support of the people, as do the IRSP.

Newspaper reports of the Provisionals' march on Sunday August 10th give a totally false impression I was on that march and I am telling you people just poured out of their houses to cheer or join the march. The RUC and the army kept a low profile so the demonstrators were able to use the whole width of the road and leave or join the march as they pleased. You wouldn't see such a march in England today.

The kids are amazing. They are so militant. There is no way they are going to put up with British occupation. It is not just a gut reaction. They know exactly who their enemy is and why the troops are there. They also know just exactly how far they can go in tormenting the troops. Many of them followed the Troops Out delegation on their demonstration round the Forts and were far braver than any of us. On one occasion some kids actually opened the doors of the fort, giving the soldiers inside such a shock that it was seconds before any of them thought to close the doors again.

I could write further volumes but I think it better that I urge people to go across themselves and see the situation. The local community are fantastic and very welcoming. There will be no doubt in people's minds then that the army is an army of occupation, not a peace-keeping force, and these benign 'plastic bullets' are huge, solid, extremely dangerous and used by the army indiscriminately."



#### THE PEOPLE'S TAXIS

« The Falls Transport Association (FTA) is a collective of taxi-drivers who operate in west Belfast. They came into existence several years ago when bus-drivers refused to operate services because of the 'troubles'. The taxis filled the gap and today run a grassroots service which serves the people very well. The price for a ride is 25p -- up very recently from 20p -- and they ply many routes constantly.

The taxis are all of a kind -- ageing, battered London-type taxis, patched up with loving care. The boots are generally open and the spare tyre and prams, parcels, luggage, bicycles are piled on top. No sedate passengers in FTA vehicles! They are generally packed and sharing the taxi is the rule. They dodge barricades, avoid the shattered glass and rocks everywhere, cruise past the British Army forts and slowly mount the ramps in their approach roads.

The drivers are universally cheerful and helpful and do not hesitate to leave the driver's seat to help passengers.

Truly, the struggle against British imperialism for national liberation has deepened the unity of the Irish people and created not only new forms of struggle but also new ways of meeting their needs. It is of such things that revolutions are made!))

#### Forthcoming events

##### CANCELLATION

In our last issue we published details of a meeting planned to oppose Soviet aggression on the occasion of the anniversary of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, organised by the London District of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain for Saturday August 23rd.

We regret to announce that this meeting has been postponed.