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# CLASS STRUGGLE



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# Republicans Reject London - Dublin Deal



At the end of November, the Dublin government gave international legal standing to its acceptance of the partition of Ireland by signing a new 'deal' with Britain's Tory government. The Irish government has now formalised its past practice of accepting that Ireland's minority of Orange bigots hold a veto over Irish unification. Not surprisingly, the British Labour Party and the Alliance rushed to congratulate Thatcher and demonstrate the fundamental unity of imperialist parties.

The agreement will lead to further united action by London and Dublin against the Republican Movement, and this is recognised to be the main aim. It does not however represent a single step forward towards the genuine independence of Ireland as a whole.

Not surprisingly, the deal was rejected by the Republican Movement before the ink was dry on the paper - even before Thatcher and Fitzgerald had their pens in their hands. In his presidential address at Sinn Fein's Ard Fheis, just before the agreement was signed, Gerry Adams said: "The current London-Dublin talks are a compliment to you all. Never before have the Irish and British establishments been forced to spend so much time deliberating on how best to isolate and de-

feat Irish republicanism." He made this point in connection with Sinn Fein's recent electoral successes and their successes are indeed of decisive importance. They reflect first of all that the armed struggle of the IRA has mass support. The 30,000 votes for IRA volunteer Bobby Sands, MP, reflected this, and the votes cast in subsequent elections show that this was no flash in the pan. It is the support of the people, more than anything else, which has British imperialism worried and causes them to manoeuvre and change their tactics. As Gerry Adams said at the Ard Fheis: "They are not so much afraid of Sinn Fein as afraid of the inherent soundness of the Irish people. They realise that they have made such a mess of this country and failed miserably to satisfy the aspirations of ordinary people that the people, cynical of the posturing of establishment politicians, represent a threat to establishment interests." Secondly, the electoral successes are part of Sinn

Fein's development as a political party capable of offering leadership on all fronts. There was a time when the imperialists taunted the republicans and challenged them to use the ballot box. Those times are long gone. The republicans have picked up the gauntlet and thrown it in Britain's face. Britain is now changing its tune and is threatening to throw them out of office, prevent them from standing for election and even ban them. To quote the presidential address again:

"It is that fear that the people will become organised and that Irish republicanism ... will become a catalyst for a re-awakened and militant alternative to the present mess which masquerades as government in both this state and the British colony in the six counties. It is this fear that fuels Dublin, Unionist and London paranoia about Sinn Fein. And they are right to be afraid!" The London/Dublin agreement is Britain's response to this fear.

Pages 11 & 12

In Depth Reports

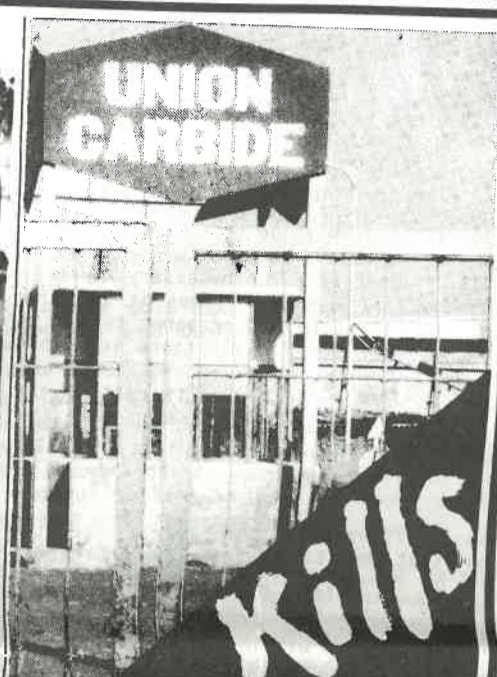
## MINERS STRIKE



A poignant moment as a wreath is cast into the Thames in memory of David Jones and Joe Green, the two Yorkshire miners who died in defence of the basic human right to a job.

### Lest We Forget

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# —Book Review— 'The State Of The Police'

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Relying on a propaganda offensive which deserves the admiration of Goebbels, the British state, with the full support and collaboration of a craven Parliament and a media incapable of telling the truth, appears to be setting about its objective of unleashing the next violent phase of its racist, offensive strategy. The urban poor, and black people in particular, are clearly to bear the brunt of the onslaught. With the state adopting its most oppressive posture in recent years, it is timely to review a book which, according to its author "critically examines the politics of policing during the 1980's".

## RELATION OF POLICE AND STATE

This short paperback packs plenty of information into 176 pages covering many areas relating to things police. It is a work basically journalistic in style and content but unfortunately, it fails to grapple with the theoretical problems connected with "the politics of policing" in an economically enfeebled and decaying imperialist Britain. The role of the state and the vital significance of its imperialist character both now and historically, are largely left out of the account.

There are some good attempts at analysis, for example, of the nature of police racism, supported by extracts from statements by various chief constables and rank and file coppers. References are made to the more obvious links between the increased level of oppression in Britain and the brutal repression of Irish patriots in the north of Ireland. However, the great significance of the appointment of Sir Kenneth Newman as Met Police boss gets only a mention.

## HISTORY OF POLICE

The account of the historical development of police forces in English cities is worth a mention. Prior to the passing of the Metropolitan Police Act in 1829, a centralised police force did not exist outside of London and its ports. In 1856, the County Borough Police Act compelled all areas to operate a full-time police force.

The fact that three parliamentary committees (in 1816, 1818 and 1822) rejected the police idea as "incompatible with British liberty" illustrates the success of bourgeois curbing in being able to trumpet in 1883 that: "The law has evolved naturally to meet the needs of the people." (Merseyside Police, publicity brochure).

Resistance was strong: "Police-men continued to be beaten all through the nineteenth century for such reasons as interfering too closely in family or neighbourhood affairs ... providing escorts for strike-breakers, engaging in brutality or moving people on too forcefully, especially in areas of high unemployment."

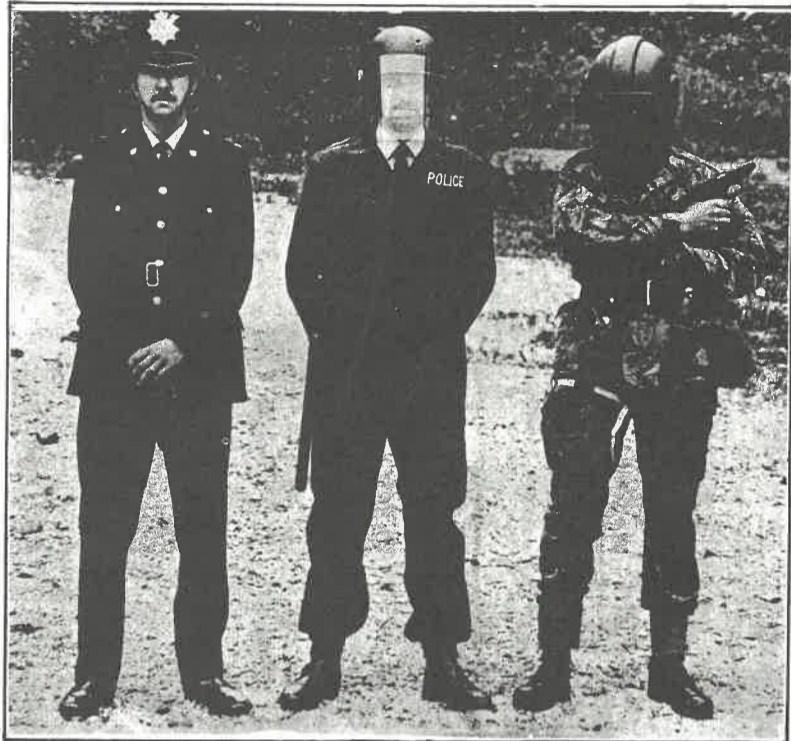


Woman arrested while demonstrating over the death of Colin Roach, Stoke Newington, January 1983.

Compare Newman's strategy of social control with the words of a parliamentary committee eleven years before the 1829 Act: "... A police force would be a plan which would make all classes of society spies on each other."

## SIGNIFICANCE OF NEWMAN

The book will tell you that Newman was chosen as boss of the Met "to strike a balance between reactive preventative and community-based strategies". More accurately and bluntly,



Our British Bobby grows into full maturity.

Newman is here to organise fascist tooling up on the one hand, and police interference in the lives of people hitherto undreamt of on the mainland of Britain. Anti-people "community based initiatives" and surveillance functions under the guise of "neighbourhood watch schemes" (about 1,000 established or planned) backed up by so-called "reactive forms of policing" (for which read CS gas, live ammunition, new types of riot sticks and authorised plainclothes thug squads) amount to what Newman loves to term "total policing".

## COMMUNITY POLICING FOR SOCIAL CONTROL

The job specification for community police officers in the Lothian and Borders Police, states that they should secure the services of at least one observer in every street, not a paid professional informant, but someone who knows the inhabitants and is inquisitive enough to find out what is going on and who is willing to pass information gained.

Information is compiled into police bulletins. Here is an example taken from a Skelmersdale and Ormskirk police bulletin, which reports on a person "checked" in the early hours. "warily dragging his feet ... carrying all his personal belongings in a plastic carrier bag." It continues: "Apparently, big sister had cracked him over the head with a bottle of orange squash and given him his marching orders from the family mansion at (address). (Name) seemed at a loss to know where he would be living for the next fortnight but said that he was due to be given a tenancy of a flat at (address). The next question is, of course, how (name) proposes to furnish his new abode but no doubt his form for theft and handling (as well as assault) should land him in good stead."

By May 1984, 384 schemes were operational in London. Communities got the schemes whether they liked it or not. One tenants' association meeting received the following threat from a "crime prevention officer": "If you do not accept this scheme, we shall simply go down the road and offer it to the next estate, who will accept it, and the result will

be that their crime and criminals will be pushed on to your estate."

This strategy, tried and tested in the north of Ireland, involves cultivating all sorts of other state agencies, key workers in communities, lumpen elements, children, anybody who can offer "information" and thus provide a "level of targetting and surveillance which no previous strategy could offer."

## POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY AND STATE POWER

The book is concerned at the "crisis in police accountability". Curiously, the author uses the word "crisis" as if the system worked once. His own research shows that as far back as 1929, the Royal Commission on Police Powers and Procedure attached little importance to the role of locally elected police authorities and this was embodied in the 1964 Police Act which "gives the appearance of greater accountability but in reality guaranteed the autocracy of chief constables."

Why are chief constables so powerful? The truth may be that the state knows it has to count on these gold and silver braided hard men to do its dirty work. Chief constables are a vital link in the state's chain of command.

In this respect, there has been a reduction in the number of British police forces (each with a chief constable) from 152 in 1962 to 51 in 1985. This represents a centralisation of police power and great increase in the power and status of individual chief constables.

The nearest the author gets to placing the state in the centre of the picture is when he quotes Justice McKinnon in a 1977 court case: "It is no use setting about a police officer, because behind him stands the police force, behind them the Army, Navy and Air Force, and behind them the whole state."

In conclusion, this was a good first reader on this important subject and I shall try to read more in the expectation of coming across work which will be based more on scientific analysis.



'The State of the Police' by Phil Scraton, published by Pluto Press, 1985, 184pp, £4.95.

## COMMENT...

On the brink of bankruptcy, Liverpool Labour Council drew back from the edge and finally made a deal. The Militant Tendency finally came up against a blank wall - the blank wall of the realities of capitalism. Courageously enough, many of them had pledged that they would not raise rents or rates, nor would they cut services. As they proclaimed, they set their face against "book-keeping politics". Workers would not pay for the capitalists' crisis. The problem is that the workers do not control industry, commerce, the banks or the state. (And, of course, neither do the Militant Tendency.)

The net result was that as Liverpool Council ran out of money, it was precisely the workers, and more particularly the council workers, who were going to have to pay for the crisis. The council employees would be without pay, and the people would suffer a total cut of service apart from those operated voluntarily. The Militant Tendency desperately needed a plan, and attempted to call a strike of workers, to save face and avoid sackings. The problem was that most workers are aware that they can claim state benefits when sacked or laid off, but not when on strike. So many who sympathised with Militant's original intentions were not prepared to be impoverished by the results. Particularly if the same tactic repeated, year after year, would make an annual Christmas spectacular out of destitution.

Militant have complained loudly that it is the government's fault. And indeed, government intervention and rate-capping have taken millions of pounds out of the cities. But more importantly, it is the fault of imperialism.

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To get back to the current local government crisis, Militant do appear at the time of writing, to have come up with a possibly convenient solution. They can get some money off other local Labour councils, whom they have condemned for putting up rates. They can make a few cuts in services. Finally they can borrow a few millions from Swiss banks without having to start repayments for two years. As that means that it will probably be some other party having to pay off the debts it will provide a clear target to knock for putting up rates in the future. Very neat.

It makes you wonder if anyone will want to win the next local Liverpool election. Screaming Lord Such may at last be in with a chance.

One last thought is that if, as Militant claim, their setback has been purely due to the betrayal of their comrades in the Labour party, if they really could stop all rent and rate rises, and cuts in services through more Labour party solidarity, does that mean that they think that capitalism can be made to work in the interests of the working class and oppressed peoples?

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The lesson from Liverpool is clear. Reformism is not enough. There are clear limits to what can be achieved through local elections, and it isn't much. The question then is what can Militant and other left Labour groups offer the working class and oppressed? More of the same? Vote Labour for a brighter future? On the national stage all they really offer is to put the likes of Kinnock into power. Liverpool already has such experience. It was not mainly during the time of this Tory government that Dunlops, Leyland, Lucas, Ford, Plessey, Tate & Lyle, and the other big companies either closed factories or forced massive redundancies. Merseyside industry was decimated between 1974 and 1979 during the last Labour government. Will the next really be able to offer a revitalisation of Liverpool? Will an alternative management of British imperialism be able to change its essential character? Hardly.

The point is stark. The only way forward is socialism. The destruction of British imperialism is the only route to the construction of a state and an economy run by the working class and the oppressed in their own interests. That requires a political struggle, not mere militant trade unionism.

The election of genuine communists to local and national government can have a purpose. The aim must be to expose these institutions and the real limitations of bourgeois democracy, which does not extend to state and local government administration, or to the army, police and judiciary, still less to the areas of real power and wealth in the economy. This is the reason why communists have fought and won elections in Norway and Belgium. It is not the objective of communists to provide an alternative management for imperialism either nationally or locally.

Militant's strategy is therefore most questionable especially when you consider their reactionary stand on issues of racism and imperialism, where they have attacked virtually every progressive struggle.

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The miners' struggle for jobs continues and will no doubt intensify over the next year. To mark the end of 1985, 'Class Struggle' asked a miner from Yorkshire his views on the main lessons learnt during the 1984-1985 strike.

In the beginning, people weren't prepared. We weren't used to our communities being in a state of seige. We weren't used to seeing military-type police all over the place. We were a bit naive really. It took time to learn the lessons we did.

On picketing, we realised that the only reason to be there was to make a point. There was a limited goal. We realised it is no good standing around just to get hurt. We were shocked really at how well-organised and prepared the police were.

But we learned a lot from picketing, especially the need for more permanent leadership among the rank and file organised in a semi-military style. We needed more people to be able to look to, to organise us at the forefront, like the police were organised. We should have been prepared to use whatever means were necessary and realistic for given situations. Everyone seemed to learn the hard way - through the beatings and arrests we got from the police. There was a lack of communication and coordination on the lines. Maybe as much as 30% were failures because of this lack of communication. For example, we would get instructions to go to a certain pit and by the time we arrived there, the scabs had already gone in. It costs a lot of money organising mass pickets. When you get to your destination, you need to know exactly where to go and what to do.

For example, we learnt not to hang about after barricades had been made and the police reinforcements had arrived, probably because we did not know how to deal with the situation in an organised fashion. Towards the end of the strike, I think we were beginning to get the message i.e. at Cortonwood, Houghton Main, Maltby where we showed much protest and aggression with minimum injuries and arrests to our lads. But by that time, the media was playing it low key. By the end of the strike, you could detect unofficial leaders among the rank and file. There was one time at Houghton Main when barricades were made; police were stoned and when reinforcements had settled in, pickets had dispersed. People began to use their heads more. But still I say that if we had prepared ourselves properly we could have blocked vital places off for days maybe.

#### IMPORTANCE OF SOLIDARITY

The second lesson from the strike was the importance of solidarity. Firstly, solidarity within the community. The strike brought the community closer together than they had ever been. When you think of all that was organised: soup kitchens, pickets' football tournaments and cricket matches, as well as marches and collections. Shop-keepers helped, too. Very important were the women's support groups. We realised how big a part they played in strike. We couldn't have lasted three months without them. We couldn't have lasted two weeks... It was because they saw it was the future of their communities at stake, the future

# Looking back with pride

of their kids.. It brought us together with unemployed people in communities, too. They supported the struggle. There was a vicar that supported us. He got a good hiding on picket line and after that he stuck mainly to the soup kitchen.

#### CAPITALISTS WELL-ORGANISED

It wasn't just the police. The capitalists were well-organised for the strike. It was all laid down in the Ridley Report.

Firstly, they had a national riot squad. There were massive numbers of police, well-trained and organised, highly mobile and absolutely ruthless.

Secondly, they cut our benefits. They said it was just the strikers' benefits that got cut. But it hurt the whole families. When we made collections in London, we got a lot of support from middle class women who said they couldn't understand how Mrs Thatcher could do that to children, having had two of her own.

Thirdly, they'd switched all power stations to dual firing: coal and oil. This had been a gradual process preparing for the miners' fight.

Fourthly, they contacted scab lorry drivers who were prepared to move coal and were highly paid. They'd arranged for scab coal and oil from other countries and had anticipated that we'd get support from the dockers and got temporary ports set up.



Another important point was the solidarity we got from abroad. We couldn't have done without that. Our own trade unions turned their backs and the Labour Party considered us an embarrassment to them. So it was nice to know that other people were prepared to support our cause. That I know of, we got support from Belgium, Australia and other places. The miners in South Africa supported us and various important people. I think as a result of this, the miners will be a lot more sympathetic to other people's causes now.

We soon found out who were our friends and who weren't. We found out that if you weren't for us, you were against us. Miners have got very little confidence in Labour, that if they get in next time, that they will reverse the pit closure plan. Labour's lack of response was the most heart-breaking thing for a lot of militants who'd been in the Labour Party for many years. There were a lot who didn't expect anything in the first place. Another lesson is that we prevented the pit closure plan from being accelerated. What a lot of miners don't realise is that if we hadn't resisted, the pit closure plan would be halfway through by now. Even if we've only kept the privatisation programme back five years, we have achieved something. I think a lot of miners forget this.

#### NEW AWARENESS

The next lesson is that the miners as a whole became politicised. For example, before the strike I couldn't care about much apart from what was in my back pocket on a Friday night. A lot of people were the same. Another generation has been politicised. There's children that saw the state of their fathers after a good hiding from the police. They've seen police storming through houses. They've seen their community in a state of seige. It's something they'll never forget. And there's questions that they'll always ask themselves.

We realise now how Catholics live in Northern Ireland, and the black minorities. We knew that for us there'd be an end to it. But we realise now that

ation we had from the police. There was one time at Rossington, the police stormed the village. They charged along the houses on their horses, smashing doors. But they were crafty. They didn't do it in daylight, they did it in the middle of the night. At Maltby, the MP had to have hospital treatment for his injuries. Even the vicar was knocked to the ground in a police charge in the middle of the night, of course. When people tried to escape into the woods, the police had dogs in the woods, off the leashes. None of this got exposed in the press. But they saw the same things that we saw.

#### COURTS

The courts - they were just another set up. The best example is Orgreave. Offices were made into temporary courts. Judges

pit closures. Their government has conceded for the time being the pit closure plans. They were definitely influenced by the miners' strike here. We sent one or two delegations to Belgium where we met Belgian miners.

There's still campaigns within the NUM to support the sacked miners. The NUM will never give up the fight. Some have got their jobs back. But there's 40 still left in prison now. To rank and file, to picketers, they're martyrs. They've done no more than fight for what's right. They were just unlucky enough to get caught. But anyone who went picketing knows that it could just as easily have been them. It could have happened to anybody. As far as rank and file militants are concerned, they'll never forget or neglect them.



While Ridley laid plans for defeating the strike, the fantastic support of miners' wives and women's support groups was one thing he didn't count on.



Law and Order on The Line .... When the state moved in on the miners, Kinnoch and Willis were busy distancing themselves from the miners' real fight for jobs.

for people like that, they have to live with it day in and day out for the rest of their lives.

#### PRESS AND MEDIA

We exposed the press and the media, especially those that went picketing. When the media decided to play a low key role - for example, at Houghton Main, the police got a good hiding. But on the news, we only heard that two or three police got injured. There were occasions when you could go to a picket and there was a scuffle and a couple of arrests and the media said there was mass riots there. The media never showed striking miners being attacked by working miners and never showed the violence and provok-

and magistrates were drafted in from all over the country with no idea about how we live. Because the police are so well received in a magistrate's court, a lot of hard-working and honest people who had never committed a crime before were criminalised. In the case of some of the more serious charges, a lot have been acquitted - like the 95 acquitted in Sheffield.

#### FIGHTING FOR A PRINCIPLE

The last lesson is that the NUM led the way forwards to fight for a principle, no matter how much the odds were against us or how big the state machine was. For example, the Belgian miners have just come out about

**SUPPORT THE VICTIMISED MINERS!**  
Victimised miners and their families still need your support.  
All money for victimised miners should go to the Miners' Solidarity Fund, St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield.  
\* \* \* \* \*  
**A CELEBRATION OF THE WOMEN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE MINERS' STRIKE!**  
with Banner: women's songs and music; Unity Theatre: 'Old Time Music Hall', Disco, Bar.  
**SATURDAY, 14th DECEMBER.**  
Tottenham Town Hall.  
All proceeds to victimised miners fund.

# Collusion and Contention

# Geneva Talks

For years past, the two superpowers have been involved in direct negotiations over nuclear arms control. In this time there have been occasional agreements made between the superpowers to 'limit' the nuclear escalation.

The same period has seen the rapid and continuous growth of nuclear arsenals on both sides to the point where both have an overkill capacity able to destroy the world many times over!

The Reagan, Gorbachev talks make the 11th summit between the USA and the USSR leaders since 1955. Its conclusion marks a continuation of the same level of 'success' previously achieved.

## THE BASIS OF CONFLICT

The fundamental difficulty that underlies the general failure to understand the real issues is that the basis of conflict between the two superpowers is constantly mis-stated. The conflict between East and West is portrayed, usually by 'left' and right alike, as a conflict between communism and capitalism. For the right this normally means backing the USA. Some liberals and social-democrats may oppose current US aggressive strategy, but hold to an alliance with that superpower. For the 'left', again attitudes range from full backing of the Soviet superpower to that of 'critical' sympathy as the fire is directed overwhelmingly against US imperialism.

Marxist-Leninists view the conflict from a totally different perspective. Long ago we saw the Soviet Union degenerate into an aggressive expansionist power.



SOCIAL IMPERIALISM

From the invasion of Czechoslovakia, through to the undermining and interference in national liberation movements and newly independent nations, the Soviet Union expressed the determination not to aid the process of liberation and social revolution but to establish the political power and economic interests of the USSR on a world scale.

It defended its economic interests, often alongside the US imperialists, in the United Nations, opposing the attempts by the Third World in the struggle for a new international economic order. It profited from unequal world trade, from the massive arms market, and from direct investment in joint projects in places like India. It opposed the Third World struggle for 200 mile sea limits, and like the US wanted a free-for-all to exploit the oceans and the Antarctic through which the biggest powers, the imperialists, would profit the most.

It came to the support of the officers' clique who took advantage of the rising popular movement in Ethiopia to seize power for themselves. It described the regime the dominant faction

Despite the acclaim given by the world's bourgeois media to the Geneva summit of the two superpowers, actual 'achievements' seem to be thin on the ground.

They had a discussion on 'human rights'. Neither is exactly noted for 'civil liberties' within their own countries, and certainly not in their activities when they maraud through other people's lands. Plenty of meat for each to slay the others. On past experience a good mutual denunciation could be expected. Nothing was publicly said.

On questions of the Middle East, some form of agreement was half expected. The Soviet Union did say that 'in principle' it wanted its troops out of Afghanistan. That would be easily understood by Reagan, and was indeed welcomed. If only those Third World countries would do what they were told, neither superpower would need to force them to do it!

On arms reduction, the main issue of the meeting, would British and French missiles be included in the count of the balance of destructive power? The Soviet Union says yes, the USA, no. Would the star wars programme be put on ice? How would each superpower verify the 'reductions' of the other? What would the target for reduced numbers or percentage cuts be? These were the central questions. The world waited for the seeds of agreement. The world still waits ... and waits.

Why then the acclaim? They like each other. They will meet again. We can rest easy in our beds....

established as "socialist", even though it had murdered many revolutionaries in the major towns and was continuing Haile Selassie's war against the Eritrean people, whose struggle the Soviet Union had previously claimed to support.

After aiding the Vietnamese against US imperialism, it backed a purge of Marxist-Leninists and Chinese members of the Vietnam Workers' Party and followed up by sponsoring Vietnam's aggression against Kampuchea and domination of Laos.

The Soviet Union has invaded Afghanistan and wants to become part of a joint superpower agreement on the Middle East. In essence it wants to struggle with the US and its allies over the redivision of the world and the continued development of mutually agreed spheres of influence.

## US IMPERIALISM REVITALISED

For its part the USA is striving to maintain its dominant position as economic exploiter of the Third World and its present extensive political hegemony.

It is openly financing and helping to plan armed aggression by reactionaries in Nicaragua, as well as giving military and political backing to dictatorships from South America to the Philippines.

After a period of adopting a defensive posture following defeats in Indochina and Central America, and successful revolution in Africa against

the interests of both the USA and its European imperialist allies, America has gone back on the offensive. The direct invasion of Grenada was a reflection of this change.

## SELF-DETERMINATION IS A PRINCIPLE

Each superpower uses the aggression, exploitation or oppression of the other to justify its own interference. For communists, the right of nations to genuine self-determination and independence is a principle. Firstly, it is up to the people of each nation to carry forward social revolution and change when they are ready to. There is no such thing as an imposed 'socialism', whether it is imposed from outside by a so-called 'socialist' power, or whether it is imposed from inside by an unrepresentative group of 'saviours from on high'. Socialism, by definition, can only be a popular act of the masses. It presupposes democracy and participation of the masses in every sphere, as well as the exercising of a mass dictatorship over the minority of exploiters who will try by every means to regain their power. Secondly, the struggle for self-determination and independence is a direct struggle against imperialism. It represents a hammer against the biggest exploiters in the world - the imperialists, and particularly the superpowers. This is the case whatever class or internal social system is represented by some of those who fight for independence.



Soviet Prog-7 missile.



US cruise missile.

## MUTUAL JUSTIFICATION

It is inevitable that each superpower will back those fighting for independence from the other, whilst loudly denouncing the aggression of the other. At the same time, they will meddle in the independence movement promoting one section against another aiming at becoming a new dominating power should apparent independence be achieved. Where the independence movement resists such pressure it will be opposed by both superpowers. Such is the position of the movements in the Philippines, in Eritrea and in Tigre.

Meanwhile the Soviet Union claims its 'internationalist' credentials by supporting one of the organisations in Azania and by proffering support (with strings - certainly in the end, if not at first) in Africa, Asia and Southern and Central America, to certain liberation movements, or sections of them.

In turn the USA gives aid (limited) to certain sections of the independence movement in Afghanistan and in Kampuchea, and leaps to applaud (and to infiltrate) any democratic, independence movement in Eastern Europe.

At every point the superpower that dominates each of these nations then uses the other's contact with sections of the independence movement to denounce 'subversion' and to justify its continued domination oppression and exploitation of that nation.

They feed off each other.

## THE RULES OF CONFLICT

The spectacle we have seen in Geneva is, then, not a dialogue for peaceful co-existence between the 'leaders' of socialist and capitalist blocs. It is a meeting of two opposing superpowers both bent on maintaining or expanding their imperialist interests. Whatever the outcome of any specific meeting, the underlying cause of conflict will not go away. As rival superpowers they inevitably confront each other on a global level. It is this inevitable conflict that leads to the necessity of negotiations. They have a common interest in domination and may agree on such points. They have an interest in trying to establish the 'rules' of the conflict - in to some extent accepting each other's defined main areas, and in keeping the clashes between them

confined to indirect conflicts where they back opposite sides.

## 'REGIONAL ISSUES'

They discussed 'regional issues'. That is they discussed the business of other countries which were not represented. The media even floated possible trade-offs. They speculated on the possibility of a Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan with some sort of joint agreement on what sort of government would be left there. (The people of Afghanistan would have to like it, or lump it, of course.) In return the US may invite the USSR to join them in working out the future of the Middle East! What was agreed privately is unknown but the media have clearly expected us to be delighted that Gorbachev and Reagan got on so well with each other. Not surprising, really.

## WHAT DISARMAMENT?

As far as deals on nuclear disarmament, little has been said. Should a deal be made, it is hardly likely to lead to massive reductions in nuclear weapons.

Without doubt, we are in favour of nuclear disarmament, but in supporting this demand of the peace movement, we have to say that it is not the nuclear weapons that cause war between imperialists, it is the imperialist system itself. If we are to oppose war, we must oppose imperialism - including British imperialism. At the



same time, we will continue to repeat that it is the contention between the superpowers that is the prime cause of war, and we will continue to call for opposition to the superpowers, and support those forces that take that stand.

Slogans calling for peace are meaningless without slogans calling for opposition to the war-mongers - the imperialists, particularly the superpowers.

## International Notes

**PALESTINE:** Despite Zionist efforts to destroy the PLO through actions such as the recent murderous attack on its headquarters in Tunis, the Palestinians under Israeli occupation continue to give it their support. Mayors, heads of local councils and national institutions, charitable societies, women's organisations, trade unions and academics sent an appeal to the representatives of the two superpowers in Geneva calling on them to recognize the desire of the Palestinian people to be represented by the PLO in any peace talks on the Palestine conflict.

**PHILIPPINES:** "Watch Report", a CIA quarterly, has identified the Philippines as "the country with the greatest potential for instability among countries in which US security ranks high." CIA boss William Casey has warned Reagan of the "precarious position" of the Philippines.

The US recently gave Marcos a 180 million dollars military and economic aid package. It has also announced plans to spend 1.3 billion dollars to "upgrade" its Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base in the Philippines. The National Democratic Front of the Philippines, the leading force opposing the US-Marcos dictatorship, sees this move as a step towards direct US intervention against the growing popular opposition movement.

## BRITISH SHARES IN BLOOD AND SLAVERY

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

All the liberation organisations, black trade unions and other popular movements in Azania (South Africa) support sanctions against the South African racists. Most countries in the world also support sanctions, but to have maximum effect, they would need to be backed by the states with the biggest business connections with South Africa - above all, Britain and the USA. But the ruling classes of those countries make such profits out of the exploitation of black labour that they have strongly resisted all calls to join other countries in imposing sanctions.

Britain is the power with the biggest stake in South Africa, with a third of all foreign investments. It has £11 billion tied up in the South African economy - £5 billion in direct investment, and £6 billion through shares in companies operating in South Africa, invested in businesses, pension funds, individual British citizens, etc. This amounts to around 8% of total British overseas investment.

In 1984, a year when the current crisis of the South African racist system began to break, British banks and companies were still able to make £1 billion out of their South African investments.

## BRITISH BANKS

Barclays and Standard Chartered, both British-based banks, control over 50% of South African banking. Loans extended by these banks are amongst the major sources of finance for South African programmes of investment in power, transport, communications and military industries.

Benn was in charge of energy policy.

Although South Africa's coal reserves are among the largest in the world, it did not attempt to make full use of them to meet its own energy needs until the 1970's. Before that, it was content to take advantage of the relatively cheap supplies of oil which it could obtain on world markets, especially from the Middle East. But South Africa was hit badly by the rise in oil prices in 1973-74, especially since the Arab oil producers began to make efforts to block oil from their countries from going to South Africa. That left Iran as the main Middle Eastern oil supplier, but that changed with the overthrow of the Shah in 1979.

British/Dutch company Shell and British Petroleum maintained supplies of oil and both of them are involved in the development of nuclear technology in South Africa. BP has also been involved in the development of the coal mining industry in the country. For decades (until

The computer firm, ICL, has supplied advanced computer equipment which South Africa is unable to produce for itself; in fact, about a quarter of the South African regime's computer technology is supplied by ICL. This includes computers used by the police to operate the hated pass system, under which adult black people have to carry passes at all times, on pain of arrest.

Both Plessey and GEC-Marconi have supplied radar equipment to the racist armed forces. Plessey claimed that the mobile radar they sent in 1981 was for civilian use, but that makes it rather hard to explain why they trained South African military personnel in its operation. Such material is not only used in South Africa and Namibia, but also in air attacks against neighbouring Mozambique and Angola.

British Leyland is another company into which the last Labour government put cash, but failed to use its control to make it shut down its operations in South Africa. Leyland vehicles are used by the army of occupation in Namibia, and its landrovers have been used by police since the Soweto uprising of 1976 to break up demonstrations.

In refusing to impose sanctions and taking no real action to stop British firms having dealings with South Africa, one British government after another has been loyal to the class whose interests it represents:

## SOLIDARITY WITH AZANIA

Because of the big British involvement in South Africa, solidarity work here can be of some value to the liberation forces in Azania. In the past few months, there have been demonstrations and meetings in many towns and cities throughout Scotland, Wales and England. Pickets have regularly taken place outside South Africa House in central London, while there have also been pickets of branches of Barclays Bank, where customers have been urged not to do business or keep accounts, because of its important role in propping up the racist colonial system in South Africa. In a few places, activists have hit at Barclays by raiding branches at night and spray painting slogans on their walls and glueing up the locks. Renewed calls have been made for people to "boycott the products of apartheid" in their shops: Outspan, Cape, Del Monte and Libbys fruit, John West, Glenryck and Puffin canned fish etc.

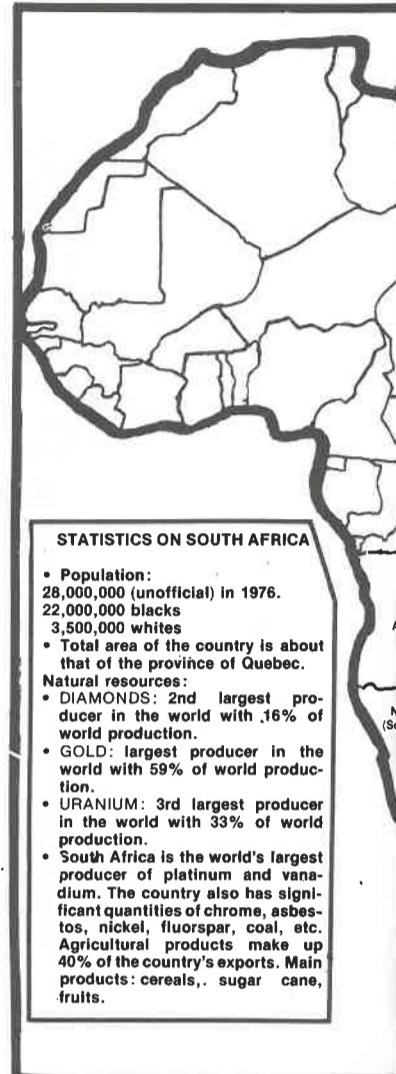
It is good that there is such a lot of activity against the South African racist regime and its supporters going on, and it should be expanded further, with people being drawn in to work at whatever level they feel able to commit themselves. It is important that ongoing solidarity work should include more material support to the struggles of both the Azanian and Namibian peoples, who face the same enemies. To support their work, either in Britain or Africa, they need cash. Raising money for the liberation movements is not an act of charity, but of solidarity. The wealth of Azania has flowed to Britain for centuries, while the blood of its people flowed upon the ground. Material solidarity can make a small contribution to ending that situation once and for all.

Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania,  
323 Willesden High Road,  
London NW10.

Black Consciousness Movement,  
BM Box 4830,  
London WC1N 3XX.

African National Congress of South Africa,  
PO Box 38,  
28 Penton Street,  
London N1 9PR.

SWAPO of Namibia,  
Namibia Support Committee,  
PO Box 16,  
London NW5 2LW.



## Boycott South

### WHAT TO BOYCOTT

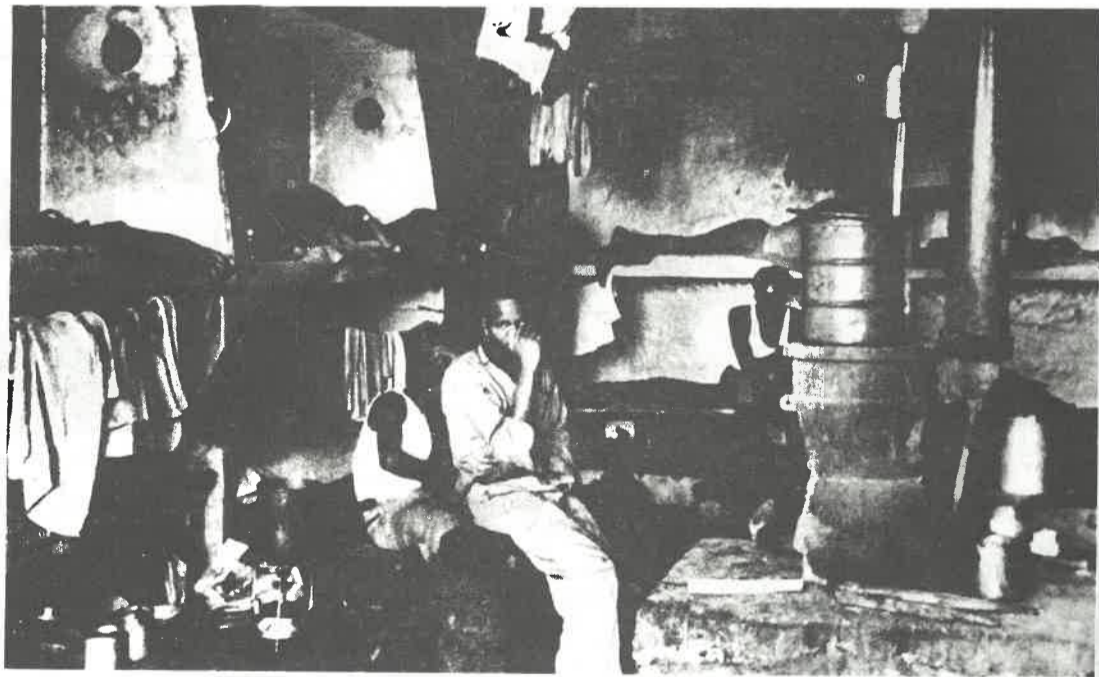
\* Fruit marketed under Cape and Outspan labels. Koo, Del Monte, S&B, Silver Leaf, Gold Reef, Goddess, John West, Sharwood, and Grants are all trademarks used for South African fruits.

\* South African sherry and brandy are marketed under Lanzerac, Koopmansloof, Zonnbloem, Theuniskraai and Allesverloren Swartland brands.

\* Tinned meat and fish (especially pilchards and corned beef) are sold under the labels Armour, S&B and Bull brand. Also Happy Pet pet food.

\* Look out for Pat Shub, Miss Cassidy and Country Casual labels in women's fashions, Rex Truform in men's suits and furs marketed under the brand name Swakoar.

\* Beware of "RSA" as the country of origin: this stands for "Republic of South Africa".



Living quarters of black miners in Azania.

## BRITISH COMPANIES

Azania is a land rich in natural resources. It has the world's largest reserves of gold and platinum: 40% of South Africa's earnings come from gold, and it is the source of 60% of world gold supplies. British firms are involved in this industry directly. Among the firms paying the lowest wages is Gold Fields of South Africa, part of the British firm of Consolidated Goldfields. Gold Fields of South Africa is South Africa's second largest gold producer.

South Africa has substantial reserves of uranium itself, but also controls the reserves of Namibia, which it occupies. Over half of the uranium used in Britain is supplied via Rio Tinto Zinc from Namibia, under agreements made with the last Labour government when Tony

privatisation under the Thatcher government), British governments, Labour or Conservative held a share of around 50% in BP, but never made a move to stop its dealings with South Africa, despite their proclaimed dislike for apartheid.

GEC and Babcock International have been major suppliers of generators for power plants to feed South African industry, while British banks helped provide loans for the Electricity Supply Commission's nuclear programme and for the SASOL oil from coal projects.

## TECHNOLOGY OF REPRESSION

British firms have supplied the South African regime with equipment used to suppress the resistance of the people of Azania and Namibia.

the monopoly capitalist class. Through super-exploitation of black labour - paying black workers one quarter to one fifth of the wage they paid to white employees - they have made spectacular 21% profits on investments in South Africa compared to an average of only 9% elsewhere. No wonder they want to hang on as long as they can.

But that might not be for too long. The mass struggles of the past year have announced to them that their days of exploiting Azania's people are numbered. Profits have been hit, and there has been a flight of capital abroad to places where investments will be safer. For years, British companies have ignored calls to pull out of South Africa, but they're now facing a situation in which, increasingly, their only choice will be to get out before they're kicked out.



Henrik Beslav, of Danish Seaman's Union and member of Maritime Unions Against Apartheid. The poster reads: "The United Nations Needs Your Help. Stop Oil. Stop Apartheid."



Young Azanians fighting back during the 1976 Soweto uprising.

### POPULAR MOVEMENTS IN AZANIA

Three liberation organisations in Azania are illegal, but still have various degrees of popular support:

The African National Congress, founded in 1912, says that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, and struggles for a multi-racial society. Its most well-known leader is Nelson Mandela, who has been imprisoned by the South African authorities for over 20 years. After it was banned in 1960, it formed an armed wing, *Umkonto We Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation).

The Pan-Africanist Congress, founded in 1959, broke away from ANC because of political disagreements. It says that Azania (it sees 'South Africa' as a colonial name) belongs to its black people, its liberation struggle must be based on its African masses and fights for a non-racial society. Its best known leader and founder was Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, who died in 1978 after years of imprisonment had ruined his health. Its present leader is Johnson Mhlabo, recently released from Robben Island prison after over 20 years of captivity. PAC has an armed wing, the Azanian People's Liberation Army.

The Black Consciousness Movement was formed in the mid-1970's. In its outlook, it has much in common with PAC. It was black consciousness organisations which led the uprisings in Soweto and other areas in 1976. The most well-known leader of BCM was Steve Biko, who was murdered by the racist police in 1977. BCM does not have an armed wing at present, though it believes only an armed people's struggle will free Azania.

There are both legal political and trade union, nationalist organisations inside Azania today.

The United Democratic Front has a political line similar to that of the ANC, while the National Forum Committee, whose main sponsor is the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO), takes a black consciousness line. Both have massive popular support among black people.

There has been a massive growth of independent trade unions among black people in Azania in the past few years. The largest grouping is the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) which hopes to unite with independent unions such as the National Union of Mineworkers, of which between 120,000 and 150,000 of Azania's half million black miners are members, into a new super federation. Other federations are the Congress of Unions of South Africa

(CUSA) and the newly-formed Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions (AZACTU). Some unions are affiliated to the UDF. FOSATU unions and some others are not affiliated to either political organisation, stressing their independence while supporting initiatives taken by them. AZACTU is linked to AZAPO.

These are the organisations created by the Azanian people to fight for their freedom. All know that the crucial factor in the fight to liberate their country is the mobilisation of the Azanian people themselves, but at the same time, they all consider that international solidarity action can assist them in winning their independence.

### THE REALITY OF LIFE IN AZANIA

"Apartheid" (literally "separateness") is the term used by the white minority settler regime to describe the system of government in Azania. Essentially, this system is the complete exclusion of all non-white people, and especially the indigenous African people, from all organs of political power. The African people do not even have a vote. Under apartheid, everyone is arbitrarily classified as African, Asian, White or Coloured. Despite some cosmetic change, such as abolishing the laws forbidding sexual relations between members of different 'races' and the removal of "whites only" signs from many parks, beaches, restaurants etc., apartheid remains in essence unchanged.

The central problem in Azania is not though apartheid in itself but the imperialist domination of Azania which it acts to prop up. These imperialist relations have been described in earlier issues of 'Class Struggle'. British involvement is described in a separate article in this issue. The huge profits made by imperialist companies operating in Azania contribute to the wealth and power of the imperialist ruling class. They also contribute to a higher standard of living within the imperialist countries and the general stability of the system. But they are extracted at the expense of the people of Azania and for them, mean only misery, hunger and destitution. For example:

\*\*\* 80% of the land is reserved for the 4.5 million whites who constitute only 15.3% of the population.

\*\*\* Africans are only tolerated in 'white' areas as labour units. They are crowded into compounds, hostels and matchbox houses in township areas, where

they have no political and few civil rights.

\*\*\* African women and children, the old and sick ('unproductive persons') are confined to the overcrowded 'Bantustans' or tribal homelands which constitute only 13.7% of the land - usually the poorest.

\*\*\* On average African industrial workers receive only a quarter of the pay of whites and are restricted to menial positions.

\*\*\* Expenditure on education for each white child in 1983 was £787; for each African child £95.

\*\*\* African children in the Bantustans are 20 times more likely to die before the age of 5 than white children. For

\* in 1960 the ANC and PAC were banned.

\* in 1977 alone, 18 anti-apartheid organisations were banned.

\* at least 1,000 people were killed in the 1976-77 student uprisings.

\* in 1984 over 150 people were killed and at least 1,200 detained.

The Pass Laws are a key instrument of apartheid. Every African over 16 years outside a 'Bantustan' area must carry a pass or reference book. Failure to produce it on request results in immediate arrest.

Between 1948 and 1981, at least 12.5 million people were prosecuted under the pass laws:



A policeman inspecting the passbooks of two black workers.

every 10,000 whites there are 20 doctors; for every 10,000 Africans, less than one doctor.

This is the background to the current upsurge of fierce struggle against imperialism in Azania. In its increasingly desperate fight against the righteous anger of the people, the regime has provided itself with a huge array of repressive powers. For instance:

Under the Internal Security Act (1982) in South Africa, the Minister of Law and Order has the power to:

\* hold people in indefinite 'preventive' detention without charge or trial.

\* declare organisations illegal.

\* 'ban' individuals (putting them out of circulation) or place them under house arrest.

\* ban newspapers and other publications.

Under South African security laws:

finances and prison sentences have become increasingly heavy.

Restrictive laws against trade unions are equally harsh:

\*\*\* Since 1973 there has been a right to strike but it is so restrictive that of 1,400 strikes by black workers over the next eight years, only three were 'legal'.

\*\*\* In September 1984, 16 black mineworkers were shot dead and over 700 wounded by police during a strike.

\*\*\* In November 1984, at the government-owned SASOL plant, 6,000 workers were sacked for joining a two-day 'stay away'.

Fundamentally it is a sign of the regime's weakness that it has to use such stark, terroristic means to survive: whether it takes a year, ten years or longer, eventually it will be defeated and replaced by a government truly representing the Azanian people.

### African Goods!

\* The P100 and P100L Ford pick-up trucks have been arriving here for a couple of years, and are not easily recognised as South African by the unwary. Ford describes the P100 as a 'vehicle based on a well proven British car' but they are actually assembled in Port Elizabeth.

\* Other items reported include saucepans and cooking pots under the Pointer label; also baking tins under the Harvest Gold and Silver Star brand names and also labelled as Paton Calvert products. Shoes marketed under the Carvela name from Dickins & Jones have also had South African labels. Creative Stationery notelets and writing paper, and self-assembly furniture from MFI, also bear the 'Made in RSA' label.

### WHAT'S BEEN ACHIEVED SO FAR

\* Southampton dockers have refused to handle arms shipments to South Africa.

\* In many areas, people have hit at retailers like Safeway and Sainsburys who refuse to stop selling South African goods by organising mass 'shop-ins'. In these, large numbers of people go to a store together, put all the South African food they can find in trolleys, take them to the check-out, and then announce they don't want them!

\* The Cooperative Wholesale Society ceased producing any South African goods under its own label.

\* The clothing chain Hepworth decided not to renew a £6 million order for South African women's clothes following a sustained campaign by the Anti-Apartheid Women's Committee.

\* The cities of Birmingham, Edinburgh and Nottingham backed the boycott.

# Chemical Hiroshima

## BHOPAL: One Year After the Disaster

One year ago, in the early hours of 3rd December, as massive leak of lethal Methyl Iso-Cyanate gas from Union Carbide's pesticides plant in Bhopal, in India, killed an estimated 10,000 people and seriously affected 200,000 others. This "chemical Hiroshima" was no accident. Thousands died and thousands continue to suffer because of the profit-maximising policies of Union Carbide, a huge US transnational company. Bhopal is no exception. Its stands as a symbol of the crimes committed by imperialist against the people of the world, particularly of the Third World. For the past year, workers and the people of Bhopal have organised to expose the crimes of Union Carbide, to demand immediate relief and some long-term compensation. A national week of protest has been organised in India from November 27th to December 3rd. The Indian people are calling for international solidarity with their actions.

Union Carbide (UC) ranks 41 among US companies. Its annual turnover exceeds the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of some of the world's small countries. It operates over 500 plants, mines and mills in 36 countries, with 100,000 employees worldwide. Its interests include chemicals, metal and carbon products, mining including of uranium, and plutonium processing. Not surprisingly, it has major investments in South Africa. In the UK, it has 15 plants and a number of subsidiaries.

In 1983, UC was operating 14 plants in India, manufacturing pesticides, chemicals, batteries, industrial carbon and other products. An advertisement, described UC's role as follows:

"....India needs the technical knowledge of the western world. For example, working with Indian engineers and technicians, Union Carbide recently made available its vast scientific resources to help build a major chemical plant near Bombay. Throughout the free world, Union Carbide has been actively engaged in building plants for the manufacture of chemicals, plastics, carbons, gases and metal. The people of Union Carbide welcome the opportunity to use their knowledge and skills in partnership with the citizens of many great countries."

The reality of the "partnership" between the people of India and UC, was tragically exposed last December. UC is only one of the immensely powerful and wealthy companies whose only interest in the people of the world is how much profit can be made from them.

Over the last year, the truth about what actually happened and why it happened has gradually come out in spite of the attempts of UC to conceal and dispute the facts.

The rundown of safety systems at the Bhopal plant took place in the context of intense competition between the big companies over the sale of pesticides, the product of the Bhopal plant. The Bhopal plant was losing money and UC was running it down and planning to transfer production to Indonesia. (It finally closed down in July of this year.)

Management had ignored complaints from unions at the plant and residents of Bhopal. Numerous smaller "accidents" had been reported and no action had been taken. Manning levels had in fact been run down. At least one worker had died from phosgene poisoning in the period before last December. The danger from the plant to both workers and those living in the area was no unknown.

Only a few months before December, a local Hindi-language paper had printed an article detailing the danger of a major disaster at the plant - "Bhopal Sitting on a Volcano".

UC was simply not concerned about the dangers. Safety costs money. Even after the disaster, UC held back information, denied responsibility and has generally shown a racist disregard for the lives and health of the people of Bhopal. UC,

of course, is not alone, but typifies the super-exploitation of the people of the Third World by imperialism.

It is well known, for example, that since more has become known about the dangers of working with certain chemicals or substances such as asbestos, Western companies have consciously moved these industries to the Third World, because they believe the health risks will not show up.

Companies like UC would not be able to operate as they do, without the collaboration of certain sections of people in the Third World, who stand to gain from this collaboration.

This is well illustrated by Bhopal. One local politician M.N. Buch lost his post as a result of challenging UC's decision to build the plant where they did, in the middle of a population centre, when it moved to India in the 1970's.

There were too, connections between UC and local government. For example, the plant's lawyer was a local official; UC's Public Relations director was a nephew of a former education minister.

### PEOPLE ORGANISE

In the year since the disaster, the people of Bhopal have found that in fighting for relief, medical treatment, compensation and alternative employment, they have had to fight both UC and the complicity of the Indian government, at both local and national levels.

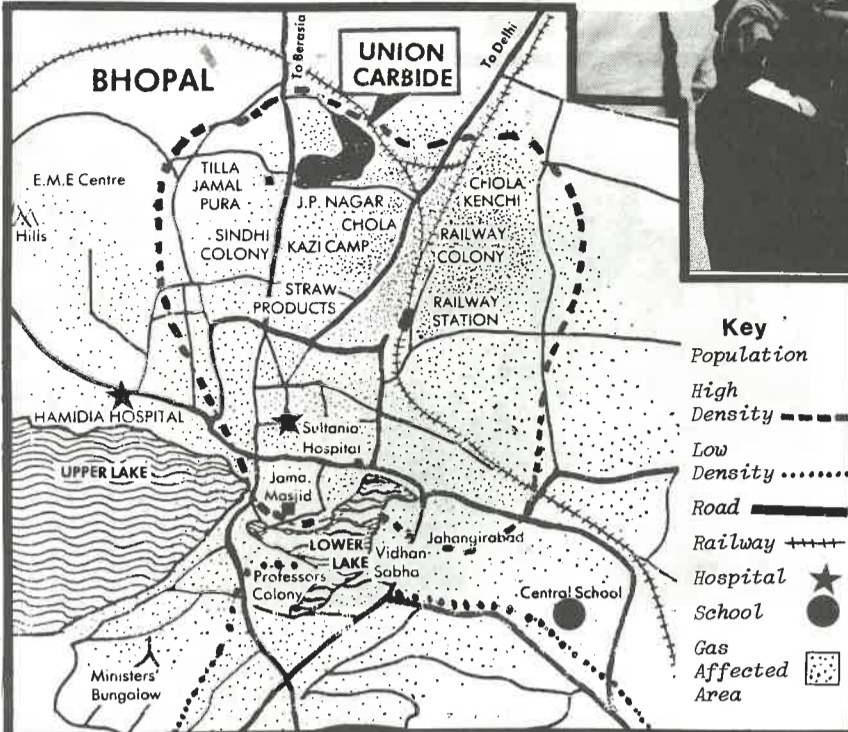
The legal battles over compensation are likely to take many years. People in Bhopal have organised relying on their own strength to fight for their demands.

\*\*\* The Zahrehi Gas Kand Sangharsh Morch organised an All-India Convention on Bhopal in February, which brought together groups concerned with civil rights, science action, health action, trade unions, women's and other mass organisations. Their demands included suitable medical treatment including distribution of the effective antidote to cyanide poisoning.

*Companies produce pesticides for profit with no regard for the safety either of workers who make them, or who have to use them.*



Thanks to Bhopal Solidarity Group and Bhopal Victims Support Committee for much of the information in this article. They can be contacted at: BSG, c/o Commonground Resource Centre, 87 The Wicker, Sheffield S3 8HT. Tel: 0742-580127. BVSC, c/o Top Floor, 50/2 King St, Southall, Middlesex. Tel: 01-843-2333/9281.



### UNION CARBIDE DENIES RESPONSIBILITY

Many lives could have been saved and the sufferings of thousands more people alleviated if UC had accepted responsibility and given accurate information about the chemical processes involved at its plant. UC's main concern has been to deny liability and avoid responsibility for compensation. They have even alleged that sabotage was the cause of the leak, a claim taken seriously by no-one.

By 2.00 a.m. on December 3rd, people were dying in the local hospital at the rate of one a

### What were the Effects on People?

#### HOW DID THE GAS LEAK HAPPEN?

The Union Carbide plant at Bhopal produced a pesticide called Sevin, in the course of which a highly toxic chemical, Methyl Iso-Cyanate (MIC) was processed. MIC was stored in three stainless steel tanks and it was from one of these that the leak of gas occurred.

On the night of December 2nd to 3rd, because of a chemical reaction within the tank, pressure built up within one of three tanks to the point where, around midnight, the gas started pouring out into the atmosphere. For two hours the safety valve in the tank remained open releasing over 50,000 pounds of MIC and other gases in liquid and vapour form: phosgene, hydrogen cyanide and carbon dioxide have all been mentioned.

#### SAFETY SYSTEMS NOT WORKING

It has been revealed that none of the main safety systems were working on the night of the leak:

\* A refrigeration system which kept down the temperature in the tank to stop chemical reactions taking place, was not working.

\* A caustic soda scrubber intended to neutralise escaping gases was out of order. It was, at any rate, inadequate to cope with the amount of MIC stored in the tank.

\* A flare tower system could not be used because of corroded piping. A water curtain system only reached to a height of 12-15 metres when the gas leak was 33 metres off the ground.

#### IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

Workers in the plant at the time realised that a dangerous leak was happening and most managed to escape the cloud of gas by fleeing in the opposite direction. The people most affected were those living in the crowded areas near the plant and in the vicinity of the railway station. The first that most people knew was being choked, suffocated and blinded by the gas. The public alarm system at the plant had not been used because there had been a previous policy decision not to alarm the public because of previous "minor leaks".

#### THE EFFECT OF THE GAS ON THE PEOPLE

It is estimated that 10,000 people were killed by the gas and 200,000 affected by it. Of these, 50,000 are one year later still suffering serious long-term effects and many are still dying. The effects on women and children being born now and in the future are still unknown.

minute. The majority were children. Many never even reached the hospital. The immediate symptoms were burning and pain in the eyes leading to blindness, local burns on the skin, nausea, vomiting and choking.

At this point, a UC spokesman described MIC as an "irritant" and advised treatment with water.

#### LONG TERM EFFECTS

The long-term effects on those who survived the first hours include respiratory problems because of damage to lung tissues and a general weakness. Eyesight and women's reproductive health are affected. Many are now unable to work as a direct result of the gas.

#### TREATMENT

Treatment of the survivors has been hindered by concern to cover up the true facts. Doctors working in Bhopal long ago detected the symptoms of cyanide poisoning, particularly through post-mortem examinations. UC, often with the complicity of the Indian government, have denied that this was possible. In doing this, they denied to the gas victims the only safe and effective antidote to chronic cyanide poisoning - sodium thiosulphate (NaTS). Supplies of NaTS have not been made available. It was not until August of this year that a court order was obtained which instructed the local state authorities to supply the drug to patients. In the meantime, hundreds more died or went untreated.

#### WOMEN'S HEALTH

Immediately following the gas disaster, many women suffered spontaneous abortions. Since then the difficulties suffered by women have grown. Painful and abnormal menstrual periods, excessive white discharge, pelvic inflammatory disease, reduced lactation and itching of the vulva are just some of the problems experienced by women.

In addition, only 1 in 3 babies born to women who were pregnant at the time of the disaster survives, some of which were macerated fetuses (decomposed in the womb), which had been asphyxiated. Babies have also been born with serious respiratory, pulmonary and neurological disabilities.

Correspondingly, the social and economic status of women in Bhopal has suffered. Their ability to carry out paid work has been cut drastically, while their value as child bearers has affected their standing in the community.





# Campaign Against Racism in School

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

On November 22nd, 1,500 people demonstrated outside Highbury Magistrates Court, London, in support of the Daneford 12. The majority were teachers who had come to support their 12 colleagues, charged with obstruction.

The charges were made following arrests on a picket of the Tower Hamlets Divisional Office of the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). It was a protest concerning the Local Education Officer's and the ILEA's refusal to do anything about racist violence in schools, particularly Daneford.



## Daneford 12..... Successful March and Rally

The campaign to support the Daneford 12 is supported by Tower Hamlets Campaign Against Racism in Schools (CARS), as well as national minority, trade union, teachers' and parents' organisations.

Co-Chairperson of CARS, Kumar Murshid, explained the background:

"The present situation in schools in East London is cause for very serious concern. For years, Asian and black school children have been the victims

Throughout the recent period, Bangladeshi students have been organising within the school to fight racism. Their action has inspired NUT members. They have held meetings, produced letters for parents and leaflets for their fellow students within the school. Above all they have made these demands to Headmaster Williams:

\*\*\* All racist boys to be thrown out of school.

\*\*\* Racist teachers to be sacked.

\*\*\* The Headmaster must do something about racist fights, not just ignore them.

\*\*\* Bengali lessons for all boys who want them, not just for fourth and fifth years.

take any action on a whole series of racist attacks on school students, both within the school and on students travelling to and from school.

### ILEA'S SHAM ANTI-RACISM

While students, parents and teachers have been drawn into the fight against racism, the ILEA has refused to take any action against racism, exposing as a sham its anti-racist policies. CARS sums up:

# Black People Demand Justice

of racial violence in and around the school premises. For years they have suffered the prejudice and indifference of governors, headmasters and teachers. The climate of hostility and discrimination, buttressed by the structural racism of institutions, has been a major barrier to the development of our youth."

### RACIST ATTACKS

The most recent spate of racist attacks started with a vicious razor attack on a young Bangladeshi boy in Daneford School, where 70% of the students are Bangladeshi. This was the immediate reason for the picket of the ILEA who, on paper have an anti-racist policy but in practice, have refused to do anything about racism in

schools.

CARS, set up in July, grew out of cooperation between the Bengali community, their organisations such as the Federation of Bangladeshi Youth Organisations, teachers, school students and parents.

Another recent activity was a picket organised by the Trades Council with FBYO along with teachers, to oppose a racist careers convention in the school, as the participants included the police, the armed forces and Barclays Bank.

CARS has produced a detailed account of racism in Daneford School, ranging from decisions to remove Bengali from the timetable of some forms to the refusal of the headmaster to

"The Campaign Against Racism in Schools has successfully brought together students, parents, teachers, and community activists from all over East London to actively fight racism. In the process, many have already had direct experience of police brutality when 11 people were arrested after the police attacked a peaceful demonstration at the ILEA Divisional Office in Tower Hamlets."

"Asian and black people have always known the forces you must contend with when fighting racism but for many of the teachers and white supporters it was a new and sobering lesson."

'Class Struggle' hopes to carry a longer article on the fight against racism in schools, with more details of London activity and the campaign to get rid of Honeyford from Drummond Middle School, Bradford. (See letter in this issue.)

## Mrs Groce paralysed

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

"Mrs Groce - paralysed. Mrs Jarrett murdered. Who's next?" asked the organisers of a march demanding justice for the victims of police violence and condemning racist policing. The November 11th march mobilised thousands of people to turn out and carry their protest from Brixton's Brockwell Park to the centre of London. A large contingent came down from the Broadwater Farm Estate, and many people joined the march in Brixton. It was the support committee and organisations of the people of these two areas which had worked to build this protest.

The great majority of the marchers were black, but there was representation from local white trade unionists and some left organisations. Workers at Brixton DHSS office lined the street as the march passed through the centre of Brixton with placards reading: "We Support You!"

I was near the back of the march

## Mrs Jarrett murdered

### Who Next?

when it started, surrounded by people from 'Militant' and Socialist Workers' Party who got on my nerves with their "Maggie, Maggie, Maggie, Out! Out! Out!" slogans. (As if getting Maggie out was going to make any difference to police racism!) So I moved up and re-joined the march where it consisted mainly of black people who called out slogans against police violence and racism and others concerned with the issues on which the march had been called. There were some good slogans on the placards people brought, such as "No More Pigs on the Farm!", a reference to the demand of the Broadwater Farm Youth Association and others that the 400 police who occupy the estate every night should clear out.

The police were there in force, but seemed to be wary of giving the march any trouble, because of the defiant mood of the people. Nevertheless, they mounted a film camera on top

of Brixton Police Station (people shouted "Burn It Down!" as they passed) and had photographers clicking away from a footbridge beneath which the march passed before crossing the Thames. They waited to make a move until the march was dispersing at Hyde Park, and then they clustered around the entrance to Marble Arch underground station, hassling some of the young black people as they came by in twos and threes. That was when they made eight arrests.

At the end of the march, there were speakers from Broadwater Farm, the Groce Family Support Committee, Black Liberation Front, Newham 7 Campaign and other black organisations, all united in their condemnation of state racism and demand for justice.

# Fight Back



JUSTICE FOR THE PRYCES!

The 'Justice For The Pryces' Support Committee is not satisfied with the verdict of manslaughter on the killer of Eustace Pryce. (For details, see earlier issues of 'Class Struggle'.) Newhouse, who stabbed Eustace from behind, is a known racist and the campaign states: "It is clear to everyone in Newham that he set out to kill one of the black youths, for which he is now a hero in Canning Town; but the prosecution refused to recognise the racist element of the incident."

The campaign also commented: "The sole aim of the police during their initial investigations was to criminalise Gerald Pryce (Eustace's brother - CS) and the other black youths. On the day of the incident, when police officers arrested Gerald, instead of allowing him to go to hospital with Eustace, they taunted him with questions about why he had hurt his brother - trying to blame the murder on him."



STOP THE DEPORTATIONS OF BLACK PEOPLE!

The Khan Family Defence Campaign was set up on 14th August, 1985, in Manchester. The major objective of the campaign is to keep the Khan family united and in this country. The first campaign meeting held at Longsight Library, Manchester, was attended by over 50 organisations, trade unionists, political organisations and members of the public. The campaign continues to meet regularly and is gathering tremendous support among the Asian community and the community in general.

Shaukat Khan came to Britain over 13 years ago. He is living with his wife and two British-born children, Imran aged 5 years and Ifran, aged 4 years, in Manchester. Shaukat's wife has the right to live in this country, yet Shaukat is being forced to be separated from his wife and children. For more information, contact: Khan Family Defence Campaign, c/o 593 Stockport Rd, Longsight, Manchester 13.

Tasneen Butt, of Bradford, is also fighting for her right to stay in this country, together with her four months old baby. Mrs Butt came to this country as a fiancée in 1984. She got married here but failed to follow the correct procedure for applying for indefinite leave to stay. If she had followed this procedure, she would have had her application automatically approved. Now the Home Office want to deport her and her baby.

Mrs Butt returned to Pakistan for only six days to see her mother who was seriously ill. When she returned, she was detained and only allowed in on a temporary basis after intervention by an MP. A last minute stop was put on the deportation and a campaign is now fighting for Mrs Butt's right to stay. For more information, contact: Tasneen Butt Defence Campaign, c/o Bangla Deshi Youth Centre, 40 Cornwall Rd, Bradford BD8 7JN.

BROADWATER FARM STILL UNDER OCCUPATION

Since the uprising on Broadwater Farm, 102 people have been arrested by police occupying the estate. The police hold the estate in force every night, and are permanently present, standing on walkways and balconies and sitting in vans at the entrances to the estate or in its car park. Harassment of people on the estate, especially young black people, is a daily occurrence, and there has been a series of raids on flats there. One night at the beginning of November, a whole block was raided: police smashed doors in and turned flats upside down before coming away empty handed. Sometimes when meetings are going on in the Youth Association building, people look up and see half a dozen police with their noses pressed against the window.

WE WILL NOT FORGET!

On Saturday 9th November, over 500 people marched in Ilford to protest against racist attacks and to remember the Kassam family. Mrs Shamira Kassam and her three sons, Zamir (6), Rahim (5) and Alim (1), were murdered when racist thugs set fire to their home in Oakwood in Ilford, in July this year. Mr Mirza Kassam and his brother were also seriously injured in the attack.



The march was called by the Joint Campaign Committee who pointed out that since 1980, no less than 20 black people have been murdered by racists in the East End of London, five of them in Ilford. Last year an Asian ticket collector, Mr Peter Burns, was brutally murdered at Seven Kings station by being stabbed through the eye by a white gang.

The campaign also pointed out police negligence in pursuing the murderers. Mrs Khan and her three children were murdered in Walthamstow in 1981. The culprits have not yet been found. As one speaker at the march, S. Kadri, said: "When a policeman is killed in Tottenham, they are quick to make arrests. But when members of our community are murdered, where are they?"

Marchers observed a minute's silence in front of the gutted home of the Kassam family and a bouquet of flowers was placed in front of the sealed door. At a rally at the end of the march, people pledged: "We Will Not Forget!"

1985 saw the end of a year long miners' strike in March. In September and October uprisings (mainly by black people), took place against the police, most notably in Handsworth (Birmingham), Liverpool 8, Brixton and Tottenham (London). In November, the British government came up with a deal with the government of the 26 counties of Ireland aimed at bolstering the faltering fortunes of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) and stopping the advance of Sinn Fein and the IRA. Throughout the year, the mass struggle of the Azanian people rocked the South African racist regime and sent shudders through the world imperialist system.

In short, there was a deepening of the crisis of British imperialism.

Since the beginning of the 1970's, this deepening crisis has had an increasing impact on the left, posing new problems for the organisations and individuals of which it is composed. 1985 saw the explosion of crises within it, which have been a long time developing.

## Labour's Left

Most of the Labour left confirmed its surrender to Neil Kinnock's leadership and policies. Kinnock aims to win back "middle ground" support from the SDP/Liberal Alliance and Tories in time for the next election. That has meant distancing Labour's leadership from the miners' strike, condemning the "riots" this autumn and criticising Tottenham Labour leader, Bernie Grant, for expressing understanding for the actions of local black youth. It meant avoiding becoming committed by Labour Party conference to a large-scale programme of nationalisation, to an amnesty for jailed miners or reimbursement of all fines imposed on miners' strike activists. It further meant a rejection of Black Sections in the Labour Party. Kinnock, Hattersley and Co., ever with their eyes on the next general election, know that the majority of black voters, if they vote, will vote Labour for want of a choice, as they have done in the past. Black Sections in terms of increased votes from black people will be slim, and more than outweighed by the loss of votes of white racists who can't stomach those black people who choose to work in the Labour Party having an increased say in its affairs.

While much of the Labour left put up a fight on these issues, at the end of the day they were faced with the fact of the Kinnock leadership having the support of most of the Labour Party, and the necessity, imposed by their own strategy of working within Labour, of maintaining a united front with the leadership against the Tories and Alliance. Thus, Tony Benn, once the hope of the Labour left, has kept a low profile all year. 'Militant' had to drop their own proposals to Labour Party conference for action in support of Liverpool Council. Few came to the support of Bernie Grant. And there was widespread disappointment when another 'left' hero of yesteryear, Ken Livingston, did a climbdown in the Greater London Council's struggle against rate-capping.

All the effort that went into organising inside the Labour Party would have been far better used trying to build a revolutionary alternative outside in order to replace it. Those who want a real change in this society but opt to stay in the Labour Party can only look forward to doing donkey-work for the leadership at election times and to more kicks in the teeth from Kinnock and friends.

## "Thatcherism"

Neil Kinnock, it is said, listens very seriously to the views of Eric Hobsbawm, one of the leading theorists of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). This should not be surprising. For years, much of the Labour left has taken a more militant stand in general than the CPGB.

Hobsbawm was one of those who argued that "Thatcherism" is something different from previous kinds of Tory rule in Britain. As identified by the 38th Congress of the CPGB, "Thatcherism" meant a "complete break" by the present Tory

42 who appealed was confirmed at the 39th Congress in May. While they were no doubt weakened by division and out-manoeuvred, the main problem was that they were not able to pose a coherent alternative to the "Euro-communists". They shared common ground in wanting to minimise criticism of the Soviet Union, turn back more towards the "labour movement" to which the CPGB traditionally addressed itself and reject the concept of "Thatcherism" and the policies which flowed from it.

From the RCL's viewpoint, each side argued from a completely wrong basis. Both declare their support for the CPGB programme 'The British Road to Socialism', and believe that there is a peaceful road to socialism in Britain, in the attainment of which a major part will be played by the Labour Party.

In the early 1960's, some members of the CPGB took issue with these very ideas, saying

government with the consensus politics of the post-Second World War governments; the fomenting of a more right-wing ideology among the people; a systematic drive to break the strength of the unions and working class and to wipe out gains made since 1945; a closer alliance with the USA in foreign affairs.

This was a central issue in the struggle which has raged in the CPGB for the past couple of

## 1985 - Crisis on the Left

(Contributed)



years. It was taken up strongly by the "Euro-communist" wing of the party, who asserted that "Thatcherism" has captured a certain degree of public support and shifted the popular mood to the right. To deal with this, a broad anti-Thatcher alliance must be built reaching as far as those Tories who oppose Thatcher, and embracing alternative movements such as those of women, gays, black people and the peace movement. What this means in practice was shown when the CPGB criticised mass picketing during the miners' strike. Come what may, it seems, the miners were expected to be "reasonable" and not to do anything which might offend the respectable people to whom the CPGB attached so much importance.

The struggle in the CPGB led to the emergence of factions opposed to the dominant line around 'Morning Star' (which used to be the party paper), 'Straight Left' and 'The Leninist'. Most of their leading members were expelled from the CPGB and the expulsion of

that the CPGB had adopted revisionist policies - it had revised away the revolutionary essence of Marxism. They argued that only a real communist party could lead the struggle for socialism; that the ruling class would use its state power to prevent a peaceful transition to socialism; that the working class would have to take power and impose its own dictatorship over the defeated capitalist class; and that solidarity with the national liberation movements of peoples fighting colonialism and neo-colonialism was an essential part of communism. For their efforts, they were thrown out of the CPGB by, among others, some of the very people who today complain about their own expulsions by the Eurocommunists.

Although there were questions on which the anti-revisionists made errors and about which they had much to learn, these criticisms of the CPGB were right as far as they went and led to the establishment of the Marxist-Leninist movement, from which the RCL emerged.

## Present Situation

The argument over "Thatcherism" is a significant one: it is going on in different forms across the left. The basic question is: how should the current period in Britain be characterised? The Socialist Workers Party says this is a period of "downturn" in the class struggle. The Workers' Revolutionary Party has just had a big row over the same question. Mike Banda and the majority of the party see the present time as one where the conditions are unfavourable to left activity, and promote "united front work" as a means of huddling up to the Labour Party. The expelled Healey group, by contrast, say that there is a revolutionary situation in Britain, as the ruling class is now unable to rule in the old way.

The importance of a correct understanding of the present situation should be fairly obvious. Any organisation claiming to be revolutionary works out a general strategy for winning socialism, but it will still not get anywhere if it is unable to judge the general trends in the world around it, the direction in which the different forces are moving, and the mood of the different sections of the people, for it is necessary to adopt the strategy, tactics, slogans and forms of organisation appropriate to these conditions if progress is to be made. The left in general falls down on this.

In identifying "Thatcherism" as qualitatively different from earlier forms of Tory rule, the CPGB denies the real continuity between periods of Tory and Labour rule. Typically of the revisionist CPGB, it tries to deny the capitalist nature of Labour governments. The continuity between the different governments in Britain has been far more significant than the differences, and the CPGB's attempt to get Labour off the hook and focus struggle against "Thatcherism" is dangerously misleading.

Since the late 1960's, both Tory and Labour governments have adopted the same basic approach to the crisis of British imperialism: make the poorer sections of the workers and people pay for that crisis and if they resist, hit them with state repression. Each party brought its own particular logic to the job, but as both accepted the logic of capitalism, they had no choice but to do what the system required of them. Thus, the last Labour government used the 'Social Contract' to hold down wages, while Thatcher has relied on anti-union laws, and unemployment to do the same work. There has been a situation of growing fascism, a situation in which the powers of the state to cope with resistance have been increased, racist and chauvinist ideologies have been cultivated among the white working people and oppression and exploitation of the majority of the people has grown. This is not to say that there is a fascist regime in Britain, but the trend towards fascism over the past 15 years has been a steady one, whichever party held office.

## New

## "National Consensus"

Where there is a grain of truth in the argument justifying the use of the term "Thatcherism" is in the assertion that the present government has broken away from the consensus policies of past governments. This is true if the extent of its denationalisation programme is examined, or the cuts it has made in the social services. But it is not true where matters such as racist immigration laws or the repression of Ireland's struggle are concerned. Successive British governments have followed very much the same policies. What has happened

though, is that the contradictions within Britain have sharpened to a point where the Conservatives have been forced into trying to establish a new "national consensus", from which a large minority is excluded.

Previously, the excluded minority was relatively small - the most militant elements of the national minority peoples, Welsh and Scottish Republicans, supporters of Irish republicanism and a handful of leftists. Other dissident voices could be absorbed within the system. But the decay of British imperialism has made the ruling class more desperate. It finds serious opposition increasingly unacceptable because it interferes with its survival/revival strategy. Under the Thatcher government this reached the point where wider sections of the people have been recognised as "beyond redemption" and excluded from the new consensus - national minority communities as a whole, peace activists, feminists, gays, the unemployed and workers who, like the miners and their families, are ready to stand up to the attacks made upon them. They are all "enemies within". As for the rest - they have either benefited from the Conservative government's policies, or belong to that very large section of the labour movement which is hidebound by legalism and still has hopes in the present system.

The proponents of "Thatcherism" recognise (correctly) that if Labour is to win office again, it must win a good chunk of its support from this new "national consensus" and that the proportion it has at present is too small. But to expand its share, it has to pander to the prejudices, fears, racism and chauvinism of that consensus, and that is exactly what the CPGB (not in so many words, of course) says that Labour should do. Not only that, the revisionists themselves will keep step with this move to the right!

## Revolutionary Path

The orientation of revolutionaries has to be different. We do not hope for anything from Labour. For us, what is most significant is not that a large section of the population has become more reactionary in its views, but that the minority who want meaningful changes in this society and who are ready to listen to communist arguments has expanded. Our strategy is not to move to the right, like the Labour Party, CPGB, SWP, Militant, WRP and most of the left, because of the re-drawing of the "national consensus". It is to concentrate on allying with and rallying the system's rejects so as to build a party dedicated to the overthrow of British imperialism, and, on this basis to win over those sections of the working people who today willingly assent in the continuation of this rotten society.

Does that mean that we agree with those who say that there is a revolutionary situation today? No. It doesn't because there is still a large majority of the people who accept the capitalist system while there is still too little clarity and unity of purpose among the minority for most of them to embrace a revolutionary alternative as yet. While that remains true, Britain will go on being a bourgeois democracy, even if it is one that is sliding towards fascism.

There are good opportunities to carry forward revolutionary work in the present period, whatever dangers exist. The Labour Party, revisionists and trotskysts cannot take up these opportunities because of their non-revolutionary character. It's up to the Marxist-Leninists, both those of today, and those who will join us in the future.

# London-Dublin Deal

DUBLIN'S SUPPORT ENLISTED AGAINST THE STRIVING FOR IRISH UNITY

The Dublin government has just agreed to register a formal international document at the United Nations in which it concedes that the six counties are part of the United Kingdom, underwrites the partition of Ireland and recognises the "right" of the Unionists to veto the unity of Ireland against the wishes of the majority of the Irish nation.

This not only amounts to a second signing of the infamous 1921 Treaty which originally partitioned Ireland and created a gerrymandered Unionist majority in the six counties. It also exceeds it in its betrayal of Irish national aspirations in that it raises Dublin's acceptance of the Treaty to an international agreement, so that the "boundary" is no longer internationally disputed. In practice, this will prevent certain issues from ever being debated at the United Nations. This agreement obliterates Articles 2 and 3 of the twenty-six counties of Ireland. While this may come as no shock to those who have always recognised that the Dublin establishment was partitionist through and through, there are certainly no grounds for presenting this utter sellout as a step forwards towards Irish unity.

## A NEW ALLIANCE

This agreement marks a change in British imperialism's tactics for retaining control over Ireland. It has not renounced partition nor the barefaced occupation of the six counties, but it has decided that it cannot rely exclusively on an alliance with the Unionists to rule the six counties. The Unionists' method of securing that territory consisted of discrimination and repression alone, and it has failed: since 1969 the six counties have been ungovernable. New methods of rule implying a new class alliance have become necessary. Since the nationalists cannot be kept down by repression alone, a mixture is needed of repression plus "winning over some of the nationalists". Clearly, the Unionists are not the right people for that job so Britain has widened its alliance for upholding its occupation of the six counties to include the Dublin establishment and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP). The point about Dublin's consultative role in the six counties is that it is intended to make nationalists think that "we" have some say in running affairs. It is also intended to counteract the growth of the Republican Movement in the twenty-six counties, for it allows the Dublin government to masquerade as a force for Irish unity. The whole agreement, with which John Hume and the SDLP has been intimately associated, is intended to win nationalist support away from the Republican Movement and into the hands of the SDLP.

This tactical change should not be interpreted as a change in

British imperialism's nature or even in its intention to hold on to Ireland. British imperialism in Ireland is not synonymous with the "orange card". On the contrary, the orange card only assumed a high importance for British rule in the last few decades of the nineteenth century. Before then, it had been Dublin Castle that was the cornerstone of British rule in Ireland. Of course, the six-county statelet has always been associated with orange bigotry and supremacism, but no particular alliance is eternal. The imperialists are capable of using all sorts of alliances to retain their hegemony. It is no surprise that the Unionists themselves, and in particular the Orange Lodges, do not grasp this. They may actually believe that Thatcher is a "traitor" as Enoch Powell said. They will believe this because it is in their interests to do so. Thus they believe that their methods are the **only** methods which will allow Britain to hold on to Ireland and that any weakening of the alliance between Britain and them means that Britain is about to relinquish Ireland. These methods happen to coincide with them ruling the roost in the six counties. It suits them to believe that British rule equals orange supremacism. It does not suit them to recognise that there is more than one way to skin a cat. And Britain has decided that at present untrammelled orange supremacism is an embarrassment to Britain's allies on a world scale. It is for this reason that political leaders from the United States and EEC countries have speedily welcomed the agreement that marks a change in alliance and methods of rule.

DUBLIN POWERLESS

And what has the British government conceded to Dublin in exchange? Firstly, that the British government will accept a united Ireland, should the Unionists ever desire one! That was a cheap concession, for pigs will as soon fly as Unionists will desire a united Ireland! Secondly, that an Anglo-Irish inter-governmental council and conference will be set up allowing Dublin a purely consultative role in the affairs of the six counties i.e. Dublin views are not in any way binding on Britain. In fact, this "concession to Dublin and the nationalists" is in practical terms an anti-nationalist concession to Britain. For, in general it means that although Dublin has no power in the six counties, it appears to have responsibilities and will be implicated. Thus, whenever Britain enforces some anti-nationalist measure, this will automatically seem to have the weight of Dublin's approval, because "Dublin was consulted". There is, of course, one issue where the consultation is likely to materialise as real cross-border cooperation - and that is security. Republicans can now reckon with London/Dublin cooperation in increasing censorship, repression, extraditions etc. It has already been mooted that An Phoblacht/Republican News may be declared illegal or that Sinn Fein may be banned.

## IT IS THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE THAT WINS CONCESSIONS

There may be some real concessions to the nationalists. There is, for example, talk about repatriating some of the prisoners of war serving their sentences in English jails and of releasing the men framed for the Birmingham bombings. Should such steps be taken, they will not be due to efforts made by the Dublin government. They will be due to the struggles of nationalist people led by the Republican Movement. If the nationalists had not persevered in their struggles, and if the Republican Movement had not made such progress in developing its leadership, then there would be no concessions, and there would in fact be no need for a London/Dublin agreement at all. For it is the struggle of the Republican Movement which has forced Britain to adopt new tactics.

BRITAIN DICTATES

The logic of the agreement is completely British. It came about not as a result of two equal partners negotiating from positions of mutual respect but was dictated from beginning to end by British imperialism. Mrs Thatcher made this painfully clear with her "Out, Out, Out" to the Forum Report, so that the basis for the talks leading to the present agreement was her public humiliation of Garrett Fitzgerald and the Dublin establishment. In fact, as Sinn Fein has been saying for some time, the final agreement corresponds in minute detail to a blueprint contained in a report called 'Britain's Undefended Frontier: A Policy for Ulster'. Amongst those involved in drawing up the report were Tory backbenchers John Biggs-Davidson, Nicholas Budgen and Peter Lloyd. They were joined by T.E.Uttley of the 'Daily Telegraph' and, most significantly, Patrick Macrory who chaired the group. Macrory previously chaired the review body which produced the plan for local government reform in the six counties. Its influence on Tory thinking since then was demonstrated with the recreation of the Stormont Assembly.

The failure of that Assembly to get "cross-community support" and the continued instability in the six counties provided the basis for the deliberations which led to the report. This attempts to provide a framework within which the British and Irish establishments could collaborate to defeat the Republican Movement and stabilise British rule. The report states that the framework must include Dublin, the Unionists and the SDLP. Pointing to the IRA campaign of 1956-62, the report states that this was a failure in particular "because internment was in operation on both sides of the border" and suggests an alternative which envisages the Dublin government being "willing to extradite those accused of terrorist crimes and to establish close and uninhibited cooperation between its own security forces and those of the United Kingdom." If this were done "it would be possible to defeat the IRA without reverting to such a contentious measure as internment". The report continues: "It is clear ... that this degree of cooperation will not be forthcoming ... nor will the cooperation of nationalists

in the North, unless they are bought by political concessions." And their concessions are - guess what! - an inter-governmental council and a purely consultative inter-parliamentary council. This sounds familiar. The report suggests that Mrs Thatcher should try to allay unionist fears by holding speeches stressing that sovereignty is not up for discussion. It also states that: "British policy has suffered in the past from an excessive and misconceived regard for the sensibilities of the Irish Republic." The "Out, Out, Out" speech shows that Mrs Thatcher heeded that hint to insult and humiliate Dublin.

It was the failure of the Unionists to "make the croppies lie down", as Republican News put it, that led to the dissolution of Stormont and to several attempts by Britain to come up with a new way of stabilising the six counties. The same elements are present in this agreement as were present in the Sunningdale package but there has been a difference in approach. Sunningdale introduced the so-called "Irish dimension" - i.e. Dublin - into the deal after the six county Assembly had been set up, so the Unionists were able to sabotage Sunningdale by resigning from the Assembly. During that deal the Unionists were in the first phase of activity and Dublin came second. This time the Unionists have been purposefully left out of the talks and the agreement between London and Dublin has been signed without any particular offer being made to them. This suggests that after Sunningdale the writers of the report realised that the required shift in the alliance of forces was bigger than at first anticipated and that there was no need to treat the Unionists with kid gloves.

## STRENGTH OF REPUBLICANISM

Behind these shifts lies the strength of the Republican Movement. With both the ballot box and the gun, it has shown the depth and breadth of its support, and its absolute determination to continue to fight for Ireland's freedom. It is the force of genuine nationalism that has forced the imperialists to change tack. It is not a force that will quickly go away.

Britain's new tactic will prove unable to stop Ireland's old struggle.

# Manchester Martyrs Commemorated

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

600 people took part in this year's Manchester Martyrs Commemoration marching through Manchester, accompanied by Scottish bands, to an indoor rally chaired by Sinn Fein's spokesperson in Britain, ex-PO, Gerry McLaughlin.

On the march, there were contingents from Birmingham, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, London and Sheffield, as well as a large local one. Organisations represented included the Irish in Britain Representation Group, the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the Pakistani Workers Association (Britain), the Asian Youth Movement, Troops Out Movement, the Revolutionary Communist League, Fight Racism Fight Imperialism and the Irish Freedom Movement.

During the march there was some opposition from local fascists. Because of good stewarding the fascists were unable to get at the marchers or provoke them. Tribute must be paid to the large number of Socialist

Federation members who volunteered to help protect the march and who did so in a militant and disciplined manner.

This year's Commemoration ended in a rally because the organisers considered that this would help to focus attention on the issues involved, rather than on a left-fascist punch-up, and would help to create the conditions for greater involvement from the Irish community. These objectives were successfully met and it was particularly gratifying to see on the march the Birmingham IBRG banner and members of the Irish community from Bolton, Manchester and Yorkshire.

The first speaker at the rally was Eileen Murphy, author of the play 'Where the Fenians Sleep'. She refreshed our memories about the 'smashing of the van' and described how the British government of the time accompanied by press hysteria whipped up anti-Irish feeling to harass and intimidate the Irish community by rounding up hundreds of Irish people. She pointed out that nothing

has changed since 1867 and drew parallels with today's show trials and with the frame-ups of innocent people.

After contributions from the IRSP and from the IBRG who spoke on the importance of the Irish community supporting the prisoners, there was a standing ovation for Mrs Fitzsimmons, speaking on behalf of the Belfast Relatives Committee for the POWs in English jails, and a collection was made which raised £159.05 for the work of that committee. Then Dave Douglas from the National Union of Mineworkers gave a rousing speech in which he said that the so-called "black savage, the savage Gael and the hooligan pitman" are all part of the stubborn forces aligned against the British state. Comrade Zulfi from the Pakistani Workers Association (PWA) was greeted with rapturous applause when he emphasised that the support of his organisation for the Republican Movement was unconditional, saying: "You choose whatever weapons you need for your struggle. We choose

whatever weapons we need for ours. You have seen Handsworth, Brixton, Toxteth ..." He reminded us that the spirit of all



Michael Larkin, one of the three Manchester Martyrs, executed in 1867 by the British state.

the martyred heroes and heroines including the Manchester Martyrs and the ten Hunger Strikers, lives on.

The final speaker was Sinn Fein's elected representative

Francis Molloy. He pointed out that there is a continuity of the injustice perpetrated by the British government and a continuity in the struggle against that injustice, a continuity through from the Fenians, then the 1916 Uprising up to the present phase of the war, and that the struggle will not cease until Ireland has freed itself from British Rule. Referring to the London/Dublin Agreement he said that it was an attempt to isolate and defeat the Republican Movement, but that it would fail because that movement draws its support from the grassroots of Irish society.

The chairperson rightly summed up the whole event as a dignified and responsible commemoration upon which we can build for the future. In two years' time the 120th anniversary of the execution of the Manchester Martyrs occurs. Work must start now to ensure that this year's modest success leads to a grand Commemoration in 1987.

# FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



Sinn Fein Ard Fheis.....

## Building On Success

This year's Ard Fheis reflected the conscious political progress of Sinn Fein in its development as what Gerry Adams has called "a coherent, principled, republican political party." (He is on record as stating that the failure to build such a political party is responsible for the failure of the Black and Tan War and the establishment of partition.) The lively and frank debate reflected the conscious attempts of the leadership "to build, to consolidate and to structure the political base" and to ensure that the move away from what Gerry Adams has called "spectator politics" for those who are not involved in the armed struggle, continues. The fact that the motions before the conference covered the widest range of topics ever placed before an Ard Fheis shows that the process, beginning with the Hunger Strikes, of opening up the struggles of Republicans on a number of fronts continues so as to provide roles for everyone and to give everyone an understanding of performing his or her own particular role as a part of the overall struggle.

### VETERAN REPUBLICAN

One of the high points of the weekend was when veteran republican Dan Gleeson joined Sinn Fein President, Gerry Adams, on the platform during the presidential address. Dan Gleeson was born in 1902 and joined the North Tipperary Brigade of the IRA in 1917. His presence on the platform together with Gerry Adams emphasised the continuity of the republican struggle and the republican tradition.

### TRIBUTE TO BENJAMIN MOLOISE

The presidential address opened with a moving reference to the Azanian freedom fighter, Benjamin Molloise. Gerry Adams pointed out that not only Mrs Thatcher, but also the Dublin government refused to impose sanctions on South Africa, commenting that "Dublin's attitude on these issues is but an extension of its attitude to the British presence in this country." Before reaffirming Sinn Fein's support for those struggling for liberation and an end to exploitation throughout the world, he said: "To our black brothers and sisters in struggle we send this simple message of support: 'Fight On!'"

**"To our black brothers and sisters in struggle, we send this simple message: Fight On!"**

### REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

The president went on to express Sinn Fein's intention to match the efforts and sacrifices of the men and women soldiers of the Irish Republican Army by their continued endeavours to popularise and politicise the struggle. He extended fraternal greetings to the women in Armagh prison undergoing strip searches, welcomed those released this year from English jails and congratulated the successful campaigners for open visits at Portlaoise prison.

He referred to Sinn Fein's electoral successes in the local government elections both in the six and the twenty-six counties where the party improved its organisation and developed a new middle leadership. This led him to the issue which he dealt with at most length in his address, the London/Dublin talks (see separate article). The address finished as it began with freedom fighter, Benjamin Molloise and his message the day before his hanging - "Freedom is at hand ... The struggle must go on, nobody must fear it."

### LIVELY DEBATE

During the debates on the many



August 1984: Mass protest in London in support of British withdrawal from Ireland.

motions placed before more than 400 delegates, two issues were particularly contentious and led to very lively discussion - abortion and abstentionism.

### ABORTION

Abortion was debated under the Women's Section. Delegates overwhelmingly supported a motion calling for positive discrimination within Sinn Fein in favour of women. This motion was supported by Jacinta Duignan and Rita O'Hara of the Women's Department who argued that "women are not represented in Sinn Fein commensurate with what they have put into this Movement." More than one motion on abortion was passed. But the most hotly debated was one that: "We recognise that women have the right to choose." The vote on this was taken twice in an atmosphere of growing excitement. It was passed by 77 votes to 73.

### ABSTENTIONISM

Abstentionism was debated in the Electoral Strategy/Constitution section. Delegates overwhelmingly passed a motion calling for Sinn Fein to promote and develop where necessary its electoral strategy over the

coming years. They dismissed suggestions that they stop contesting Leinster House elections and - again reaffirming present policy - agreed, prior to any future Assembly elections in the six counties, to seek a complete nationalist boycott, only failing which would Sinn Fein contest.

Abstentionism proved to be the most controversial topic debated at this Ard Fheis and throughout the debate it was standing room only. Danny Morrison introduced the session, calling the delegates on behalf of the Ard Chomhairle, to support two motions restating Sinn Fein's existing policy, and the constitution of not entering the Leinster House, Stormont or Westminster parliaments. He reminded delegates that the IRA had pledged repeatedly that there will be no rundown of the armed struggle and had given assurances that it supports the development of Sinn Fein's electoral strategy. The debate centred on a motion from Dublin which, while not seeking to alter Sinn Fein's policy of abstentionism, proposed that it "be viewed as a tactic and not as a principle", with speakers fairly evenly divided

for and against. Joint General Secretary Tom Hartley, speaking in a personal capacity, supported the motion in order, he said, for Sinn Fein to improve its understanding of: "How do we break down our isolation in the twenty-six counties?" and said: "There is a principle riding above all principles and that is the principle of success." One speaker against the motion termed abstentionism "the very principle on which the Republican Movement has been built" and Liam MacElhinney concluded that to enter Leinster House would be "a betrayal of all those who gave their lives." Ex-prisoner John McCloskey held up letters from prisoners in English jails supporting an end to abstentionism "when the time is ripe". Several of those who opposed the motion detected the "slippery slope to Stickysism" at work in it. The motion was defeated by the narrow margin of 20 votes. These fiery debates of contentious issues show Sinn Fein grappling with issues that may be painful and difficult in order to face the real problems of the people in the thirty-two counties of Ireland so as to become "a relevant, political party, which transcends partition."

### Trial in Manchester

## Unite Against the PTA

In January, in Manchester, the trial of those arrested in Liverpool and Birmingham at the end of 1984, will take place. Charges of conspiracy to cause explosions will be levelled against Dr Maire O'Shea, Peter Lynch, Peter Jordan and William Grimes and Patrick Brazil.

Four of the five defendants will have been in prison for over a year before they are put on trial. They will have spent the bulk of that time on high security, Category A, status. The fifth, Dr Maire O'Shea, spent months in prison before being granted bail.

All were held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) without access to lawyers before they were charged. Maire O'Shea, Peter Lynch and Peter Jordan, who all lived in England, were members of the Irish in Britain Representation Group, and active in the Labour Committee on Ireland or Troops Out Movement.

General campaigns against the

PTA and a campaign in support of all five were sparked by the arrests, and friends and relatives of Maire O'Shea also launched an individual campaign on her behalf, demanding that the charges against her be dropped.

Now the question of how to express this support and solidarity around the trial comes up. The political questions are seen quite clearly. All the campaigns are opposed to the PTA and have set out to publicise how it is used to harass Irish people in general. The PTA was introduced in reaction to the development of the Irish national struggle in 1974. Since 1984 it has been widened to attack other anti-imperialist forces, whilst remaining primarily an anti-Irish Act.

All the campaigns can point to experience of past trials to show the lack of credibility of the English courts. Already two television programmes have exposed the likelihood that Annie Maguire and her family

and friends were falsely convicted in their trial, and that similarly the evidence in the trial of those convicted in the Birmingham pub bombings was flimsy, and inaccurate. Even a Tory MP is backing the call for a review.

Two campaigns can also find unity in exposing the use of conspiracy laws which, in effect at least, turn the burden of proof onto those who are charged to show their innocence. The historical development of conspiracy law can itself be shown to be directly in response to the Irish struggle.

All these issues show a possible basis of unity, or at least co-operation between the campaigns. Preferably this would take the form of a joint co-ordinating committee. Co-operation is essential on the detail of support work. People up and down the country need information on what is happening in court. There need to be accurate notes and good organisation

of contact, particularly with those on trial or their legal representatives.

Outside the courts there needs to be joint action on pickets, demonstrations, etc. Of course, some of those involved will want to orientate their activity in one direction and others in another. There seems no reason why this should prevent co-operation in gaining maximum publicity. It is to be hoped that the campaigns will meet soon to discuss how they can collectively maximise support for the defendants.

### EVENTS

#### December 7-15

End Arms Sales to Human Rights Violators!-Campaign Against the Arms Trade Week of Action. Volunteers to help needed: contact CAAT office, 5, Caledonian Road, London N1. (Tel. 01-278-1976)

#### December 13

Yolocambai-Ta in concert, with Half and Half from Grenada,

### Demo Backs

#### Maire O'Shea

About 600 people marched through Birmingham on the 9th November, demanding that the conspiracy charges against Dr Maire O'Shea be dropped. Dr O'Shea is one of the six people arrested over last Christmas and New Year under the PTA. Five of them go on trial in Manchester in January.

After the march, a packed rally at the Digbeth Civic Hall heard speeches from Christine Crawley MEP, Geraldine Egan, Peace Camp Campaigner, Pam Dean a Birmingham city councillor, a member of a Miners' Wives Support Group, John Fisher, ASTMS divisional organiser and Jeremy Corbyn MP.

staged jointly by South London Central America Solidarity Campaign and Southwark Anti-Apartheid. 42, Braganza St., London. SE 17, at 7.30. Tickets: £2.50 waged, £1.50 unwaged.

#### December 14

Women rally at Greenham Common to mark the 4th anniversary of the Women's Peace Camp.