

CLASS STRUGGLE



Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

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25P

1980's.....DECADE OF THE AZANIAN REVOLUTION.....

WAVES OF STRIKES & PROTEST...

AZANIA/SOUTH AFRICA

16,000 WORKERS SACKED

On 23rd April, South African security forces shot dead at least six striking railway workers at Doornfontein Station in central Johannesburg and nearby Germiston. The railway management, South African Transport Services (SATS) had previously sacked 16,000 workers still on strike following an ultimatum to return to work.

In the evening after the shootings, security forces surrounded COSATU house where members of the South African Railway and Harbours Union (SARWHU) were meeting. They gave them no warning or time to leave, arrested 400 people and beat them up in police vans.

These events broke through the media silence on the struggle in Azania. The British press has given more coverage to the whites-only election and the splits among the South African ruling class about how best to maintain the racist system than to the wave of working class struggles over the past month.

While some sections want to move faster along the road of "reform" in order to stabilise the situation in South Africa, Botha's regime also faces critics from the right, including the majority of white miners who fear the loss of their privileges.

Azania people, however, have few illusions about Botha's "reforms". They know that any "reforms" to apartheid will be only cosmetic and have continued to build to genuine, mass, revolutionary movement. The last month has seen a wave of strikes and protests:



* On Monday, April 13th, political and church leaders announced that they would defy new restrictions on freedom of speech, announced the previous weekend. The new regulations prohibit speech or actions in support of detainees.

* On Tuesday, April 14th, the Food and Allied Workers Union held a one-day strike in protest at the detention of their leaders in defiance of the ban.

* The railway workers' strike has now lasted over six weeks. Estimates of the numbers on strike vary from 18,000 to 22,000. Trains still running have been firebombed and commuter travel has been chaotic.

On 20th April, an ultimatum was given to strikers by management, promising deployment of the army in addition to police: "Management hereby gives notice that arrangements are being made to appoint whites on a permanent basis at City Deep (big railway depot: Ed). These employees will not be transferred once the strike has been called off."

* The same tactic of using white scabs has been used against another over two week old strike of postal workers in the Johannesburg/Soweto area.

The determination of the Azanian working class in the face of ruthless repression is one aspect of the revolutionary struggles of the Azanian people. The struggle in the townships against evictions, against collaboration with the racist regime continues.

The struggle for national liberation is drawing in increasingly wider sections of the Azanian people and will take many different forms, including the armed struggle. They will go on fighting till they have won back what was stolen from them: their land and their freedom.

THE PHILIPPINES STRUGGLE



Jose Maria Sison talks to CLASS STRUGGLE.....P.6.

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST?..



THE LABOUR PARTY & THE LOCAL ELECTIONS.....P.3..

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WHAT A CHOICE!



LOCAL ELECTIONS

On May 7th, local elections will take place up and down the country. The bulk of the organisations and individuals who claim to stand for socialism are singing their normal chorus "Vote Labour". The important issue is whether local councils can actually make any real change.

SOCIALIST COUNCILS?

"Socialism in Action" - that is the slogan of Tameside council. It appears in all job adverts and public notices of the council - as do similar slogans from other Labour councils. If life in Tameside, or in other similar areas, is a life of "socialism", it is difficult to see what the difference between socialism and capitalism is! Because Labour councils tend to be in areas of poverty and unemployment, are we to take it that in the eyes of the Labour party these are features of socialism?

We understand that socialism means the common ownership of industry, where working people are actively involved in the running of industry and society. Yet, in Tameside, industry remains privately owned.

Profits are screwed out of the labour of the working class; there is poverty and unemployment. Schools have been closed. Nursery provision is limited. The list goes on. So what is the purpose of the slogan? What we say in Tameside and other similar councils is "Capitalism in Action".

The pretence that local councils can form islands of socialism in a sea of capitalism is not only ridiculous. It represents a refusal to campaign for real socialism, a refusal to expose the evils of imperialism.

CENTRAL AND LOCAL STATE

Many Labour councils emphasise that they are forced to do what they do by laws passed by the Tory government. It is undoubtedly true that the Tories have cut back the limited local bourgeois democracy that did exist. Those councils which raise rates beyond the government's target figures are penalised through cuts in the rate support grant. This has forced many councils to cut services or to borrow extensively from banks - money which must, of course, be repaid. Labour councils, like Tameside, have forced through productivity deals with its own workforce. As direct works departments are forced to compete for council work, there is now the excuse for worsening the conditions of council workers. Some have used MSC labour to replace their own direct works. But when they cry that they are forced to do this by the Tories, is this not an admission that they are doing the Tories' work for them?

And what alternative do they propose? Elect a Labour government they say - but they don't promise socialism, merely capitalism with a caring face. They will not end the system which creates exploitation, oppression, poverty and unemployment. At best, their promises amount to caring more for the most hard hit victims of the system. And they will pay for this care, not by expropriating the capitalists, but by cutting the living standards of the working class as a whole. They want freedom - but only freedom to raise rates (alongside raising taxes and restraining wages).

COOPTION

Meanwhile, what has happened to the independent groups that used to campaign against injustice? Labour councils have been in the forefront of the campaign to incorporate them into the system. Again in Tameside, as an example, Housing Aid now has spanking new offices in the council buildings and work in harmony with the Housing

Department. Under the mantle of a "caring council" such organisations are drawn into partnership, becoming dependent on council financing, and the independent voices are stilled - one by one.

RACISM

The same pattern can be seen in the struggle against racism. Previously independent activists can be found in large numbers in offices paid for by councils, living off council salaries. Dare they campaign publicly and actively against their employers? Or has their struggle been confined to committee rooms? And do the Labour councils really listen to the voice of the national minority communities?

Take the well-known Liverpool council, who, despite fierce opposition from local national minority communities appointed a political hack from outside the area as Race Relations officer.

Even those few councils which have waged anti-racist campaigns, in the face of fierce opposition (branded as 'looney lefts' by their own party as well as by the Tories), have done so on their own terms, not by aiding the development of independent programmes. They have not made one move to aid the financial and political independence of national minority communities. Everything has been geared to the assimilation of national minorities into the imperialist system. More 'equally' yes - but 'equally' part of the system.

So, when election day comes, ask yourselves these questions:

Do you vote for more cuts or for rate rises?

Do you vote for selling council houses or for rent increases?

Do you vote for privatising services or for cutting the living standards of council workers?

Do you vote for open racism or do you vote for institutionalised racism?

Do you vote?

GOOD LORD

KNIGHTED FOR SERVICES RENDERED

James Callaghan is to become one of a small and exclusive band of knights, it was announced at the end of April. There is a rumour going around Labour 'left' circles that this is a pay-off - a pay-off for his recent rubbishing of Labour defence policy. We hope this picture gallery will help to put their minds at rest.



Above we see Callaghan and Len Murray holding hands lustily singing at conference together. While their dulcet tones unite, so to do their actions. Together they presided over the social contract, the centre piece of the last Labour government's programme. Callaghan was Prime Minister and Murray, the TUC General Secretary. (He's the one on the left - if you'll excuse the expression.) Wages were cut. The NHS and other services were cut. Unemployment was one of the few things that wasn't! Len Murray got his place in the House of Lords.

Of course, such Labour programmes are not carried out by individual Labour politicians and TUC leaders. They need the support of their peers. Amongst the TUC leaders who have helped such Labour programmes, we find Frank Chapple (ex-leader of the electricians), Hugh Scanlon (once engineers' union leader) and Joe Gormley (who preceded Arthur Scargill as leader of the National Union of Mineworkers). All gratefully received their honours as they entered the House of Lords.

Now we wouldn't want our readers to get the wrong end of the stick. There is no new trend of leaders of the 'labour movement' beavering away with one eye on a seat in the House of Lords. It's a fine old tradition.

Below we feature the previous duo. Harold Wilson became a leader of the Labour party with a reputation of being on the 'left' of the party. He cut wages with his incomes policy etc. etc. (see Callaghan above for the full list). Alongside him is a portrait of Murray's predecessor, Vic Feather. What was their reward? You guessed it - the Lords (not the cricket ground).



So the Labour 'Left' can rest at ease. Their comrade Callaghan has not been rewarded for supporting Tory policies. Like the others above, he is merely receiving the benefits of promoting Labour policies. So next time you see Neil Kinnock and Norman Willis, hands clasped, and voices raised to the tune of the Red Flag, see if they've got their fingers crossed.

Poverty Makes You Sick ...

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Whether you live or die, or how ill you get, is not an inevitable result of nature. Throughout the world, the patterns of sickness and health are a result of the system you live under, and whether you are at the top or bottom of that system. That's why the biggest problems of ill health are to be found in the parts of the Third World most oppressed and exploited by imperialism.

Within the imperialist countries it is those who get the least of the system, that have the worst health problems. If you are black, a woman, old or poor, you are more likely to get ill or die early.

ILL HEALTH IN BRITAIN

Successive governments failed to change class inequality in health. In 1980, the DHSS tried to suppress its own 'Black Report', which clearly showed that thirty years of the NHS had failed to change those inequalities.

Seven years on, another report, 'The Health Divide', published at the end of March, showed that nothing has changed. Not that that should surprise anyone.

The new report highlights the relationship between poverty and ill health:

"All the major killer diseases now affect the poor more than the rich"...(Only one, skin cancer, bucks the trend; it is mainly a disease of those rich enough to sun themselves on hot foreign beaches.)

The poor are also more likely to be ill. They suffer more arthritis, piles and deafness. They are less likely to survive cancer.

The children of poor families have more bad teeth and bad lungs: "Children living in deprived districts of Glasgow were nine times more likely to be admitted to hospital than those from non-deprived districts."

The gap between the families of white-collar workers and the rest has widened since 1971. "The health of working class women is particularly poor. Death rates amongst women from coronary heart disease and lung cancer actually rose in manual groups, while showing a substantial decline for non-manual women."

RICH AND POOR IN BRITAIN

More than sixteen million people - one third of the population - live in poverty or on its margins, the Child Poverty Action Group and the Low Pay Unit stated in a joint report published on 21st October, 1986.

The gap between rich and poor is growing. In 1979, the richest 40% of households accounted for 72% of original income. By 1985, that had risen to 76.5%. On the other hand, the poorest 40% accounted for 9.5% in 1979 but were worse off by 1985 as they only got 6.3%.

The top 1% own 83.7% of land and 81.2% of listed British shares. At the other end of the scale, the bottom 50% (some 21 million people) own just 7% of personal wealth.

This is the reality that leads to health inequality.

ARE THE POOR TO BLAME?

Imperialism is based on exploitation. It only works as long as the few can live off the wealth created by the many. That is the reality of "healthy competition". Large numbers of people have no choice but to live a week to week existence to just get by. Trapped in the worst housing and having the least access to society's services.

That is why Edwina Currie's pleas to the poor to help themselves are both insulting and wrong.

A view taken up by the 'Black Report' and 'The Health Divide': Black: "Smoking behaviour cannot be taken as a fundamental cause of ill-health. It is rather

an epiphenomenon, a secondary symptom of deeper underlying features of economic society."

'The Health Divide' mentions how women at home with young children smoke to "help them survive their stressful load" and says: "Such actions which would be labelled irresponsible by professionals, may be the only way in which mothers can stay sane."

The same report quoted a study on council estates in Gateshead in 1984, which found that: "Nearly a third of households reported defects in houses which they thought affected health ... especially in connection with respiratory conditions."

Other studies have shown that poverty is the cause of children not eating properly. To quote one such study: lack of money was frequently cited as the reason for lack of fruit and vegetables in the diet.

The government's 'Healthy Heart campaign' also ignores the reality of people's lives. The Coronary Prevention Group has criticised the campaign and points out that "healthy" eating could be more expensive and that there was no evidence that people on low incomes had been considered when the programme was conceived.

YOUNG VICTIMS OF THE CRISIS

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Misery, hopelessness, poverty and parental violence is ruining the lives of thousands of children who are victims of mass unemployment.

More than half a million British children are in families where the chief wage-earner has been unemployed for two years or more. 1,250,000 youngsters are living in a home where there is an unemployed parent. One in ten families have some direct experience of unemployment.

The combined effects of unemployment and low pay meant that by the end of 1986, as many as 30% of children in Britain are living below or around the official poverty line according to DHSS statistics. Since 1979, the number of such children has risen 64% to a staggering 3,880,000. Up to 400,000 of those live in households existing below the Supplementary Benefit level (££8.80 a week for a two child family, after rent).

The divorce rate for unemployed couples is twice that of couples in work.

Tension in families suffering the effects of unemployment is thought to be a major factor in the 60% increase in reported cases of child battering.

According to the Samaritan Organisation's 1986 Annual Report, suicide is now one of the most common causes of death amongst young people.

BAKHTAURA FACES

DEPORTATION AGAIN

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Baba Bakhtaura Singh, well-known Sikh folk-singer, again faces deportation despite his recent House of Lords victory. In a vicious and cynical determination, the Immigration Appeal Tribunal dismissed Baba Bakhtaura's appeal, which had been referred back to them by the House of Lords.

This proved that "British justice" has nothing to do with the high-minded principles and fine phrases trotted out by the Law Lords, and everything to do with the vindictive racism expressed by the adjudicators of the Tribunal.

Baba Bakhtaura came to England in 1979 as a member of a folk group. Their original leave was extended from 7 days to three months. Baba Bakhtaura remained after that - his parents, brothers and sisters all lived here - and in 1982 he was convicted of "overstaying" and jailed for a month.

INTERESTS OF SIKH COMMUNITY

Since then, he has been appealing against a deportation order, and in June 1986, the case reached the House of Lords. In an important judgement, the House of Lords ruled that the interests of the community from which he comes, must be taken into account in considering whether to deport him (see 'Class Struggle', July 1986).

The House of Lords could not make the final decision on deportation, but referred the case back to the Appeal Tribunal to decide, this time taking into account the community interest.

The House of Lords had quoted approvingly findings of the original adjudicator like: "The appellant is, I am satisfied, a major attraction at festivals and the like, capable of attracting audiences of several thousands. He gives his services free to charity when others of his standing might charge as much as £500. He is greatly respected for it." The result of the Tribunal seemed a forgone conclusion.

TWISTING THE RULES

This was not to reckon with the fascist worms used by the British state to implement the immigration laws, nor their ability to twist the rules in order to deport a black person.



There was one sentence in the 30-page House of Lords judgement which contained a loophole. It says, in effect, that "it may well be difficult" to take into account a person's contribution to his community during a period when he was not lawfully in the country. The adjudicators latched onto that one sentence. They distorted the words "it may be difficult" to mean "it is impossible" to consider the period of unlawful presence.

They then distorted the facts of the case. Baba Bakhtaura was here lawfully for many years, because once he appealed, his stay became lawful. The adjudicators refused to consider that period. They spoke instead of the period "authorised by the Secretary of State" - the three months to which his original leave was extended. They did not consider that period either. They considered the original seven days for which the folk group had been given leave! They said: "In our view, if this appeal were to succeed, it would make a mockery of the immigration regulations". In fact, they made a travesty and a farce of the whole appeal process.

Once again, the racist immigration system has spat on the rights of a black community. And Baba Bakhtaura, his wife, who is a British citizen, and his two little girls, aged two and four, are plunged back into the agony of the deportation threat and fear of a divided family.

The Baba Bakhtaura Defence Campaign is determined not to accept defeat, but to fight on by all means to ensure this deportation is stopped.

Police ignore Court Order

Heathrow Airport police locked up Mohammed Ashraf while his estranged wife took his children out of the country in defiance of a court order.

Mr Ashraf went to the airport because he suspected his wife was going to try and take the children abroad. He asked the police for help and showed them the court order.

The police refused to help him. But twenty minutes later, they arrested him at the departure

gate. They said he was from Barkingside and was wanted for battering his daughter. Mr Ashraf showed the police his passport, which proved he was not the person they wanted. But he was locked up for three hours until a witness came from Barkingside and told the police they had the wrong man.

In the meantime, Mr Ashraf's wife had flown out with the children. The police did not even offer an apology.

repression..



..and resistance

ANTI-FASCIST ANTI-RACIS

ISLINGTON

TOWER HAMLETS

Racists Evicted

A victory in the anti-racist struggle was won at Westminster County Court on March 25th, when an order for the eviction of an Islington family was granted, on the grounds of racist harassment.

Maurice Barnes, an influential Labour councillor, claimed the eviction order as "another successful case for Islington Council which shows we will not tolerate racial harassment by tenants on our estates - and neither will the courts."

This statement is far from being the truth, as any study of the racism of the courts and council housing policies demonstrates all too clearly. The evidence of too many other families subject to similar attacks, outlined in court, contradicts such a statement.

The successful outcome in the court depended primarily on the evidence of the Bengali families given in the two-day hearing; the South Islington Law Centre who acted in the interests of the Bangladeshi families in compiling the council's case and the work of Islington Anti-Fascist Action in setting up a support network on the estate for the families.

Islington Council, like many others, has a good paper anti-racist policy. But without the pressure of months of patient, low key work gathering evidence

while offering support to the families, the Labour council would not have brought the case against its tenants on the Highbury estate.

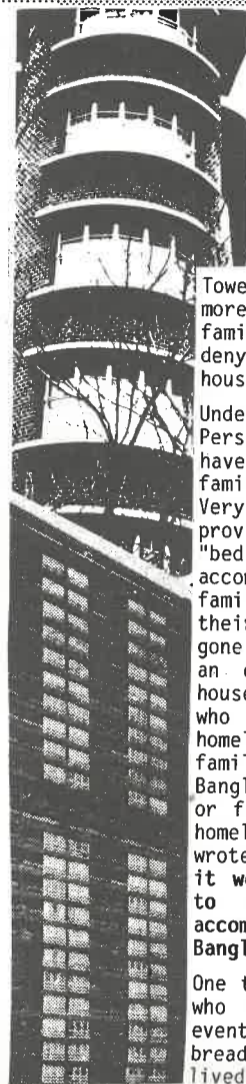
ANTI-FASCIST ACTION

The involvement of Islington Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) was not based on the premise that the state is a reliable ally of anti-racists, but more on the position that all methods of combatting racism and fascism need to be employed.

Islington AFA has always considered itself "an anti-racist, anti-fascist, group", observing that racism and fascism are interconnected, each feeding off the other; both needing to be challenged. This has involved Islington AFA, since its formation last year, in the activity of confronting overt fascists at Avenall Road (see 'Class Struggle', September 1986) supporting the Ozberber family campaign, involving a Turkish family evicted by Islington's Labour Council, as well as attending last November's AFA Remembrance Sunday march and the protests at the fascists' election meetings at Greenwich earlier this year.

The challenge to racism and fascism continues. Anyone wanting to contact Islington AFA can write to: c/o Red Rose Labour Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

Council Families



Tower Hamlets Council is more than seventy Bangladeshi families onto the street denying its obligation house them.

Under the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act, local authorities have a duty to house homeless families with young children. Very often, all the council provide is dingy, overcrowded and insanitary accommodation, but at least families are given a roof over their heads. Tower Hamlets gone further. Under the an exception to the duty house is in the case of families who are "intentionally homeless". The council families who have Bangladesh to join the homeless intentionally! wrote to families: "In our it would be reasonable for to continue to occupy accommodation you were Bangladesh."

One type of case is of families who have waited in Bangladesh eventually coming to join breadwinner. Mashak Mia lived in Tower Hamlets

ANTI-FASCIST ACTION: CONFERENCE

A lively conference organised by Anti-Fascist Action (AFA) at the University of Bradford on March 28th, was attended by 169 delegates from 54 organisations around the country. A new constitution was agreed as well as the election of a national committee.

A motion to change the name of the organisation to Anti-Racist Anti-Fascist Action was defeated. But it was agreed that "anti-racist, anti-fascist" should be included as the broad aims of the organisation.

An amendment on the composition of the national committee was agreed which, in addition to 15 elected members, proposed that there would be delegates from local groups elected annually.

Although most of the conference time was taken up with amendments to the constitution, which meant the exclusion of workshops from the agenda, the discussion was serious and constructive and great efforts were made by the delegates to agree to compromise in an effort to establish a national organisation, which in no small measure was due to the effective control of the chairman.

The conference agreed to give maximum support to the Viraj Mendis campaign and recognised that Viraj Mendis is fighting against racism and fascism.

Anti-Public Order Bill Demonstration - 4th April (Photo)



STREETS BELONG TO US

About 1,000, excessively-policed protestors marched through central London on April 4th. The event proved to be a successful defiance of the new Public Order Act. Since April 1st, this law requires that before any march, its organisers must give the police six days' notice and the police must agree the proposed route. The march organisers, the Coalition Against the Public Order Act, had not notified the police of the march, nor of its route. This "illegal" demonstration was called under the slogan of "The Streets Belong to Us" in order to defy the serious curbs on the right to protest.

Starting from London University,

all along the march was flanked by police. Unable to prevent the march, the police created a provocative and intimidating atmosphere by constantly pushing and man-handling the protestors and photographers covering the march. One potential flash-point, the non-stop picket of the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square, passed relatively peacefully. But police snatch squads went into action, seemingly indiscriminately dragging demonstrators from the crowd, when moves towards Whitehall and Park Lane turned into scuffles. Around 30 people were arrested.

Further "illegal" protests and pickets are planned. The fightback continues.

Police travel accords

But the affair is a public concern

"A particular public concern is the truth."

A solicitor who were the use of force

'SUGAR - COATING THE KILLING BLADE'

Class Struggle Interview with Jose Maria Sison

Jose Maria Sison gave this interview to 'Class Struggle' during his recent visit to Britain, part of his European tour.

CS: Can you please say something about the situation in the Philippines since the fall of Marcos and the different forces at work there, at present?

Sison: The US-Aquino clique is now in the process of rapid consolidation. Since November 10th, 1986, the United States has allowed the Aquino faction in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to come out on top of the two other factions, which are those of Enrile and Marcos. The new regime has just gotten through its big comprador-landlord constitution in a plebiscite, and the other voting exercises for Congress and the local executive officials are forthcoming.

The US thinks that the Aquino regime can carry out what Marcos failed to do. The same exploiting classes are ruling the country. The same military establishment is carrying out a scheme of counter-insurgency, so called, but at an intensified level of brutality. But, at the same time, there is supposed to be this lady president being able to hold the system together, innocent and blameless, and sugar-coating the killing blade.

It must be known to the whole world that there is complicity between the United States and the Aquino regime in carrying out the same brutal scheme, with an emphasis on low-intensity operations. The abuses and atrocities being committed by the AFP, which used to discredit the Marcos regime, are calculated, this time, to be effective and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines is being made to appear as accountable.

FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS NOT SOLVED

Though the Aquino faction is now securely on top of the two other factions - definitely in the short term of one to two years, the other reactionary factions are there, with their respective armed followings, within and outside of the AFP, and are prone to inflict violence against each other. The factionalisation of the AFP is the continuation of the deterioration of the ruling system, first manifested by the emergence of the fascist dictatorship. This dictatorship served notice to all that the ruling classes can no longer rule in the old way, and in the medium term of two to three years, this will become very obvious - this inability of the ruling class to rule in the old way.

The fundamental problems of the Filipino people are not being solved, because the crisis will continue - the socio-economic crisis will continue to result in a more severe political crisis. In the medium term, the Aquino regime will become vulnerable to charges of corruption and failure to quell the revolutionary movement, charges which could be made by a military group. The coup threat will become more serious and real in the medium term. It will even race ahead of the armed revolutionary movement, reaching the stage of the strategic stalemate.

CS: Can you explain what you mean by the strategic stalemate?

STRATEGIC STALEMATE

Sison: In strategic terms, the New People's Army (NPA) is on a strategic defensive, in the sense that there is a superior military force. But at that level, the NPA has been able to engage in tactical offensives and muster forces superior to every part of the AFP which the NPA chooses to attack.

The AFP has 40,000 combat effectives and 120,000 regular support troops. The ratio of 10,000 full-time guerrilla



JOSE MARIA & JULIETA SISON

fighters with automatic rifles for the NPA against 40,000 combat effectives for the AFP is not a very bad ratio for the NPA, and it is already within the range of planning that the NPA would reach up to the level of 25,000 rifles. I estimate that this would be the level of armed strength that would create a new situation with the AFP stalemated.

CS: Would this new situation express itself in the NPA setting up consolidated liberated zones?

GUERRILLA FRONTS AND LIBERATED ZONES

Sison: Yes, there would be the tendency of quite a number of guerrilla fronts to link up. There will be quite a number of guerrilla fronts in 63 provinces out of the 73 in the country. These guerrilla fronts are separated from each other. A guerrilla front consists of at least ten municipalities. There are gaps between guerrilla fronts, so more extensive areas will arise involving the linking up of the present guerrilla fronts. This will occur in the strategic stalemate.

The revolutionary forces continuously build political power in the countryside. These are revolutionary committees of people's self-government along the united front line, and they are assisted by working committees for education, organisation, land reform, finance, livelihood, defence, health, cultural affairs and so on.

These revolutionary committees are further supported by underground mass organisations for workers, peasants, women, youth and so on. The formation of these organisations of political power spell consolidation, and other things which spell consolidation would be the building of the branches of the Communist Party, the formation of more units of the NPA, and so on.

US BASES

CS: Can you please say something about the significance of the US bases in the Philippines, in terms of US strategy, both at present and in its likely evolution? Also, could you say whether, as the armed struggle advances further, you expect the USA to commit itself to a large-scale military intervention?

Sison: The United States official line is that the US military bases in the Philippines are so important

the launching of US aggression. The revolutionary movement, at the same time, has to broaden international support. This means developing relationships at three levels: country to country; people to people; and party to party.

The revolutionary movement has to gain access to as many sources as possible for anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons. You know that, in 1969, the US war of aggression was practically busted when 5,000 planes were brought down by the Vietnamese resistance. So, it's possible for the US to do its worst, and the revolutionary movement is ready to meet even a war of aggression similar to that one conducted by the United States in Vietnam.

CS: Can you say something about the revolutionary movement's strategy for building an independent economy in the Philippines?

Sison: The country is without the fundamentals of modern industry. It is agrarian, pre-industrial, semi-feudal at the moment.

After gaining political power, the Filipino people, particularly the working class and peasantry, will be able to develop a self-reliant economy. But certainly not an autarchic one. Land reform will be thoroughly carried out so as to allow the surplus product produced by the peasant masses to be channelled to industrialisation and a large domestic market of at least 58 million people will emerge. National industrialisation has to be carried out as the leading factor in economic development, and this shall be based on agriculture already benefited by a genuine land reform.

For some time the Philippines will still have to produce the kind of export crops it has been producing - the country is not going to be industrialised overnight. So, certain exports have to be made and the export earnings used in two parts: one part would be for the importation of capital goods for the industrial development of the country, and the other part for the importation of consumption goods. To hasten the industrialisation of the Philippines, loans would have to be secured. A certain proportion of the products and income of the new industries would pay for imported capital goods.

The Philippines will have to develop three sectors of the economy: heavy industry can be built in stages, and light industry serving the production and consumption needs of the people, especially the peasant masses, will have to be built in order to bridge heavy industry and agriculture. That would be the basis of overall economic development. But, at the same time, foreign loans can be secured to augment the domestic savings.

The country has a rich natural resource base. It has all the essentials for industrial development, and the country has a large population, which is also a large productive force. If not for foreign and feudal domination, the country can advance and become a modern industrial country.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

CS: What do you see as the significance of the Philippines experience for the international communist movement? And what

do you see as the most important tasks for building that movement?

Sison: We have to consider that the trend of independence is healthy. After all, of what use is the universal theory of Marxism-Leninism, if it is not applied in the concrete conditions of a country? If it is not made to live through the concrete practice of a revolution in one country, or in every country?

Hoping for some kind of a centre for the international communist movement in one country may be futile for some time. The most that can be done is to have study conferences, or some 'institute' - the bourgeoisie have this type of exchange, don't they? But, certainly, communist parties would resist any single party dictating what should be the line for all communist parties.

We are now on the eve of earth-shaking upheavals. At the moment, some people might think that the revolutionary movement in Europe is at an ebb, despite the objective conditions which are favourable for a flow in the revolutionary movement. The parties in Europe which want



NPA FIGHTERS

to fulfil the historic mission of the proletariat should at least concentrate on building the hard core for the great mass actions to come, possibly before the end of this decade. The capitalist system is in a serious financial and economic crisis. The capitalists themselves are pushing third world countries to go into social crisis. The social unrest is there, becoming more intense and widespread, and revolutionary movements are bound to arise from these conditions. There has to be a complementary relationship between the revolutionary movements in the capitalist countries and in the under-developed countries. It is unfortunate that while the big bourgeoisie in the capitalist countries is in trouble, those considered socialist countries are making it appear that they are in some serious economic trouble and adopt certain concessions to capitalism in order to be able to advance. The socialist countries before the end of this century, however, will develop to such a point that they will be able to facilitate one way or the other, the advance of social revolution in the Third World.

At the moment, proletarian internationalism is a phrase that is being avoided in policy statements. There is the tendency to play up diplomacy to the point of obscuring proletarian internationalism ... although what appears to be an obsession with diplomacy is also calculated to prevent war.

El Salvador

IN MEMORIAM: MICHAEL DE WITTE

We print below extracts from a statement by the Party of Labour of Belgium, commemorating the death of Belgian revolutionary, Michael De Witte, in El Salvador.

Michael De Witte, member of the Party of Labour of Belgium and of the Party of the Salvadorian Revolution, was killed in the guerrilla zone of Tres Calles, El Salvador.....

Michael entered the El Salvador underground forces to devote himself body and soul in this tiny country to the world-wide anti-imperialist revolution. Michael was responsible for the medical organisation of the 'Partido de la Revolucion Salvadorena' in the Tres Calles region. He was referred to as 'the surgeon', because of his almost continuous presence on the front-line, where emergency operations were the rule of the day for those injured in the fighting. But he was also in charge of organising hospitals behind the lines, outside the fighting areas where the injured were taken after emergency treatment. He also super-

vised the setting-up of recovery units.....

For all the members and friends of the Party of Labour of Belgium, Michael's life as an activist was the embodiment of all revolutionary moral principles. He used his professional and scientific knowledge to serve the oppressed masses of the Third World. Thanks to his work, dozens of revolutionaries from El Salvador, wounded in battle, were saved and continue to strike blows against the enemy today.

Neo-colonial repression in El Salvador has already resulted in 60,000 deaths. Michael had decided to live the life of the peasants and workers, of all the oppressed peoples of the Third World, to share their fate and the dangers and risks which are continually theirs....

THE SPIRIT OF INTERNATIONALISM

No. Michael did not die in vain: and he did not live in

vain, either. He had lived in Ruanda, in Zimbabwe, in Cuba, in Nicaragua. He knew well what the oppression imposed by imperialism on millions of people in the Third World was like and he had decided to live with one single aim: to hasten the death of imperialism and prepare the day of freedom of the oppressed masses.

The statement goes on to outline Michael's life and his activities as a student and as a doctor in the PLB's practice at Genk. In El Salvador, he had become convinced of the importance of dedicating oneself to the party and wrote to friends in Belgium: "To become a member of the party here, you have to have been working with the organisation for at least two years. You must dedicate yourself entirely to the revolution and the party, both before and after victory, and accept all the consequences,

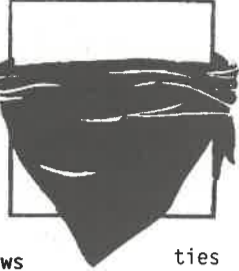
including death. I would like to say: go on working for the building of the party and for the class struggle in Belgium..."

CARRYING ON MICHAEL'S WORK

There are soldiers of the revolution who are killed in battle who do not die because they go on inspiring the lives of those who carry on their struggle. A Michael De Witte Foundation will be set up in his memory. In the first place, it will collect the financial and technical means necessary for publishing a book about Michael De Witte's life,.... In the second instance, it will bring together doctors and medical workers who want to leave for the Third World or who want to guarantee the logistics of those who do go.

Michael's sacrifice will not be in vain. It will strengthen the revolutionary morals and the internationalist spirit of all the members and friends of the PLB.

SOLIDARIDAD EL SALVADOR



Soviet Union

REFORMING THE SYSTEM?

PART TWO

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Reform talk arouses animosity within party and state structures in the Soviet Union because it endangers the stability in the bureaucratic hierarchy and the privileges associated with such positions. At a twice-postponed Plenary session of the CPSU's Central Committee, held at the end of January, Gorbachev repeated that: "Time-servers, careerists and trimmers" and those who stain the CPSU's name by "money-grabbing, drunkenness and immorality" would be forced out. But the very fact it took so long to arrange the Plenum was testimony to the extent of resistance within the CPSU to the "new course".

The enormity of the task of reform is increased by the reluctance of officials in the middle ranks to put instructions from the centre into practice. "There is an administrative layer, the apparatus of the ministries, the party apparatus, which does not want alterations," concluded Gorbachev, in his June 1986 speech. "And does not want to be deprived of certain rights connected with privileges."

At the moment, a purge is out of the question. It would have to be too disruptive and widespread. But the legal weapon of "anti-corruption drive" is its equivalent in setting up warning examples. To win the political argument against institutional inertia is the only feasible option open to the reformists. This has not prevented action against "obstructionists".

PARTY BOSSES REPLACED

Before the 27th CPSU Congress last year, 46 of the 156 regional party bosses (important because of their influence on the choice of delegates to the CPSU Congress) were replaced. Five of the bosses of the fifteen constituent republics have been replaced, along with almost half of the Council of Ministers.

A third of the Central Committee was removed at the Congress. Gorbachev may call for "long, strenuous and dedicated work" but the new personnel have very

often been the deputies of the old bosses. They are not necessarily a new kind of apparat-skik committed to the reformist solutions. Also, a majority of CC members were appointed under Brezhnev's stewardship, and their dedication to the reforming crusade is questionable. The policy struggle is far from over as continuous tirades about poor performance and incompetence show the battle is not yet won.

DEGENERATION OF SOCIALISM IN USSR

When Gorbachev declared at the January Plenum: "The country (has) lost its dynamism: difficulties and unsolved problems were accumulated and elements of stagnation were manifested.", he was signalling the complete failure of the general political and economic, ideological and social line that has been pursued for a long time in the Soviet Union.

The degeneration of socialism in the Soviet Union is made clear in Gorbachev's admission that: "There was created at home, a whole system that gave birth to a mechanism which interrupted the socio-economic development." What was not made clear was that what faced them was evidence of the bankruptcy of Soviet revisionism.

The crisis of their system was the result of the consolidation of negative tendencies that gradually became dominant from the 1950's onwards, associated not only with Brezhnev and his cronies, but also with those who wished to embark on a reforming crusade under Krushchev.

The Soviet Union today, faces the consequences of that historical regression, the abandonment of Marxism-Leninism. There has not simply been a "process of interruption", as Gorbachev describes it. In the privacy of a gathering of Soviet functionaries, the appeal is not to socialism (that's for public consumption) but to a traditional call of the ruling class everywhere: their definition of the national interest - 'Let the Mother country live'.

India

STARVATION IN ORISSA

India's much-vaunted development progress under the Congress government of the Gandhi dynasty has had little effect on the masses of the peasantry in the rural areas. News is even com-



entrant in this sorry circus is the politician."

Rajiv Gandhi visited Kalahandi as a publicity stunt in 1985. It was reported that a 35-year old woman had been forced to sell her fourteen year old sister-in-law to feed her three starving children. Gandhi went to her village and promised special incentives to the back-



ward regime. Shortly after this visit, the Orissa State government said the whole story was a lie.

Now starvation deaths are being reported in Kalahandi and the Orissa government continues complacent. Bhajat personally witnessed starving people in Kalahandi eating ants to survive. Questioned about this, J.B. Patnaik, Orissa's Chief Minister, said that the people were not eating ants for lack of other food. "It is merely, you see, a type of food popular in many areas ... they like it and fry it up and eat it. A type of delicacy."

Gorkhas want Independence

West Bengal's "Communist" government is trying to eliminate a movement for national independence by the Gorkhas of Darjeeling district. 1200 families have been burned out of their homes by police terror.

It is not surprising that it was the 'Communist Party of India (Marxist)' (CPIM) who tried to eliminate the 'Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)', Maoists who led a courageous people's struggle for a new democratic India in the late 1960's and 1970's. The Marxist-Leninists were popularly called "Naxalites" because they led the first uprising in West Bengal in the village of Naxalbari - in Darjeeling district!

The Congress government in Delhi has always been quick to stamp on any movement by India's oppressed nationalities or oppressed castes. In the case of Gorkhaland, the CPIM have criticised Congress for not being repressive enough.

The Gorkhas, Nepali-speaking majority in Darjeeling, resent Bengali domination. They point out that Darjeeling has no historical continuity with Bengal. It suffers from economic depression with the decline of the tea industry and the tourist trade. The Gorkhaland Liberation Front, leaders of the independence movement, has imposed hartals (total stoppages), on the district and reacted to the recent West Bengal elections by a mass boycott of the polling booths.

BOOK NEWS

PRE-COLONIAL BLACK AFRICA

Cheikh Anta Diop

In retracing the black contribution to the foundations of western civilization, Diop reconstructs "all aspects of African national life... to defossilize that African history which was there at hand, lifeless, imprisoned in the documents." 240 pages.

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Shiraz Durrani

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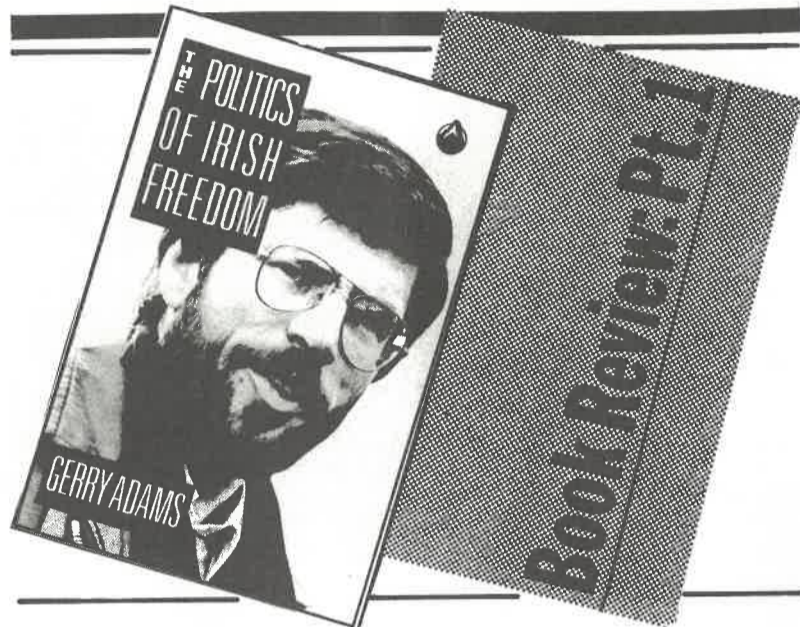


ADAMS' BOOK 'THE POLITICS OF IRISH FREEDOM' LOOKS AT THE ORIGINS OF MODERN REPUBLICANISM

'The Politics of Irish Freedom', Gerry Adams' recently published book, sets out with considerable clarity his own understanding of the modern Republican Movement's development. He takes us through from the very beginnings of his own involvement. This starts with the aftermath of the 1964 Westminster elections, and the 'Divis Street Riots': the climax of a campaign to intimidate the Catholic working classes and divert their possible support for nationalist candidates. The RUC, wielding pickaxes, removed an Irish tricolour from the window of the Sinn Fein election office in Divis Street. The result was a pitched battle involving 350 RUC men with water-cannon and armoured cars in an assault on the Falls Road area of West Belfast.

"By the end of 1964, I was an interested part of a small group that gathered in a dingy room in a Cyprus Street GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association) to learn about Fenians and Fenianism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, partition and British imperialism."

From these beginnings, and it is clear even then which side the violence was coming from, Gerry Adams takes us through the occupation by the British Army in 1969, internment, Sunningdale, the Hunger Strike, to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement at Hillsborough. In the process, he draws the lessons of a new generation that has risen amongst Ireland's nationalist people, determined that this will be the final phase in the long struggle for Irish self-determination.



THE CENTRALITY OF PARTITION

"As I absorbed all of this," writes Adams. "I came to understand the centrality of partition in the whole dreadful scheme. I also realised that

without a proper understanding of the reason and consequences of partition there could be no understanding of the problem and thus no solution. Partition was, and remains, the main means by which self-determination is withheld from us."

PEACEFUL PROTEST - VIOLENT REPRESSION

His earlier book, 'Falls Memories' ends by describing in its final pages the dawns of political consciousness. In the early sixties, he and others like him began to question the state of "the nation": "We wondered as we passed the customs posts on our way to Bon Beag for a summer in the Gaeltacht, what exact the border was."

The answer would be given clear and simple by the sectarian state and its Orange mobs, and later by the British Army: it's there to keep you down! Peaceful protests demanding reform in the Northern Ireland state - adult suffrage, an end to discrimination in jobs and housing, an end to the gerrymandering of local government boundaries - would be met with increasingly violent responses and ultimately to the killing of fourteen people on Bloody Sunday, 1972, shot dead by British paratroopers.

AN OPPRESSED PEOPLE

"These, then, were the origins of modern Republicanism, in the realisation of a people's condition: dispossessed of their culture, their identity, decent jobs and housing, and any effective political means of changing this situation. The nationalists of the Six Counties were a "displaced people", surrounded by a state which could only exist by continuing to suppress them. Any attempt to change things through 'liberalisation' brought the very existence of the state into question.

This is one of the first lessons for 'British' people to learn: the removal of civil rights, dispossession and violent repression is something we tend to associate with far off dictatorships of Central and South America. But the reality is different. It has been happening and is still going on, at the hands of the British government, just across the Irish Sea.

Arriving at this understanding has involved a long and hard struggle, many years of imprisonment, brutalisation and much grief. While the long-term objectives had to be kept firmly in sight, a political movement had to develop in which self-determination became a real solution to the problems that confronted people, one that would make the sacrifice of life and liberty worthwhile. Thus began the process of developing a strategy that would move towards this goal: education, politicisation, organisation, developing the analysis and leadership that could take the people forward.

The development that occurred during the 1970's was all the harder given the years of taking a back seat forced on the nationalist people of the north of Ireland. They had none of the middle-class expertise, skills and resources that the likes of John Hume and the SDLP would bring to 'constitutional' nationalism. What they had instead were the tail end of a generation that had been 'getting chances', but whose expectations were frustrated by the increasingly narrow world of the sectarian state. This generation had two choices: emigration or stay and fight, standing alongside the people who had no choice - the broad masses of working class nationalists who were going nowhere except, perhaps, towards a united Ireland.

A POLITICAL STRUGGLE

It is on this basis that the popular movement that is modern Republicanism developed. For those who see in it only "gangsterism" or "militarism" without broad support. 'The Politics of Irish Freedom' brings home the important lesson that both the unarmed and the armed struggle have significant political dimensions: "To get through a normal day, an active IRA volunteer is all the time involved in politics, all the time enlisting support, going to people and asking them to do this and that for him or her. Even if one could describe the armed struggle of the Ogligh na nEireann as militaristic, it bears little resemblance to what may be called militaristic in terms of a standing army. Despite all the British propaganda stories, it is obvious that the IRA exists and operates within the active consent of a sufficient number of people to finance, arm, clothe, feed, accommodate and transport IRA volunteers and in every way build around them a voluntary political infrastructure."

For its part, the Hunger Strike did away with any vestiges of "spectator politics": "When the only form of struggle being waged was armed struggle, it only needed a small number of people to engage in it. But with the Hunger Strike people, rather than just looking on at one aspect of struggle, had an active role to play which could be as limited or as important as bill-posting, writing letters, or taking part in numerous forms of protest."

(Next issue: The review continues with an analysis of the relationship between the national struggle and the struggle for socialism.)



EVENTS

Saturday, 9th May

SOUTH AFRICA

A People's War
Against Imperialism
and For Revolution

A Proletarian-Socialist View
of the situation and struggle

10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.
Conference Hall,
5 Westminster Bridge Road,
London SE1.

Organised by:
Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee

Contact: 01-735-1186
or 01-821-5808 (evenings)



STOP REAGAN'S CONTRA WAR
AGAINST NICARAGUA

Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign
'Blood Money' campaign

NSC are appealing for people to join the solidarity campaign with the people of Nicaragua, and for donations for its work.

Contact: Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, 23 Beventen Street, London N1 6BH.



Saturday 2nd May
LEILA AND THE WOLVES

Saturday 9th May
BATTLE FOR BEIRUT
& Summing up Session (PSC)

For more details, contact:
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Manchester M15 4BX
Tel: 061-848-9782

Saturday, June 6th.
CONFERENCE

TWENTY YEARS OF THE
OCCUPATION
OF WEST BANK & GAZA

Royal Commonwealth Society
18 Northumberland Avenue,
London WC2
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Fund-Raising Social for
MEDICAL AID FOR PALESTINIANS
7.00 - 10.00

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