

CLASS STRUGGLE

POLITICAL PAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF BRITAIN

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Community Policing

COMMUNITIES FIGHT BACK

The uprisings of oppressed youth, led by the black youth, in Britain's towns and cities last summer were quite a shock to the ruling class. A ruling class used to channeling discontent into trade union bureaucracies, parliament and the Labour Party, there to defuse it. The uprisings showed that a section of the British working class was reclaiming its revolutionary traditions and was prepared to fight the ruling class with the aim and intention of winning. Faced with this situation, the state also began to rally its forces.

Stage one involved brutal repression. David Moore was run down and killed by a police vehicle. Paul Conroy had his back broken. Hundreds of people suffered horrible injuries at the hands of the police. Hundreds more were railroaded through the courts, and then locked up for years. The Bradford 12 were charged with conspiracy. Police forces were issued with plastic bullets, CS gas, water cannon and armoured cars. But the British State knows well how to use both carrot and stick!

The carrot being dangled is that of community policing. The State wants us to believe that everything will be fine so long as we go back to having a "bobby on the beat",

who "knows the area and its people" and who organises football matches for the kids and jumble sales for the old ladies! But Dixon of Dock Green is dead, and the imperialist crisis is here to stay. A smiling policeman cannot hide the reality of growing poverty, unemployment and deprivation. Inevitably, the police are called on more and more to exercise their main function - that of keeping the people down and maintaining the status quo. And the people are not fooled. Around the country they are fighting back, exposing "community policing" for what it is, and showing that the revolutionary forces of last summer are here to stay.

BRISTOL

On January 29 and 30, the youth in the St. Pauls area of Bristol, scene of the April 1980 uprising, waged a militant struggle against police attacks and harassment.

During the early evening of Friday January 29th, 30 racists attacked four West Indian youths, one of whom was stabbed and seriously injured, later requiring stitches. When the police were called they simply refused to arrest any more than one of the racists. Meanwhile, the black community had heard about the racist assault and

were determined to actively exercise their right to self defence. To try and prevent the people from exercising this right, St. Pauls was sealed off by the police who waved truncheons, used vans and riot shields, and shouted racist abuse. Police spent their weekend harassing and chasing black youth, who fought back with bottles, stones, and petrol bombs. The people inflicted a number of casualties on the racist police, including serious injuries to a community policeman, Ian Bennett.

At least 21 people were arrested and some have been charged with serious offences, including attempted murder. Whilst the press has been full of sympathy for the injured cop, alleging that the local people "loved" him, they have nothing to say on the condition of the black youth who was stabbed.

In fact, whatever sympathy there might have been in the community for the police, was very rapidly dispelled when on Sunday January 31 the police raided the home of Mrs Agatha Royal, whose son David, was one of the acquitted St. Pauls uprising defendants. Not only did the police cause substantial material damage to Mrs. Royal's home, they viciously assaulted her, kicking and punching her, and leaving her with nasty injuries. The people of St. Pauls know that any punishment meted out by them to the police is richly deserved.

LIVERPOOL 8

Liverpool 8 was the scene of one of the most extensive uprisings last summer, and since then the area has not been quiet! The youth of the area have not been taken in by the introduction of "community policing" and continue to wage guerilla warfare against them, in

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BR OFFENSIVE PUSHED BACK

"Class Struggle" Correspondent

After several weeks of militant action it looks as if the train drivers have won an important victory.

British Rail had set out to break the previous agreement with the unions, impose new working conditions on the drivers by withholding an agreed pay rise, and in doing so cripple the organised strength of the rail workers. If they had succeeded it would not just be the immediate battle that was

lost, but it would have put management in a commanding position and able to impose further speed up, worse conditions and more redundancies throughout the industry.

That was why, despite the apparent triviality of the issue, it was essential to fight a major struggle over it.

The management was holding back a 3% increase already agreed. The actual difference it would make to take home pay would only be about the price of a couple of packets of

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Inside...

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

To honour March 8th, International Women's Day, this issue of "Class Struggle" contains a number of articles on the fightback of women against oppression. Our Editorial on page 2 traces the origin of International Women's Day and shows the link between women's struggles and other working class and anti-imperialist struggles. On pps. 667 we show how the threat of rape is an attack on all women, and how new technology is affecting women. On p. 8 we look at the struggles of black women against the threat of deportation. And on p. 5 we highlight the defiance of women workers in Scotland against the bosses and their courts.

International Women's Day

"We strike for justice for all women".

This was the slogan as tens of thousands of women garment workers marched out of the sweatshops on the lower East side in New York City, on March 8th 1908. They demanded an end to filthy, unsafe working conditions, an end to child labour, an 8-hour day and the right to vote.

Normally women worked 12 hours a day, crammed into lofts and basements which were fire hazards. Following the militant strikes of 1908, there were large-scale strikes in the winter of 1909-1910. Out of these women's struggles, more than 300 garment shops were unionised in New York City.

Inspired by the garment striker's militant and collective struggle, the Second International Congress of Socialist Women accepted Clara Zetkin's proposal in 1910, and declared March 8th to be "International Working Women's Day".

Today, women throughout the world celebrate International Women's Day, not only to remember the militant and often courageous struggles of women in the past, but also to highlight the struggles of today. As communists, we fully support struggles against specific aspects of women's oppression, and also recognise that the fight for women's equality is an essential part of the struggle for socialism.

Throughout class society women have been oppressed, although the form of this oppression varies. In Britain today, women are doubly oppressed, as women and as workers. They do worse jobs for less pay, are discriminated against socially, politically and in education. Women's health problems are not accorded proper attention. The attitude of female inferiority pervades all areas of life, from cradle to grave. Women's freedom to move around is curtailed by the threat of male violence.

The basis of women's oppression can be seen in their 'dual role' as wage workers and domestic workers. At work, women are concentrated in low-paid, boring, unskilled jobs, with little opportunity for training or promotion. Women's employment is still regarded as peripheral, done for 'pin money' in spite of the fact that over 40% of the workforce are women (half of whom are married) and many families would be depressed into poverty if it were not for the wife's wages. Capitalism uses women in times of boom, allowing them to 'disappear' back into the home during a recession.

At home women bear the major responsibility for maintaining and reproducing the work-force, that is, cooking, cleaning, child-care, washing clothes, providing warmth and

comfort so that the workers are fit to work again the following day. This task, which is essential to capitalism, is carried out by women isolated in the family, trapping them in day to day drudgery, cut off from social production. Women who work outside the home have to cope with two jobs. The economic unit of the family is at the basis of women's oppression, which is not to say that we are against the family as such, but we oppose the economic role it is forced to play in capitalist society. When we are fighting women's oppression, we are fighting for equal pay, taking up issues like nurseries, better health care, etc; and educating men. We are also fighting the very way that this society is organised. We must challenge the oppression of women in all walks of life, at the same time recognising that only socialism can lay the material basis for the full liberation of women.

In today's crisis, women are being forced back into the home, subjected to an increasing barrage of propaganda about 'women's place' in society. They bear the brunt of the cuts in the NHS and welfare services and face even more arduous work in trying to maintain a family on a reduced income.

Black women in Britain, as members of oppressed national minorities face triple oppression - as workers, as women and as national minorities. Unemployment and repressive health care practices fall heavily on black women, and the black community as a whole is not safe from deportation, and all are in danger from racist attacks. National minority women are the most oppressed section in Britain today.

Women don't just sit back! Remember the workers at Lee Jeans, Chix, Grunwick and many more; remember Anwar Ditta, Jaswinder Kaur, Nasira Begum, to name just a few of the national minority women who have taken up the struggle against the racist immigration laws. Remember, women fighting cuts, and in tenant's struggles.

Women are taking up arms to fight against imperialist aggression: Young women in Zimbabwe left their families to join the national liberation forces. Women workers in Kerala, India, carry on industrial struggles in the face of pickets being shot by the police. In Ireland, women have taken up the Republican cause, many of them being killed or put in prison during the course of the struggle. Our sisters fighting to rid their countries of imperialist domination know that this has to be done before they will make much progress towards the liberation of women.

To all these women fighters we pay tribute.

From our Postbag

FROM: A VETERAN BRITISH COMMUNIST

One can only approve of the amount of coverage given to the vital issue of Poland and the imposition of martial law. This is not the first time that martial law has been imposed on one of the eastern countries under the heel of Social-Imperialism. Czechoslovakia is still under the shadow of Soviet occupation and the restrictions amount to a form of martial law.

As to your analysis. How is it possible for Marxist Leninist analysis to omit the role of the Roman Catholic Church of which there is not a single mention, nor the fact that in making a Pole Pope, the Catholic Church was aware that Poland was ripe for a takeover by the Church? The corruption that eventually led to the confrontation with Solidarity and the demise of the PUWP through martial law was already visible in 1949, when I saw for myself how "party members" allocated to themselves the only flats available in devastated Warsaw and used cars from the "party" pool for shopping and other private luxuries.

Seeking truth from facts is the basis of all Marxist Leninist Mao Zedong Thought analysis and if the facts are dealt with so negligently or by omission of vital periods and issues, then incorrect conclusions are inevitable. Solidarnosc does not purport to be an organisation to take the place of a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party nor is it anything but a Trade Union organisation operating in a fascist military political vacuum. Its nationalist tinge is one that enables it to rally the mass of Polish people, as well as the Polish workers it set out first to organise. The fact that from the first the Roman Catholic Church had a hold on Solidarnosc is solely due to the bankruptcy of the PUWP leadership at all levels. There was a time in May 1981 when Party Branch level comrades of the PUWP held a Congress at Thorun in the hope of rescuing from the corrupt leadership of the PUWP some remnants to allow a new growth of a true Marxist Leninist grassroots Party, but although the Congress passed all the correct resolutions in support of those of its members still fighting in Solidarnosc against the Church's attempts to control and guide Solidarnosc, these comrades were swept aside in the tide

of anger at the growing and very visible corruption and the changes in the PUWP leadership. This, going from Kania to Jarulselski, descended very soon to martial law under the guidance of the Marshal of the Soviet Union who is head of the Warsaw Pact forces of which Jarulselski is an integral part.

It is entirely correct to support slogans such as Solidarity with Solidarnosc. It is correct to ask for the removal of martial law and the release of all imprisoned and interned. It is correct to demand the punishment of those guilty of murdering or maiming workers and others imprisoned or interned. But it must be clear that what is likely to emerge is not a movement guided by a Marxist-Leninist Party although some good comrades are still fighting within Solidarnosc. What will emerge is a country governed to a great degree by the Church or its stooges who have already indicated to the Soviet Union that it will not take Poland out of the Soviet Union's sphere of influence.

Editorial comment: We thank our reader for his comments. We hope to return to the questions he raises in the future.

A Working Woman's Notebook

● In 1980 women members of five trade union branches in Hull put forward practical suggestions to make it easier for women members to be actively involved in their union's affairs:

*Branch meetings to be held at more convenient times and places, preferably during work time.

*Provision of child care facilities.

*Making union matters easier to understand, and providing more union education courses.

*Creating opportunities for women members to get together to discuss the common problems they face.

*Active encouragement and support from husbands/boyfriends/male trade unionists so that women can gain confidence and experience in trade union activities. In particular, the sharing of housework and family commitments is essential if women are to have the time to get involved in trade unions.

● Women are 40% of the workforce, but they are mainly confined to the lower paid jobs. In the National Health Service, 75% of NHS workers are women, but only 25% of doctors and only 7% of consultants are women. In teaching, basic grade women teachers outnumber men by 3 to 1. But there are more men than women heads of primary schools, and six times as many men as women heads of comprehensives. Out of 69 High Court judges, only 2 are women, and 20 out of 635 M.P.'s are women.

● An estimated 40,000 pregnant women in Britain are being denied a simple test that could prevent them giving birth to babies seriously deformed by spina bifida or downs syndrome. Women over the age of 35 have a significantly increased risk of giving birth to such children, and should have access to these tests as a basic right. The tests cost far less than the cost of looking after the deformed child, not to mention the hardship and distress suffered by the families of deformed children, particularly the mothers.

Less than half the health authorities provide a testing service. Nationally, the government is not convinced that the testing service is worth the cost. Many doctors don't consider it to be a serious problem or worth the extra work.

Nor is it valid to blame the women themselves for failing to turn up to ante-natal clinics early enough during pregnancy. It is the task of the ante-natal service to make itself easily accessible to women. Far too little effort and resources are put into appropriate health education in Britain.

● Cuts in public spending mean that many women are having to give up work and go home to do jobs which until a little while ago they were paid for doing. Children being sent home at lunch time because the local authority won't

provide school meals, discontinuing dinners during school holidays, withdrawing school buses, can all immediately confine women to the home. Education cuts also mean fewer nurseries and children having to wait longer to get into school. It is women who have to stay at home to look after them. Health

Service cuts mean longer waiting lists and shorter stays in hospital. The chronically ill, the old and the mentally disturbed are being pushed out into the community as a policy. The burden of so-called 'community care' falls on women. Abortion, contraception and sterilisation facilities are being starved of funds. It is women who have to suffer the consequences of unwanted pregnancies. Local council cuts mean no money for house repairs or for new housing. It is women who have to work in deteriorating conditions and who try to make condemned houses habitable. In all areas of life, the working class, and especially women, are expected to bear the burden of the capitalist crisis.

● Despite the 1975 Equal Pay Act, in 1980 women earned on average only 72% as much as men. While the average male manual worker earned £111 a week gross, the corresponding figure for full-time manual women workers was £68. For non-manual workers, the figures were £141 and £83 respectively. And while 10% of women workers earned less than £50 a week, less than 1% of male workers suffered such low wages.

CHANGES IN CLASS STRUGGLE

Starting with our next issue, April, "Class Struggle" will be appearing in a new and larger format. It will cost 20p.

"Class Struggle" has always aimed, with varying degrees of success, to serve the working class and oppressed. Our new efforts to develop the paper need the support of our readers. You can act as a "Class Struggle Correspondent" on struggles where you live and work; order extra copies and sell them to friends and work-mates; and contribute financially to help us make the necessary improvements in the paper. Any donations, however big or small, will be gratefully received.

"Class Struggle" can be contacted c/o New Era Books.

LAURENCE SCOTT

Fighting for Jobs

"Class Struggle" Correspondent

Laurence Scott workers have already had the experience of being evicted from their factory occupation by the thugs called bailiffs who charged in brandishing pick axe handles and sledge hammers.

Then they saw their mass pickets being bypassed by helicopters, which swooped in to remove some of the machinery that still remained in the factory.

Now they have experienced one of the biggest police/scab military style operations seen in an industrial dispute for several years.

FIGHTING THE STATE

The workers, who are fighting the closure of the factory, have maintained mass pickets on the gates to hold hostage a number of motors, other products and equipment. Concrete had been poured round the gates to keep them shut. On February 16th 300-400 police moved in against the pickets to force them away from the gates. 10 lorries moved up to the plant, scabs broke up the concrete with pneumatic drills. The lorries, some carrying fork lift trucks, entered the plant. During the day the 160 pickets were reinforced until the crowd was 300

strong. The police forced them back and closed the street until, at 3 pm, the trucks roared out again in convoy. In the clearing of the street scuffles had broken out. Two pickets were arrested. Not surprisingly they just happened to be the Convenor, Dennis Barry, and a shop steward, Philip Penning. Three more were arrested later.

The following day 200 police repeated the operation. The local residents have already complained about the police, and previous bailiffs' raids, objecting to the noise, the frightening of kids, and the fact that they have to pay for such police operations.

FIGHTING THE UNION BUREAUCRACY

Meanwhile, the AUEW leadership, which has been sabotaging the struggle for months are trying to excuse their conduct, and attack the strikers. Last year over 1000 branches of the union sent a protest resolution condemning the leadership's sabotage to the executive. Now the union President, John Boyd has sent out a 3 page letter to every branch attacking what he calls "an irresponsible campaign". However he can't stop the latest campaign of resolutions being sent to the executive. All union branches are being asked to demand a ballot for the removal of the executive. Under rule 14, if 1 in 10 branches support the resolution, the General Secretary has to call the ballot.

The strike committee can be contacted at 20, Roundcroft, Romiley, Cheshire.

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The development of conspiracy law

Mass Struggle and 'Conspiracy' 1848-1890

The Chartist movement in Britain effectively ended in 1848. Increasingly the English working class, and particularly the skilled sections, turned their attention back to 'pure' trade unionism. The concern with 'political' agitation in the main began and ended with the securing of legal changes in trade union rights. The struggle for the right to organise effectively against the employer was, however, still bitter; still an openly class question that demonstrated the nature of the state.

In 1851, nine members of the National Society of United Trades were arrested during a dispute following the sacking of a union representative at a tin-plate factory. During the strike that followed, scab labour was brought in from France. The Trade Unionists were found guilty of "conspiracy to force or induce workers to depart from their employment". In a similar trial in the same year, Duffield and two other Trade Unionists were arrested after striking for higher pay and were found guilty of conspiracy. Judge Erle later remarked that "the force acquired by combination is incalculably greater than the sum of powers so transferred to the union by each individual." (True, of course, - that is the purpose of combining against the immense strength of the employers.) Erle declared that a worker had a right to withdraw his labour, but not to instigate others so to do. This would constitute a conspiracy.

In 1859 the government conceded certain 'rights' of 'peaceful persuasion' in the "Molestation of Workmen Act". The limitation of such statutory (passed by Parliament) law was soon apparent.

A number of members of the Tailors Union were convicted in 1867 after instigating other workers to strike and posting pickets. The Judge, Bramwell, defended the verdict on the basis of Common law (law handed down by Judges through examples which set a precedent).

"By the common law, liberty of a man's mind and will, how he should bestow himself and his means, his talents and his industry is as much the subject of the law's protection as is that of his body. Therefore if two or more persons agree to co-operate against that liberty of thought and freedom of will they are guilty of conspiracy."

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN IRELAND

Up to the end of the 1840s Ireland had seethed with struggle, culminating in the 1848 rising. The famine, and the ruination of the bulk of the population, the mass emigrations were capped in 1849 by the "Encumbered Estates Act", which made it even easier for landlords to evict the tenant farmer. Charles Duffy, the only Young Ireland leader left at liberty in Ireland, organised the Tenants Rights League.

After its collapse in the mid-50s it was superseded by the 'Phcenix' - a secret society built mainly from still-existing Repeal clubs, which soon merged with the then newly developing organisation of Irish exiles in the

USA, the Fenian Brotherhood - an open organisation which also served as a cover for the underground Irish Republican Brotherhood. The movement was a revolutionary national one, appealing mainly to workers, and with an agrarian reform political base.

In 1863 the "Irish People" was launched - a paper that acted as a major

FREE THE BRADFORD 12!

The trial of the Bradford 12 begins on April 26. The conspiracy charges against these Asian youth, as part of the state's racist reaction to the uprisings of last Summer, make this a major political trial. Mass pickets will assemble outside Leeds Crown Court on that day. On April 3rd there will be a national demonstration in Leeds. South London Support Group is organising a Public meeting on March 3rd, and street meetings on 13th and 20th March. Other activities are being organised in many areas around the country. For full details of all events contact Southall Rights. Phone: 01-843-0904.

organiser of the Fenian Movement.

In 1865 Luby, O'Leary, Kickham and Rossa, the main organisers of the "Irish People" were arrested and charged with conspiracy. The evidence was that they had repeatedly stated that their aim was an Independent republic and that no other means but armed struggle could attain this aim. No evidence showed that they had actively prepared for such a rising. None was needed. Three of them were sentenced to 17 years' penal servitude. Rossa got life.

Two years later came the abortive 1867 uprising. After its failure many trials took place.

In a number of these trials the Common law development of the conspiracy charge as a political weapon of the state continued to be refined for use against those against whom no direct charges could be brought. McCafferty was arrested, one month before the uprising. Evidence of the rebellion was used against him despite his being in prison at the time. Meany, who had been in the United States throughout the period was prosecuted in the same way. The rule that the actions of one person can be used as evidence against others - not allowed in other trials - was reinforced. Both were found guilty. 1868 saw Mulcahy and 19 others charged with aiding the Fenian 'conspiracy' or 'conspiring to make war'. "So far as proof goes", the judge said, "conspiracy is generally a matter of inference" and "the very plot is an act in itself."

In 1870, the Fenians' Arms Organiser in England, Michael Davitt, was found guilty of conspiracy and sentenced to 15 years. Davitt was also a close collaborator of Tom Mann, Ben Tillet,

John Burns and others who worked to build the unskilled workers general union in Britain, between 1889 and 1891.

CRIMINAL LAW AMMENDMENT ACT

1871 saw, in Britain, the Criminal Law Amendment Act. Following four years after the Reform Act which gave the vote to most skilled sections of the working class, the new act relieved unions from prosecution over acts of 'restraint of Trade' (i.e. strikes), which previously were held to limit the employers "freedom to bargain". The Act still maintained it as an offence to 'molest or obstruct' with the aim of persuasion to strike, or to force the master to alter his mode of carrying on his business. The courts promptly showed their 'independence' by claiming that this did not effect 'common law'. Judge Brett, in 1872, found a group of London gas-workers guilty of conspiracy to strike in a struggle to reduce their hours from 80 a week. The workers "did definitely agree to force the gas company to conduct its business contrary to its own will," Brett declared. The one year sentence given to the workers led to widespread struggle, and was then commuted to four months. In 1875 the government was pressured into producing the "Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act", which excluded trade disputes from criminal liability.

Section 3 stated that an act of contemplation of, or in furtherance of, a trade dispute was not a conspiracy if such an act was not a crime if committed by one person.

Section 7 however still maintained penal clauses on picketing, against violence, threats, intimidation, molestation and obstruction; it thus did nothing to stop the use of the law against workers faced with scab labour being used when they were in dispute. On this basis seven Trade Unionists were found guilty in the "Bauld" case just one year later of "conspiring to compel workmen to quit their employment". Conspiracy charges were thus still used against people who are not actually accused of any act of assault or obstruction.

However, from this time, criminal conspiracy charges were rarely used in industrial disputes. Politics, however, is another matter.

During the 19th Century Marx and Engels consistently supported the Trade Union movement, but also pointed out its limitations; "The Trade Unions are helpless in the face of the major factors influencing the economy" commented Engels in the "Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844". And later in 1879:

"For many years past the English working class movement has confined itself within a narrow circle of strikes for higher wages and shorter hours ... The Trade Unions in their Charters actually bar all political action on principal and in this way they stop

the proletariat as a class from taking part in any working class movement."

Whilst stating that, "Trade Unions are a necessity for the working class in the struggle against capital," Engels insisted on the need for a political movement to end the system of wage slavery. Marx also pointed to the fundamental importance of the Irish struggle to that of the working class in England:

"The decisive blow against the English ruling classes ... cannot be delivered in England, but only in Ireland."

In 1870, Marx and the International Working Men's Association led a working class movement in support of amnesty for Fenian prisoners. The government quickly gave way in order to avoid a real movement of unity between the working class in Britain and the Irish national revolution building up, which was the main fear of the British ruling class.

The political movement of the working class began to find a form in the Social Democratic Federation which was founded in 1883. Its main base was in the general unions, who had many Irish organisers in that period, including Jim Larkin who later founded the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. The SDF included in its ranks many Irish workers, including James Connolly who later became the historic leader of the Irish working class.

In 1886 the state moved to crush the new movement. Five leaders were charged with seditious conspiracy after they had addressed a mass rally of 20,000 in Trafalgar Square. The rally had been followed by 'rioting' and the breaking of windows in the West End. The five were acquitted, and this ended the era of the seditious conspiracy trial.

CONSPIRACY - TOWARDS A DEFINITION

Five years earlier, Charles Parnell, an Irish Nationalist MP and a leader of the Irish National Land League, had been charged with conspiracy to persuade tenants to go on a rent strike and to occupy land, but, mainly as a result of a mass movement, the jury failed to reach an agreement and he was acquitted.

However, during the trial the Judge, Fitzgerald, laid down a definition of conspiracy which is still used in

Common law. Conspiracy, he said, was:

1. An agreement to do a lawful act for an unlawful end;
2. An agreement to do an unlawful act for a lawful end; or
3. A plot to injure some third party, or class, although the wrong if inflicted by a single individual would not be a crime.

Fitzgerald openly spoke of "a political trial such as the present". He showed none of the qualms of state representatives today, who deny that political trials take place. But history shows precisely that the law develops and responds to the main struggles as they unfold.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH

Cont'd from front page.

cigarettes. The bosses said they would only pay up if the drivers accepted flexible rostering and a system of exhausting shifts and hours. Although productivity questions were already being discussed with the unions, the management pre-empted negotiations and attempted to force the issue.

KEEP PAY AND PRODUCTIVITY SEPERATE

The Union, quite correctly, had previously insisted and won a dispute about it, that pay negotiations and productivity were separate questions: an important stand that prevents the selling of jobs. This basis also makes it easier to oppose 'productivity' deals based on redundancies.

Although the union has agreed to discuss productivity questions, the management has had to agree to pay the increase without any concrete agreement on 'flexible rostering'. Apparently a clear victory.

INDEPENDENT ARBITRATION?

The deal, or surrender, was proposed by a supposedly 'independent' arbitration panel. But no one should be in any doubt that the arbitration would have been completely different without the militant action of the workers themselves.

GOOD TACTICS

There are also some important lessons. The action the railway drivers took was tactically well-considered. The one-day strikes hit BR hard economically, particularly in the freight areas - putting pressure on other capitalists, who in turn could put pressure on the government and BR. At the same time it minimised the financial pressure on the drivers, which meant that sections that may have vacillated in the struggle instead remained firmly behind it. Yet the workers were kept united in collective action. If the management had responded with a lock out, that also would have strengthened the unity of the drivers.

UNDERSTANDING THE PRESENT IS VITAL IN BUILDING A FIGHTBACK

We are at a time when the working class has suffered some big

defeats such as at Leyland and Ford. We can see that demoralisation exists because the failure of Labour party/social democratic politics to help the working class, at a time of real economic crisis of the imperialist system has not yet been replaced by a conscious understanding of the need to destroy imperialism. The opportunist leaders and organisations can be seen to have no answers, but the influence of opportunism is still there, and has a disarming effect on the working class. That situation will continue until there exists a strong revolutionary movement based on an understanding of the evils of imperialism, and its consequence - opportunism.

However it is possible to fight back in a limited way. The problem can be seen in what has to be admitted is a relative lack of fight back, as the bosses crisis has been forced onto the back of the working class. The economic struggle against wage cuts and massive unemployment has not yet materialised on a broad scale. There are fine examples of resistance such as Lee Jeans, Plessey, BL Bathgate, Laurence Scott, etc.. But the "big battalions" of the working class are relatively passive as yet.

Even in the railways the problem is clear to see. Sid Weighall, the NUR leader, sat on his backside like an elder statesmen pretending to be 'neutral' in this dispute. In fact he did nothing but try to sow discord between different sections of railway workers and thus sabotage the struggle. The drivers, however, remained firm despite the stab in the back by their 'brothers' in the leadership of the NUR.

However, all this shows the vital importance in these economic struggles for workers to fight on ground of their own choosing and utilise militant and effective tactics which take account of the present conditions.

BREAK WITH OPPORTUNISM

Most important of all is the necessity of breaking with the social democratic and reformist outlook, and with its more 'left', but just as insidiously paralysing, hangers on. There is only one answer to a system that is decaying, but viciously oppressive and exploitative; that is to unite with all those who oppose it, and bury it.

Plessey Women Defy the Courts

Since the end of January, the 200 workers at Plessey's Bathgate factory in Scotland have been occupying the plant in a fight against closure. The militant determination of the workers, who are mainly women, reflects the example set in Scotland by the Lee Jeans women.

The Plessey workers are already having to defy the weight of the state. A judge has granted an injunction to the company, which orders the workers to leave the factory. 141 people were directly named in the injunction and could face prison if they refuse to leave.

Which is precisely what they did. "We had a mass meeting", the AUEW Convenor, Ina Scott explained, "and decided we would stand firm. Of course I'm worried about the step I've taken but we have a lot of support."

The workers are hanging on to £3 million worth of machinery and £650,000 worth of finished goods. Donations and messages of support can be sent to: Mary Murphy, 30 Main Street, Faldhouse, West Lothian, Scotland.

The Right to Live without Fear

The fear of rape affects all women. It inhibits their actions and limits their freedom. It influences the way they dress, the hours they keep, the routes they walk. No woman is immune from rape. Women of all ages, races and lifestyles have been rape victims.

Rape is a total attack upon the person, which affects the victim physically, psychologically and socially. Physically she may suffer pain, injury and mutilation as well as pregnancy or V.D. Psychologically she suffers a violation of her autonomy by the attacker's complete disregard for her as a person. Her faith in the world as a safe environment is shaken. Socially, she will have to face questions from family or friends. She may have the ordeal of police questioning and a court appearance.

"CALL IT NATURE, BUT RAPE'S THE NAME."

Rape is very common. In 1980 the number of rapes reported to the police in this country was 1,224. Of those accused, 416 were found guilty and most were sentenced to immediate prison or borstal. It is estimated that only one case in twenty is actually reported. This means that rape takes place approximately 70 times a day.

Why then, until recently, did we hear so little about it? Doesn't it matter that women are suffering violent attacks on this scale?

For about a fortnight in January, rape was big news. A worker at Birmingham Rape Crisis Centre told me: 'Suddenly all the newspapers want to talk to us about rape. You'd think it never happened before.' Incidents like the judge's statement about 'contributory negligence', the Glasgow rape case and the television programme showing a police interrogation of a rape victim are sensationalised in the mass media but there is no systematic exposure or analysis of violence against women.

"IF WE'RE ATTACKED
THEY SAY WE BEGAN THE GAME"

The idea of contributory negligence is widespread. A MORI opinion poll (Sunday Times 24.1.82.) showed that 33% of those questioned believe that women themselves are at least partly to blame if they are raped. When rapists or murderers are at large, the police warn women not to go out at night or travel in empty railway carriages. If a woman ignores this advice, they argue, she puts herself at risk,

and if attacked, she must share the blame. This has brought an angry response from women. They should have to trade in their freedom in order to be protected from violence? Why is there no attempt to make the streets safe?

Besides the myth that women 'ask to be raped' there is the myth that they 'deserve' to be. In practice, any woman who does not conform to the image of solid middle-class respectability stands less chance of seeing her rapist brought to court and convicted. This includes women claiming social security, divorced or separated women, unmarried mothers, and especially prostitutes.

"THOUGH WE PROVE OUR INJURY
THE JUDGE MAY SET THE RAPIST
FREE"

The trial of a rapist is also the trial of a rape victim. The more an alleged rapist can show himself to be an ordinary, decent chap, the greater the victim's difficulty in establishing her guiltlessness.

Another myth is that rapists are sex-mad monsters. Men do not rape because of uncontrollable sexual urges. 63% of cases dealt with by Birmingham Rape Crisis Centre are planned. In 1975 less than 2½% of convicted rapists were sent for psychiatric treatment. Most rapists are "normal" men. Perhaps the police's unwillingness to believe that the Yorkshire Ripper was a 'respectable' man, i.e. white, married, middle-aged and in employment, helped to prevent his capture for so long.

"WHEN EXPLOITATION IS THE NORM
RAPE IS FOUND IN MANY FORMS"

The crime of rape cannot be understood if it is seen just as a brutal attack by a man on an individual woman. In all class societies, relationships between men and women have been distorted; all working people have been oppressed and exploited, but women have suffered double oppression and exploitation. In this capitalist society, the driving force is profit. Everything and anything is used to increase profit. In that context sex is viewed as a commodity always in demand. The "sex-object" woman conveniently fills such a "need". Whether it be in pornographic films and magazines, sex shops, or page 3 pin ups, women are being used as sex objects. Rape is the end product of such a system.

"CALL IT DUTY, BUT RAPE'S THE NAME"

The social system encourages men to see women as possessing a very desirable commodity (sex), which they must somehow buy or coax or force out of them. The highest price a man can pay for the ownership of that commodity is marriage, i.e. guaranteed financial and emotional security for life.

The law which says there can be no rape in marriage is the law which still sees married women as the property of their husbands.

Complete equality for women, including freedom from the fear of

rape, will only come about with the abolition of the capitalist system. But there are many things which could be done here and now to decrease the incidence of rape. The most important issue is the education of both men and women to see women as people in their own right, not as the possessions of men or as objects for men's use. We must support the right of women to defend themselves and to be trained to that end.

We must campaign for a woman's right to control her own sexuality, including free and safe contraception and abortion on demand. Another demand is the recognition of a woman's equal right to work, and her right to equal pay and conditions. Finally we must demand that rape is treated as a serious crime with serious consequences for the attacker, and that all women who make allegations of rape are given a fair and sympathetic hearing.

The subheadings in this article are all taken from Peggy Seeger's song "Reclaim the night".

Raped before Execution

The People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran has received numerous reports of women and even young girls being raped by the prison guards and torturers of the Khomeini regime. According to a so-called "religious decree" issued by Khomeini, women and girls who are arrested are regarded as "spoils of war" and so become the "slave girls" of Khomeini's followers. Many women political prisoners have been raped a few hours before their execution. In a statement from Paris, the Mojahedin say,

"We hereby urge the United Nations' Secretary General, Amnesty International, the International Red Cross and all the democratic and humanitarian organisations worldwide to directly investigate the situation in Khomeini's jails."

EL SALVADOR

In a recent book, Salvadorean revolutionary Ana Guadalupe Martinez described her treatment at the hands of the fascists being propped up by US imperialism.

"As they undressed me they pawed me, at my breasts, my genitals, my legs, making jokes about my body.

"She's got a good body; hasn't had kids yet ... This bitch has got to get fucked ... We'll just see how many of us she can take. Who wants to be first?"

"In the case of women, sexual abuse, the constant pawing and the threat of rape are among the principal ways used by the repressive apparatus to demoralise. The mere fact of feeling an assassin's hands on your body causes revulsion and anger.

"For both men and women, this type of torture represents an effort to erode the structure of our ideological values, those which give us our sense of dignity, honour, of courage.

WOMEN AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

In the Imperialist Countries

In the Third World

In "Great" Britain, the electronics industry is looking closely at Ireland, Scotland and Wales. But the big impact of the chip in the developed, imperialist countries will be in its application, both to industry and to office work. It is in the office that the chip will be brought in more quickly. In Britain, capital investment per office employee is only £500, compared with £5,000 for industrial employees. Two in five of all women workers work in offices - as clerks, typists, secretaries, office machine operators, telephonists and in similar jobs. The German electronics company, Siemens, has estimated that by 1990 around 40% of present office work can be carried out by computerised equipment. So the introduction of the chip to the office is going to hit women hard.

It's not only women's jobs that will be hit - it'll be their working conditions and their health too. The techniques for increasing productivity, already familiar to factory workers, can now be introduced into the office; the breakdown of each job into its simplest component parts, the meticulous measurement of worker performance, removal of individual initiative, packing of work by machine rather than by the operator, the necessity to spend every second of the day at the machine, the constant drive to speed up, the perpetual attempt to cut jobs, the move into shift work. Long hours of reading data on a visual display unit can result in eyestrain which produces headaches, fatigue, focussing inabilities, nausea and even psychological reactions.



More and more white collar workers are seeing the need to join a union: for example the number of women in the white collar union, APEX, nearly doubled between 1967 and 1977. There's been increasing militancy: the Civil Service strike in '79, the typists strike in Camden, London, in '78/9, the Liverpool typists strike in '81.

Although the oppression of women by imperialism is far more bitter in the third world countries than it is for the women who live in the imperialist heartlands - a job is literally a matter of life and death, sexual harrasment takes the form of prostitution - women share their position as the slaves of the slaves, they share a common enemy in the imperialist system. As women of the oppressed nations, as women workers, and as women, women have the most profound reasons to seek its destruction.

Today the favourite site for imperialism to invest in is a Free Trade Zone - of which there are over 100 dotted across Asia, Africa and Latin America. The host country provides special concessions, the expensive necessities for industry to function (e.g. roads, energy, buildings) and cheap labour. That's where women come in. 80-90% of the workers in the FTZs are women.

Many are engaged in microchip assembly (200,000 - 300,000 in SE Asia). Although the application of the chip to industry and office will put millions out of work, the production of the chip is labour intensive.

"The manual dexterity of the oriental female is famous the world over. Her hands are small and she works with extreme care. Who, therefore, could be better qualified by nature and inheritance to contribute to the efficiency of a bench assembly production line than the oriental girl." (Malaysia; The Solid State for Electronics) OR: "Next to a robot you get a woman." (Dr. Guillerma Villalva of the Centre for Working Women of Mexico).

Despite the "happy children" image promoted by the multinationals of their workforce, the reality is that grinding poverty forces women, often the sole supporters of their family to take on any job they can. On a recent TV programme ("A Small World") a Sri Lankan woman reported that her monthly wages were 520 rupees, (£13), of which 200 went on lodgings. Women in the Philippines reported that they had to work from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. six days a week and 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Sundays. "Sometimes we work on - we stay in three days and two nights... nobody can go out because the door is locked, padlocked and the window is closed."

Only young women are employed (16-25), for after three or four years of peering through a microscope, wiring the edges of the chips to its base, their eyesight will not be good enough. In Singapore, the lives of contract workers from Malaysia are completely ruled by the state: they can only marry after five years of a "clean record" and with the government's permission, and then only on signing a bond agreeing to be sterilised after the second child. When women lose these jobs, there is little option but to serve their former masters in another role, as prostitutes.

The women of the third world countries suffer the triple oppression of nationality, class and sex. But the imperialists cannot herd them together and hope that they will remain "happy children". All that imperialism is doing is adding to the numbers of those who want to bury it once and for all.

THE IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES

Those parts of microprocessor production which are done in the imperialist countries, again find their workforce from among the women of the oppressed nations and nationalities. For example, in Silicon Valley, California, production is carried out by young women who are Mexican, Chinese or Puerto rican, mostly with young children - their wages are either at or just above the legal minimum.

"Obviously these psychopathic killers who take pleasure in human pain cannot possibly understand that dignity and honour reside in our respect for the revolutionary struggle, that all physical pain caused by them can be transcended by our dignity and our determination to sustain principled struggle at all times."

AFGHANISTAN

Apologists for Soviet imperialism have absurdly claimed that they went into Afghanistan to liberate women. But the Association of Revolutionary Afghan Women gives the lie to this garbage. Founded in 1976 to fight for women's emancipation, the association changed its aims in 1978 to fight for national liberation, after the arrival of Soviet troops. Their representative Keshwar Kamal pointed out that,



Keshwar Kamal.

"the women of Afghanistan suffer more under Soviet occupation than they used to under the laws of Islam." In a recent interview with the Belgian paper "Concret" she said that their

organisation is working for unity among the resistance. They have relations with revolutionary groups working among the masses in Afghanistan, but none at all with the fanatical fundamentalist groups based in Pakistan which distort Islam and wrongly present the issue as a conflict between Islam and communism instead of, as it really is, a people's struggle against the occupying superpower. When the men took to the mountains to resist the invader, she said, the women were left to take charge of social and economic activity. The brunt of Soviet attacks have particularly fallen upon them, and many have been raped and killed in cold blood. The old structure of society has effectively been dismembered by the war, and the experience has greatly raised women's consciousness.

BLACK WOMEN'S STRUGGLES

United they stand

by a Class Struggle Correspondent

Last year will be remembered by many of us for a long time to come. After 5 years of hammering away at the Home Office, Anwar Ditta was finally re-united with her children. Waiting with her at Manchester airport were two other women who were also fighting the Home Office, Jaswinder Kaur and Nasira Begum. While they rejoiced in Anwar's success and were determined to win as well, it still came as quite a surprise, when after a whirlwind campaign Jaswinder and her son, Manjit, transformed an apparently hopeless legal case into a resounding victory. When this was quickly followed by Nasira Begum's success it became apparent that something special was happening.

These women, joined by Cynthia Gordon, Nasreen Akhtar and later Shirley Graham, were showing such determination that the Home Office was giving in all down the line.

What was causing this? The Home Office was not becoming more humane, but these black women were forcing them on to the defensive. And they weren't particularly unusual women either. Mostly they shunned personal publicity, recognising that their struggle was far wider than their own particular case. They recognised the need to stick together for mutual support and the absolute necessity of fighting a public campaign.

The support and help they got was invaluable. As Nasira said: "I am amazed how hard they worked, ... I can never tell them how much it meant."

Now, since she has won she has been just as strong in her support of other people who are fighting. In particular she is active in support of the Khan family which is fighting deportation at the moment. Similarly, Jaswinder is helping with the Chun Hee campaign in Leeds and Anwar Ditta, besides doing a lot of public speaking, was instrumental in setting up the Sultan Mahmud campaign in Oldham.

No doubt the others will stay in the fight as well. What else can they do when they have been through such an experience?

That experience has changed them irrevocably. They have gained in confidence to the point where Nasira could cross-question Timothy Raison, a government minister, in public, and win.

It has also educated them in an understanding of the state in a way that you can't get from books. As Nasira says: "they do justice when they want, where they want", and the knowledge that her naturalisation application has been held up fuels this view.

Without exception these women are committed to supporting others who are fighting back. In the meantime they all have to cope with day to day discrimination, getting mugged like Nasira, losing jobs like Anwar's husband Shuja or having to bring up a family on the Social Security breadline or by sowing pillowcases at a penny a time for the NHS. But they are also determined that the racist and sexist laws, under which they have suffered, must be smashed. With their determination the future will be much brighter.

Defend the Khan Family!

"Class Struggle" Correspondent

Shaukat Kahn came to Britain as the "son" of a family friend in 1972. Two years later he went to Pakistan on holiday, and had no trouble re-entering Britain as a "returning resident". When the 1974 amnesty for "illegal" immigrants was announced he did not apply, thinking it to be automatic and anyhow he had had no problem returning from holiday. He has now lived and worked here for nearly 10 years. In 1979 Parveen Khan came here openly to marry him, they have since had two children. Now Shaukat and Parveen are both threatened with deportation. The two children have the "right" to stay.

They have been given a deadline, of February 25th to go. On February 13th a demonstration was held in Manchester to defend the family. Mr. Khan has had to leave his home and go underground. Mrs. Khan lives at home in Longsight dreading the day that Police and Immigration officers come to get her. When they do they will also be either deporting two British citizens (the children) or forcibly separating babies from their parents.

A number of struggles against deportation have been won, but only through mass campaigning. You can fight the racist immigration laws and help this family by contacting the support group, C/O

593 Stockport Rd., Manchester 13

Iran Deportations

The threat of large-scale deportations is hanging over the Iranian student community in Britain. Many of these students are strong opponents of the Khomeini regime (as they were of the Shah), and consequently the Iranian government is frequently refusing to pay their fees. As they are unable to pay the fees they cannot get extensions on their visas and so become liable to deportation as overstayers. Known opponents of the regime will almost certainly be executed if they are sent back, probably summarily at Teheran airport itself. Already, two students who were deported recently

have been executed. They were A Shadbakhty (Queen Mary's College, London) and H. Moghadam (Salford University). An Iranian student at Salford College of Technology has received a letter telling him that he must leave the country. The British state is knowingly and callously condemning Iranian students to death.

Recently the Italian, Swedish and French governments have refused to deport Iranian students facing similar circumstances. Iran Solidarity is organising a campaign to persuade the British government to do the same. They can be contacted at: Iran Solidarity, Box 8, Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester.

Cont'd from front page

order to harass and frustrate whenever possible their attempts to bully, frame and beat the local people, and wreck and raid their homes. In one of several attacks by youth on police in October, the youth actually captured a police radio and used it to jam all police transmissions for several hours throughout Liverpool 8. Through the first week of December there were nightly battles between youth and police in Falkner.

The fiercest struggles to date between the people and the police (community police of course!) in Liverpool 8 since the uprising, occurred during the first week of February, when the youth repeatedly ambushed police cars and police on foot patrols, and physically prevented them from raiding working class estates, meting out due punishment in the process.

The people of Liverpool 8 are engaged in a protracted battle with the forces of the state which goes on all the time, the people increasingly choosing their own time to attack or retreat.

HANDSWORTH

Handsworth in Birmingham, and Brick Lane in East London have been held up as models of community policing. Reality is somewhat different.

In Handsworth the latest technique in community policing is murder. 43 year old Shofique Meah was getting ready for work when police burst in and accused him of stealing £20. He was taken to Thornhill Road Police Station, and within one hour he was dead. The authorities say that he died from an epileptic fit. His doctor says that he never suffered from epilepsy and was perfectly fit at the time of his arrest. When Shofique's family saw his body, his forehead was bruised and swollen.

Similarly, community policing lies in tatters in Brick Lane after police beat up, insulted and arrested well-known local Asian youth leader, Shoaib Chowdury. Shoaib came to the assistance of some Bangladeshi women and children who were being set upon by racist thugs. The police threw Shoaib up against a wall, kicked him, beat him up and told him to, "shut his fucking mouth". Shortly after the incident 300 local people packed a meeting called by local Asian youth groups and the Bangladeshi Welfare Association. The meeting unanimously voted to break off all relations between the police and the local community, and two former members of the community liaison committee resigned there and then.

Liberal solutions simply do not work in conditions of imperialist crisis. Around the country, people are finding out from their own experience that if you scratch a community policeman you find a racist thug. And they are fighting back, all the time learning the lessons, both positive and negative, of previous struggles. A new wave of uprisings is inevitable, progressive, revolutionary and just!

BRITISH WORKING CLASS SUPPORTS



SOLIDARNOSC.

As the workers and people of Poland continue to resist the despotic martial law regime, they are receiving strong support from the British working class, in particular from its more militant sections.

Two Solidarnosc activists, Marek Garztecki and Piotr Kozlowski, senior steward at the Ursus tractor plant, undertook a highly successful tour of Scotland. In six days they spoke at seven public rallies - in Glasgow, Stirling, Falkirk, Bathgate, Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

They were given a warm welcome at a mass meeting of shop stewards at the British Leyland plant at Bathgate, which was held immediately after the decision had been taken to occupy the plant in defence of jobs. The convenor, Jimmy Swan described Piotr Kozlowski as, "someone who could give us great advice about how to run our occupation." Piotr wished the workers success and assured them of the support of Polish workers.

A march in Glasgow drew support from a number of political organisations, including the Scottish National Party. At a rally after the march, Marek Garztecki said that the experience of their tour was that it was ordinary working people who understood and supported Solidarnosc's struggle. He said the same went for the people he had met during the tour, from El Salvador, Chile, Iran and Turkey. A collection raised £500. £20 came from the workers of Lee Jeans, who last year occupied to save their jobs. Lee Jeans convenor, Ellen Monaghan said that, compared to the Polish workers,

"We had it easy, because of the type of support we got from the labour movement. That's what Solidarnosc needs now."

At the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, the Joint Shop Stewards Committee with representatives from COHSE, NUPE, AUEW and NALGO, has raised its voice in opposition to martial law.

MASSEY FERGUSON

On January 19, the 3000 shop floor workers at the Massey Ferguson tractor works in Coventry, which has substantial business dealings with Poland, decided (with only two votes against) to black all materials from Poland. This followed an appeal from Piotr Kozlowski, himself a tractor worker. Piotr said:

"It is inhuman to accept the products of a system of slave labour. The response must be immediate, that you do not accept these products and do not send components to Ursus ... In the west there are governments which want to destroy Trade Unions by legal means. In Poland this is being done by force by the armed military. We must stand united to defend Union Rights."

A shop steward at the Massey plant explained that the links between their plant and the Ursus tractor plant date back to the 1976 food price riots in Poland, when they sent a letter of support to the Ursus workers. Just one week before martial law a letter had arrived from Ursus asking the Coventry workers to send a delegation, and suggesting holiday exchanges between the children of Ursus and Coventry workers. He said:

"This is not the action of a right wing workforce lining up with Thatcher. It is a continuation of the tradition which in 1975 led to a massive collection at the factory for jailed Spanish Massey workers."

The Massey Ferguson workers are currently fighting the threat of a third big redundancy in three years. Their example of taking industrial action to support the Polish workers (sort that one out Thatcher, Tebbit and co.!) is a great example of internationalism.

MANCHESTER

Piotr also received a warm welcome from Massey Ferguson workers in Manchester, who decided to emulate the example of Coventry. Whilst in Manchester, he also spoke with shop stewards from Chloride, Shell Chemicals, Mather and Platt, Kellogs, Laurence Scott and British Leyland. A 600 strong march had contingents from a number of local factories, including Laurence Scott, whose picket had had a visit from Piotr. Speaking at the rally, Steve Longshaw, Deputy Convenor at Laurence Scott, told how pickets at the factory had been arrested that very morning and how workers at Laurence Scott had also to fight against the AUEW misleaders, just as Solidarnosc had to fight the bureaucrats in Poland. Piotr said:

"Solidarnosc does not support capitalism. We stand for a genuine socialism based on worker's democracy."

Piotr also visited International Harvesters in Bradford.

The South Wales Miners have also condemned martial law in Poland and are demanding the right to visit their fellow miners in Poland.

BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham Trades Council now has a clear position of solidarity with Solidarnosc, after a motion originally passed by members of the revisionist 'Communist' Party, which blamed both the Polish authorities and so-called 'Solidarity extremists', was overturned.

300 people took part in a Birmingham demonstration. Amongst those speaking at the rally was Les

Felton, a national executive member of the train drivers union, ASLEF, who described the ASLEF strike as a symbol of workers struggle in Britain.

The Lancashire Association of Trades Councils declared their support for Solidarnosc and linked it to their support for those peoples fighting the Western imperialist powers. This theme of international solidarity has run through the solidarity work. For example, Marek Garztecki described meeting a member of the Farabundo Marti Liberation Front of El Salvador:

"He immediately greeted us by saying that we were fighting for the same things."

Ewa Sadowska

Ewa Sadowska is an eighteen year old Polish student and a member of Solidarity. She came to Britain in July to visit her aunt and uncle. Since the events in Poland, she has applied to the Home Office to be allowed to remain in Britain, and has been accepted as a student at West Bromwich College of Technology. In spite of the Thatcher government paying lip service to the cause of Polish freedom, her application has been rejected. An appeal is due to be heard on February 26th. The Polish community and others are organising to try and make sure that Ewa is allowed to stay.



We need to continue to build on the internationalist support for Solidarnosc. The workers and people of Poland need all the help they can get!

-Get your Trade Union Branch or Shop Stewards Committee to condemn martial law.

-Get your union branch to adopt an interned or imprisoned Solidarnosc worker.

-Black all work involving Poland until martial law is ended and trade union rights are restored.

-Campaign for the unions to break all links with those State 'Trade Unions' in Eastern Europe who support martial law.

-Get a Solidarnosc speaker to your branch. They're contactable at: Solidarity Trade Union Working Group in the U.K., 64 Philbeach Gardens, London, SW5 9EE. Telephone 01-373-3492

-Support the work of the Polish Solidarity Campaign: 89 Edinburgh Rd., London, E13

SOLIDARITY WITH SOLIDARNOSC!

INTERNATIONAL

NOTES



ERITREA: As we go to press, the Soviet-backed Ethiopian fascist regime is building up for a massive offensive against the people of Eritrea. Because of Eritrea's important strategic position, US imperialism - then the dominant power in Ethiopia - had this territory illegally incorporated into Ethiopia in 1952, in defiance of the principle of self-determination. Today the Soviet Union has stepped into US imperialism's shoes. According to the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), four Soviet generals have been sent to mastermind the offensive. Still more sinister, 200 Soviet experts in Chemical and biological warfare have also arrived, along with stocks of two deadly nerve gases, which they have already employed in Afghanistan. All this clearly shows that what the Russians are planning is nothing less than genocide. They want to grab the strategically important areas in preparation for war, and are ready to exterminate whole peoples in order to achieve this. Latest reports from the EPLF indicate that poison gas has already been used in Tirukruk, causing the local people to flee across the border into Sudan.

Meanwhile, 70 Soviet and Cuban military experts, and 60 Ethiopian soldiers were killed when an Ethiopian plane was shot down by rebels in the Tigray province, which borders Eritrea.

IRAN: The military commander of the People's Mojahedin organisation, inside Iran, Moussa Khiabani and a number of other leading Mojaheds, including Ashraf Rabai'i (wife of Mojahedin leader Massoud Rajavi), died martyrs' deaths on February 8, in struggle against the bloodthirsty Khomeini regime. The loss of these outstanding leaders is certainly a heavy blow to the Iranian revolution. However, as Massoud Rajavi has pointed out, the Mojahedin have suffered many such blows. For example, in 1972 the Shah executed nine of the ten members of the Mojahedin Central Committee. But this did not prevent the Mojahedin from continuing with the revolution.

"Today, of course, Khomeini is in great joy but this will not last long for ... the resistance of the Iranian people and the popular and just struggle of the People's Mojahedin will stay alive and continue firmly until Khomeini's downfall. The dawn is imminent in Iran ..."

The Revolutionary Communist League sent a message of condolence to Mojahed Brother Massoud Rajavi.

SOUTH AFRICA: A South African trade unionist, Neil Aggett, General Secretary of the Transvaal Section of the African Food and Canning Workers' Union, was murdered in prison by the South African fascist authorities on February 4. His killing has led to a storm of protest. As a part of national mourning, thousands of black workers across the country went on a 30-minute strike on February 11. Work at the three big ports of Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London came to a standstill. Thousands of people walked the ten mile funeral route, in one of the largest funerals ever seen in Johannesburg. The mourners carried

placards and flowers and sang freedom songs. In a brave act of defiance, thousands marched under banners and flags of the banned ANC liberation movement, the first time that they have been publicly displayed in Johannesburg for over 20 years. Public display of ANC insignia can be punished by imprisonment.

The linking of industrial struggles to the broader struggle for national liberation by the black working class is testimony to the rising tide of the struggle. It is therefore not surprising to see the agents of imperialism within the working class movement in Britain rushing to the defence of the apartheid regime. Steelworkers' misleader, Bill Sirs, who has sold thousands of steelworkers' jobs down the river in Britain has recently said:

"Before I went to South Africa, I was under the impression that industry was totally segregated, that all conditions were bad, and soon we shall witness in that country a holocaust of frightening dimensions. My views have been modified ... It is easy to whip up enthusiasm for revolution, but I don't think we should do that."

Sirs knows well enough that the privileges enjoyed by himself and the other trade union misleaders are dependent on the exploitation of the working class at home and on the total immiseration of the masses in the oppressed countries. We have to wage a determined struggle to drive these parasites out of the workers' movement and build real fighting class unions.

MONGOLIA: President of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, Bazaryn Shirendeb was recently dismissed from his post by the Presidium of the Great People's Hural. He was given a serious warning by the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party.

A resolution of the Party Central Committee on Bazaryn Shirendeb's "serious mistake" published by the "Unen" organ of the Party and the government, said, Bazaryn Shirendeb, "only paid lip service to learning from the rich experience of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, but in research work, he ignored this significantly important point."

The resolution added that "Soviet scholars" had "repeatedly offered many valuable suggestions" on the development of Mongolian science and research affairs". However, "those very important proposals and suggestions have not been given due attention" by the leading member of the Academy, and were ignored by Institutes of the Academy.

According to the resolution, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party had accused Shirendeb of "rudely attacking specialists of fraternal countries" and of "violating the Party's line of foreign policy".

Bazaryn Shirendeb, 70, a doctor of history, had been a member of the Central Committee of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party since 1947 and served as Secretary and member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee. He had held the posts of President of the Mongolian State University, Minister of Education and Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and was President of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences for 22 years. (Reprinted from China's Xinhua News Agency)

DENMARK: Women's groups in Denmark have vigorously protested against the decision of a Copenhagen court to drop charges of attempted rape and negligent homicide against a British soldier, a lance-corporal with the Royal Horse Artillery, who last Autumn took part in a NATO exercise in Denmark. Late one night he gave a lift in his truck to a nineteen year-old Danish woman, who was later found dead on the roadside, after having suffered horrific head injuries. In court, the Brit admitted 'making advances' to the woman before she either jumped, fell or was pushed from the moving vehicle.

GUATEMALA: The four revolutionary organisations fighting to overthrow the repressive pro-imperialist regime in this Central American state have joined forces to form the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union. They will now co-ordinate their military operations. A spokesman for the new organisation said that their aim was to establish a "patriotic, popular and democratic" government in Guatemala. The guerillas recently seized radio stations to broadcast their message to the people. (Information from Xinhua)

CHINA: In a speech to mark the occasion of the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year), Comrade Li Xiannian, a Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, announced that the 12th National Congress of the Party will be held this year.

EL SALVADOR: There is mounting evidence of United States military involvement in the El Salvador war. Television screens the world over have now shown US "military advisers" on patrol with M-16 rifles. But the people's armed struggle continues to develop. On 27 January guerillas of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front staged a daring raid on the San Salvador military airport destroying a number of aircraft. As part of the international campaign of support for the struggle in El Salvador, three students at Essex University recently staged a week-long hunger strike. 21 year old Adriana del Paso from Mexico said:

"We hope to publicise the war in El Salvador, particularly the United States' military backing for the vicious junta."

Bloody Sunday Remembered

Class Struggle Correspondent

3,000 people took part in a march and rally in Birmingham on Sunday January 31 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Bloody Sunday, the day when fourteen Irish people peacefully demonstrating in Derry were massacred in cold blood by the Parachute Regiment.

The march which was switched to Birmingham at the last moment, was originally to have taken place in Coventry, but the police imposed a ban on the grounds that the fascist organisations were mobilising against it. Other attempts were made to sabotage the march. For example, a coach from Coventry was stopped by police just outside Birmingham, escorted back to Coventry and, after more delay, sent back to Birmingham by another route. Despite all this, 3,000 members of the Irish community, workers, national minority people and youth assembled at Sparkhill Park and marched to a rally in Digbeth.

A substantial part of the march was through working class Asian and Irish areas. Hundreds of local people came out of their homes to watch the march and eagerly accepted leaflets. It was not uncommon to see whole Asian families (three generations) standing watching the march. Many Irish people shouted their support and some Asian youth joined the demonstration.

The march was led by flag bearers and then a Republican band from Glasgow. Then came Sinn Fein banners from around the country, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, Women and Ireland, the Armagh Co-ordinating Committee and numerous branches of the Troops Out Movement. Also supporting the march was a militant contingent of the Revolutionary Communist League, some other solidarity groups, various Iranian revolutionary groups, Welsh Socialist Republican Clubs, the Revolutionary Gay Caucus, a few trade union branches, some small contingents of the British left, and the Labour Committee on Ireland (L.C.I.).

RALLY

At the rally, after the march, the L.C.I. speaker boasted of his organisations' work and urged those present to join the Labour Party. Before he could continue he was drowned out by boos and jeers and calls from the crowd for people to join Sinn Fein. He was forced to discontinue his speech!

The speaker from the Armagh Co-ordinating Committee stressed how the Prevention of Terrorism Act was used to intimidate and harass the Irish community in Britain. She noted how a chief inspector of the, "Anti-Terrorist Squad" had been quoted in the press as warning British people to beware of all their Irish neighbours who had "disappeared" over Christmas, and who had recently returned. "Can Irish people not even go home for Christmas without being open to suspicion?", she asked.

A letter to the rally from Irish



prisoners in jails in Britain was read out. They said:

"From the graves of our patriot dead we will go forward and build our socialist republic by the most reliable weapon in Irish history and that is armed resistance."

A cousin of murdered hunger striker, Kevin Lynch made a short speech. She said that the only weapon the prisoners had was their lives and that they:

"Gave them selflessly for all Irish people, so that one day Ireland will be free from Britain."

The final speaker was from Sinn Fein. He said:

"If freedom is to come to Ireland, as no doubt it will, it can only come as it came to Zimbabwe, through the barrel of a gun."

He said that the Irish people's war was a just war and that it would go on until all vestiges of British imperialism had been removed from Ireland and a 32-county Democratic Socialist Republic had been established. He said that nothing good could come for Ireland from either the Labour, Tory or Liberal Parties but only from M-60s and Armalites.

After a one minute silence in memory not just of the 14 murdered at Derry, but also for the ten dead hunger strikers and all the Irish martyrs, the rally was closed by the John Ogilvy Band from Wishaw, Scotland playing the national anthem, "The Soldier's Song".

MARCH IN DERRY

On the same day, 10,000 marched in Derry. They followed the same route as the fateful march of ten years ago. Relatives of the fourteen dead were at the head of the march and behind them came fourteen young boys carrying black flags. Most of the boys appeared to be under ten years old, showing once again how British imperialism can never subdue the
LONG 'D OVER

Republicans attacked

On 5th and 6th February, the Army and RUC mounted joint raids in nationalist areas. 43 people were arrested and taken away to the notorious Castlereagh Barracks. Among them were 10 members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party from the Markets area of Belfast, who have been charged with membership of the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA)

These arrests are the latest of several recent attacks on the Republican movement. In December and January there were repeated raids on the Sinn Fein HQ in Belfast (see the last issue of "Class Struggle"). On January 29th Jim

Gibney, the Sinn Fein national organiser, was charged with the murder of two men in 1975. However, one man is already serving a life sentence for this same case and the charge has been described by republicans as one of the biggest frame-ups they have ever known.

WHY THE ARRESTS?

The reasons for these arrests are clear. The Republican movement now intends to stand in forthcoming council elections and so build on the massive support they built up during the hunger strike. Not only will their success be embarrassing for the government, but it could also seriously undermine the already declining, pro-imperialist SDLP. Thus, the recent raids and arrests have been directed at well-known Sinn Fein and IRSP members. Under

the Emergency Powers Act, "suspects" can be held for 7 days. If charged they can be held for up to 2 years awaiting trial. Thus, even if those charged are finally acquitted, arrest and remand can be used as a form of internment.

The Army claim that their information is coming from within the Republican movement. However, if past form is anything to go by this "information" will fail to materialise and the case will be dropped.

After years of goading the Republican movement to "test its popularity" at the polls, the British state is terrified of them doing just that. It wishes to avoid a repeat of the election of Bobby Sands and Owen Carron last year, which exposed its lie that the Republican movement does not have popular support.

"Democracy" in the 6 counties has always meant gerrymandered constituency borders, guaranteed loyalist majorities, intimidation and murder. British imperialism has tried to subdue the Irish people for 800 years and these current measures show that the hold of imperialism over Ireland is weakening. As Richard McAuley, Chairman of Belfast Sinn Fein points out:

"They may well harass our party and may indeed succeed in imprisoning some of us but they will not stem the rising tide of Irish Republicanism and Nationalism."

IRELAND WHY AN ELECTION?

On February 18, the people of the Irish Free State (Republic of Ireland) went to the polls to elect a new government for the second time in seven months. The Fine Gael-Labour government fell after its viciously anti-working class budget (the second since it came to office) was defeated in the Dail (Parliament). If passed, the budget would have increased VAT to 30%, and imposed it even on children's clothes, slashed food subsidies and taxed welfare benefits. The prospect of this was too much even for the handful of renegade, anti-nationalist "socialists" who sit in the Dail, such as sticky Joe Sherlock, who had supported all the governments' anti-working class measures to date. They withdrew their support, and the government fell.

The two elections in one year, and the viciously anti-working class measures that all the bourgeois parties in Ireland agree are necessary, shows the particularly acute state of the imperialist crisis in Ireland.

All the three main parties of the Irish big capitalists - Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and Labour - are pro-imperialist and anti-working class. The position of all of them rests on imperialist domination and oppression of Ireland, and all of them accept that the working class must be made to pay the bill.

The crisis is particularly acute in Ireland because it is still fundamentally not an independent country. Ireland is still dominated by imperialism. The partition settlement that was imposed by British imperialism on the Irish people, 60 years ago, was Britain's first neo-colonial coup, and an advanced refinement of the imperialist tactic of divide and rule.

The partition of Ireland destroyed any prospect of unity between the working class of the two religious communities in Ireland. As James Connolly had predicted it ushered in a 'carnival of reaction'. By dividing North from South, the new "independent" state was effectively deprived of Ireland's main industrial base which Britain continued to rule directly. This left the South as a predominantly agricultural society facing a tremendous struggle to develop any type of integrated and balanced national economy. In other words, through

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risen people of Ireland who come forward generation after generation to fight imperialism. A contingent from Clydeside Troops Out Movement took part in the march.

At the end of the march, British troops and RUC attempted to enter the Bogside to carry on their murderous work. They were met by 200 youths, who in two hours of fighting used petrol bombs, acid bombs and rocks to defend their area. A landrover went up in flames. On that day of mourning, British imperialism was shown yet again that it can never crush the Irish revolution.

Other protests took place around the world, including in Canada, New Zealand and the United States.

partition, British imperialism continued to dominate Ireland: the North by direct colonial means, and the South by neo-colonialism. Thus, a 1980 study showed that the Free State remained a net exporter of sides of beef and of cheese, but a net importer of meat products and dairy products.

The Irish capitalist class has sought to develop the national economy by flinging the door wide open to investment by the imperialist powers. The Ireland Development Authority (IDA) entices investment by offering unprecedented concessions on taxation, etc, which are based on the super exploitation of the Irish working class. Therefore, under the aegis of British neo-colonialism, the imperialists of the USA, Japan and the Common Market countries have been able to step up their exploitation of the Irish people.

However, whilst the further sell-out of Irish sovereignty by the IDA has brought fabulous profits to the imperialists it has not brought prosperity to the people. Indeed, Ireland has a foreign debt of Ir/£4 billion, about 1/2 of the Gross National Product, and higher per head even than revisionist Poland. An enormous tax burden is foisted on the people and 30% of tax revenue is devoted purely to paying the interest on foreign and domestic debts, let alone repaying the debts themselves.

But, as in Poland, this rapid industrialisation has brought into being the grave-diggers of the bourgeoisie. Recent years have seen a big growth in the militancy and class consciousness of the Irish proletariat as shown, for example, in recent strikes by bus workers, Dublin Corporation general workers, at the Tara mineworks, and the work-in at the Clondalkin Paper Mill.

In addition, the courageous hunger strike last year, put the national question firmly on the centre of the political stage throughout Ireland and in various places, workers took industrial action to mourn for the murdered hunger strikers. The working class youth of Dublin, heavily afflicted by unemployment, took to the streets and fought against the police and other symbols of rule by the rich, last summer, as their counterparts did in the North, and in British cities.

SINN FEIN

In this situation it is very important that Sinn Fein used the elections to stand seven candidates in order to highlight the national struggle, expose the pro-imperialist parties, and provide the people with a real alternative. Sinn Fein's election campaign highlighted the centrality of the national question, but also dealt with such vital questions as unemployment and taxation, and showed the vital link between the two. Their election manifesto said:

"We believe first and foremost in British withdrawal and the establishment of a democratic socialist republic. The failure of the partitionist system of government is

now evident to all. British rule has brought death, agony and suffering to our people in the occupied part of our country. More than 300,000 people are unemployed in the thirty-two counties and the disintegrating economy of the South has killed all the hopes and ambitions of our youth."

"Ireland unfree is an Ireland at war, jobless and without hope for the future. We believe in the building of factories, not jails; in giving work to our youth, not creating lucrative positions for politicians and their friends; we believe in the resources of the Irish people being used for the advancement of the Irish people and not for maintaining Britain's presence in Ireland."

Sinn Fein's electoral intervention also exposed how bourgeois democracy is a farce and a fraud for the poor and the oppressed. By standing seven candidates they were entitled to broadcasting time, but Section 31 of the 1976 Broadcasting Act prevents Sinn Fein spokesmen from being quoted or interviewed on radio or television!

A number of other anti-imperialist candidates also stood including six from the Irish Republican Socialist Party, and Bernadette McAliskey, for People's Democracy.

As "Class Struggle" goes to press, the election results are not known, but what is known is that no bourgeois election will solve the crisis of imperialism in Ireland. The Irish people's struggle for national independence and reunification will continue, with the main front being the armed struggle in the North, but with many other separate but complementary fronts, as well.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Friday March 5th.
Women in struggle. Celebration of International Women's Day, organised by Birmingham Branch of RCLB. Speakers include: Anwar Ditta, Troops Out Movement and RCL representatives. Banner Theatre present: "Women at work". 7:30 pm, 'The Grapes', Mill st., City Centre. £1 - Unwaged 50p.

Friday March 5 to Monday 8th.
International Women's Day - Delegation to Armagh. Picket of Armagh Jail. Details Armagh Co-ordinating Committee, c/o 374 Gray's Inn rd. London WC1A.

Sunday March 7th.
International Women's Day. Celebrate victory of Jasvinder Kaur and build support for Pow Shien Leong. 3:30 pm, Royal Park School, Leeds 6.

Saturday March 13th.
Victory to the Irish Republican Movement! No more Welsh troops for Ulster! March led by Welsh Martyrs Fife and Drum Band. Rally with speakers from Sinn Fein, IRSP, Scottish Socialist Republicans & WSRM. Organised by Welsh Socialist Republican Movement. Assembled 1 pm, Castle Car Park, Caernarfon.

Saturday March 20th.
Victory to the Irish People! Troops Out Now! Demonstration called by North London Irish Solidarity Committee. Assembled 2 pm, Archway tube.

Sunday March 28th.
El Salvador. Demonstrate against US intervention. Assembled 12:30 pm, Speakers Corner. Rally 2:30 Trafalgar Square, London.

Saturday May 1st.
Internationalist Mayday Rally to support the Irish people and anti-imperialist struggles around the world. Social in evening. Organised by RCLB. Details to be announced.