

**SOUTH  
ASIA**

**NEWSLETTER**

journal of the asian socialist forum

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 2

10 pence

# southall erupts



The murder of Gurdip made most of us very angry. On the very spot where he was stabbed to death, we wrote 'This Racist Murder will be avenged', 'We'll get you Racist Scum'. These words summed up the feelings of most of the black youth in Southall who learned about Gurdip's death, and crowded around the Dominion Cinema. We were angry not only because of Gurdip's death and the killing of 2 black students in East London, but also because for years, we have suffered racial discrimination, intimidation and police harassment.

# GANDHI TIGHTENS THE SCREWS

ONE YEAR AGO, on 26 June 1975, Indira Gandhi declared a State of Emergency in India. She claimed that it was a temporary measure only, designed to curb 'reactionary elements' who were trying to subvert Indian democracy. And she was supported by the Communist Party of India (CPI), on the pretext that the 'emergency' was designed to smash the reactionary landlord class and semi-feudal elements.

At the time we predicted that the 'long term objective of Indira Congress is to use these repressive laws to maintain industrial discipline, prevent rural struggles and create better conditions for investment of native and foreign capital' (South Asia Newsletter, Vol 1, No 4). We also said that Gandhi's much publicised 20-point programme would not significantly change the living conditions of the mass of people. But today speculation is no longer necessary — her record speaks for itself.

Thousands of workers, including many CPI trade union activists, have been thrown into jail just for opposing the reduction of the annual bonus payments from 8 to 4 per cent. Strikes have been virtually banned and all known militants of working class organisations have been jailed.

Press censorship is total, and has been extended to cover speeches made in Parliament and judgements of the courts. The emergency regulations have also been used to enact constitutional amendments which prevent anyone from challenging the actions of the executive in the courts.

## CON-TRICK

The 20-point programme has also lost its glamour. Only two weeks ago the Labour Minister, Raghunath Reddy, announced that it was very difficult to evolve a national minimum wage for agricultural workers at the moment. Again, a government working group on the employment of children has come to the conclusion 'that it is neither feasible nor desirable to totally abolish child labour at the present stage of the country's economic development' (Economic Times, 25 May).

The proposal to abolish the rural debt has also been a con-trick. The real beneficiaries of rural credit facilities have been the rich and middle peasants.

The big monopoly houses, landlords and the rich have generally benefited from the State of Emergency. When the Finance Minister, Mr Subramaniam, presented his Budget two months ago, he spoke at length on the need to take effective steps to prevent tax evasion. Accordingly he reduced the income tax and wealth rates and introduced lavish investment allowances to capitalist firms. Indirect taxes on luxury goods were also reduced.

The capitalists and landlords have also benefited from the industrial 'peace and discipline' brought about by the repressive laws. And the Indira regime has further relaxed planning controls and retrospectively legalised investments carried out without planning permission.

Foreign capitalists too have benefited from the emergency. The Foreign Exchange Regulations Act has been amended to facilitate foreign capital investments. And the Government has made strenuous efforts to attract British, West German and American investments.

Naturally the friendly bank of 'developing countries' — the World Bank — has responded by stating in its report to the Aid India Consortium that: 'To support the Government of India's efforts to accelerate the rate of economic growth, the aid community must continue to respond to India's need with no less vigour than was displayed during the recent crisis years' (Business Standard, 21 May).



On the political front, the Government has been successful both in dividing and weakening the bourgeois opposition parties and in paralysing the reformist parties like the CPI (Marxist). The bourgeois oppositionists – including members of the right-wing Jan Sangh – have been openly invited to join the ruling Congress party. Some have already done so.

Those who are unwilling to do so are now being coerced to form one constitutional and national opposition party, which Gandhi has declared that she will recognise. The bourgeois parties have lost no time in accepting this compromise, but Indira is not going to put all her eggs in one basket. She must also make sure that there are no more mass movements like that led by J.P. Narayan.

## APPENDAGE

Her son, Sanjay Gandhi, is now busy organising paramilitary groups for this purpose. He recently had discussions with Bal Thackeray, leader of the fascist Shiv Sena; and it was the Shiv Sena who plastered Bombay with welcoming posters when Gandhi visited the city.

The Government has also taken the initiative against the reformist workers parties. The pro-Moscow CPI is now a mere appendage of Congress; while the CPI (Marxist), which does oppose the emergency, has confined itself to occasional declarations. Paralysing divisions in its leadership, particularly over cooperation with rightist parties like the Jan Sangh, have left the rank-and-file confused and demoralised.



*Police attack rioters in New Delhi food riots*

The splintered Naxalite groups have done no better. The most slavishly pro-Peking ones now argue that the most important distinction is between the pro-Soviet bourgeoisie and anti-Soviet bourgeoisie! Therefore it is necessary to join up with the anti-Soviet bourgeoisie – extreme rightist groups like the Jan Sangh and the Rashtriya Sevak Sangh – to fight 'fascist' Indira.

## BANKRUPTCY

However, a process of political clarification amongst the most advanced layers of the oppressed is slowly taking place. The bankruptcy of the Stalinist and Maoist organisations has been clearly revealed with the emergency, prompting many of their followers to seek new

policies and new directions. This is borne out by the questions that are currently being debated by militants in the underground (see 'News from the Underground' in *South Asia Newsletter*, Vol 2, No 1).

We in Britain must solidarise with those militants in India who are the victims of Indira's repression. But more than that is needed.

Both the CPI (M) and the Naxalites in Britain seek to build solidarity movements while preserving and strengthening their disastrous multi-class alliances with Jan Sangh, etc. These opportunist blocs must be fought through a campaign to build a united front of working class parties and organisations.

**R. ROY**

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
SOUTHALL ERUPTS	1
GANDHI TIGHTENS THE SCREWS	1
BALUCHIS GIVE BHUTTO THE BOOT	3
FABLES OF G.K. REDDY	7
STRUGGLE OF THE MINORITY TAMILS AND THE POLITICS OF THE ETA	8
LANDLESS LABOURERS IN THE PUNJAB	11
"WHO'S LEFT?"	12
RELEASE GEORGE FERNANDES	14
NEWS IN BRIEF	15
POEMS	16



*"Out of sight, out of mind..."  
Beggar clearance programme.*

# Baluchi's give Bhutto the Boot

On April the 8th, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, spoke to a mass rally in Quetta, Baluchistan. His audience consisted mainly of 1500 Punjabi soldiers posing as civilians a tactic well used by dictators such as Pinochet in Chile and Banzer in Bolivia. According to the Pakistani media, Bhutto delivered a speech "that was the most revolutionary step forward in the history of Pakistan since its birth and the real liberation of the Baluchi people." What the Pakistani media did not report was the intervention of the Baluchi people after Bhutto's emotional outburst. The Baluchi response was summed up by the Pathan intervenor who shouted "Bhutto you are telling lies! Release Wali Khan, Khairbaksh, Ataullah and Bizenjo!" Bhutto's real liberation immediately led to the brave Pathan's arrest (see photo). This sort of intervention has always taken place when the Prime Minister has spoken in Quetta. Two years earlier in August 1974, Abdul Lango of the BSO (Baluchi Students Organisation) was killed in an attempt to assassinate Bhutto.

## The long Baluchi struggle

The struggle of the Baluchi people, as well as other oppressed minorities such as the Bengalis in what was East Pakistan, for liberation started before Pakistan was created on August 14th 1947. In fact the creation of the Durand Line in the 19th century by the British Imperialists, which split the Pathans between two borders, initiated these struggles. The ruling class that came to power after "independence" clouded the reality of the multi-national make up of the country and the right of national minorities to self-determination. They said that Islam was all that was necessary to unite the Sindhis, Punjabis, Pathans, Baluchis and Bengalis. It was not long before it became apparent who benefited from this set-up - the ruling class of Punjabi and Mahajir (former Indians) landlords and capitalists soon monopolised every aspect of the new state. The consequent oppression of minorities, especially the Baluchis, sparked off the Baluchi Wars of 1958-67. After 1971 and the events in Bangladesh,

the struggle of the Baluchis assumed a new significance. As Wali Khan, leader of the National Awami Party (NAP) - the dominant party in Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province - said that the so-called Islamic unity of Pakistan was broken "because no need was paid to the multi-national reality of the country".

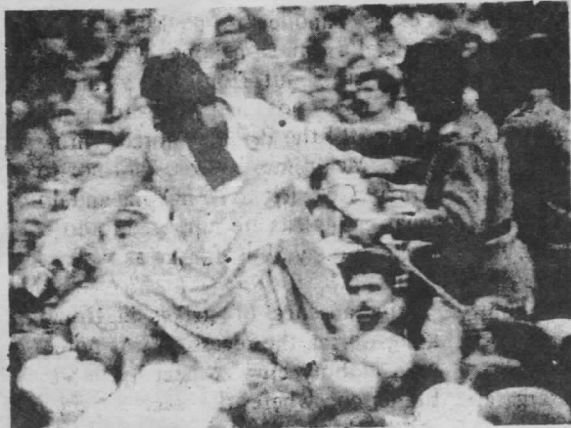
The formation of Bangladesh had two main consequences on the Baluchistan situation. Firstly the Pakistani ruling class was forced to grant some concessions to the Baluchis in the form of a provincial government, and secondly, it spurred sections of the Baluchis to struggle beyond the limitations of the NAP provincial government. The correctness of this latter phenomenon was shown by the fact that nine months later the Pakistani Government crudely framed the NAP government and had it dismissed and its leaders, Khairbaksh Marri, Ataullah Mengal, etc., arrested. The frame-up in the form of the "cache of Soviet arms for the NAP discovered in the Iraqi Embassy" had far reaching revelations. For instance, it revealed the collusion between the Pakistani and Iranian ruling classes (who, it is common knowledge, are the plicemen of U.S. imperialism in the Mid-East). The motivation for this collusion is clearly spelled out in the "FEER" of May 28th '76. It states that "the Shah and the Pakistani military share a common view that through Iran and Baluchistan, the Soviet Union is out to gain a warm-water port in the Gulf". Later on, we shall specify what this Iranian "interest" means in practice.

## The Army moves in

Immediately after the dismissal of the NAP government and its replacement by "stooge sardars", Pakistani military with the co-operation of the Iranian Air-Force launched a campaign of terror against the Baluchi people. American Chinook helicopters, piloted by Iranians, were used to massacre, brutally, the population in the Quetta area. Later in 1974, when the Chamalang campaign was launched to consolidate the earlier assault, the Iranian involvement as well as the use of "counter-insurgency" tactics was increased. According to the ex-stooge governor of Baluchistan, over 4 divisions of the Pakistani army (fifty to sixty thousand men) including the elite commandos of the special services group were used. Furthermore, a squadron of 25 Iranian helicopters based in Quetta were "highly active" in this terroristic campaign. The use of "people's colonies"



("strategic hamlets" - a tactic directly borrowed from the U.S. "experience" in Vietnam) in which Baluchi people were herded into concentration camps, and forced to work on "public work" projects was extensive. Directly complementary to this was the practice of using the Iranian Air-Force to "search and destroy" the means of living of the Baluchi people, such as herds of cattle, flocks of sheep, farmlands etc.



Pathan intervener being arrested

## The AAZ and the Socialist Revolution

In spite of this horrendous military assault, the Baluchi people showed heroic resistance, and refused to bow down to the whims of the Pakistani ruling class. Instrumental in this struggle has been the Awami Azadi Mahaiz (Baluchi Peoples Liberation Front). The AAZ's position on the struggle against oppression of Baluchis is clear. It considers that the resolution of the "problem of nationalities and democratic rights" is ultimately linked to the socialist revolution in Pakistan. Furthermore, although the AAZ critically supports the NAP on the National Baluchistani Question, it still maintains a political distance. It places also great importance on superseding the NAP politically and leading the liberation struggle itself. The correctness of its approach in this respect has been proved in practice. Whereas the NAP (and other Baluchi organisations who still maintain faith in the Pakistani ruling class) have been crushed and its leaders slung into the "faithful" jails the AAZ has not only survived the military onslaught but has grown both in stature and in numbers. But due its isolation in the mountains of Baluchistan, the AAZ has been unable to grasp the fullest extent of the obstacles in its path. For instance, the stranglehold of U.S. imperialism through Iran in Baluchistan (and

Pakistan in general) has been underestimated. In the last year, Iran gave £36 mill. in "aid" to Baluchistan - twice the amount the Pakistan Government could rustle up. This "aid" is invested primarily in capitalist enterprises such as textile mills, cement plants, etc., from which 90% of production is repatriated to Iran to facilitate its role as "policeman of the U.S." We agree that the struggle of the Baluchi people against oppression is linked with the Socialist revolution in Pakistan, but we feel that this linked further with the struggle of all socialist revolutionaries against the common enemy, U.S. imperialism. In other words, the AAZ as vanguard of the Baluchi people should link its struggle against the ruling class of Pakistan to the struggle against imperialism which actively props up the tottering regime of Bhutto.

To this end, socialist revolutionaries the world over should solidarise and support the struggle of Baluchi people for liberation.

**DOWN WITH THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP IN PAKISTAN !**

**OUT WITH THE IRANIAN MILITARY IN BALUCHISTAN !**

**DOWN WITH THE NAP'S COLLABORATION WITH THE PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT !**

**FORWARD WITH THE LIBERATION OF BALUCHISTAN AND WORKERS POWER IN PAKISTAN .**

Ravi C. Lalvalla

# SOUTH ASIA

# MARXIST

# REVIEW

## NEW ISSUE OUT NOW !

ARTICLES INCLUDE:

WHAT IS INDIRA UP TO?

STRUGGLE IN THE

ARAB EAST.

SOVIET IMPERIALISM?

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

AND THE TECHNOCRACY.

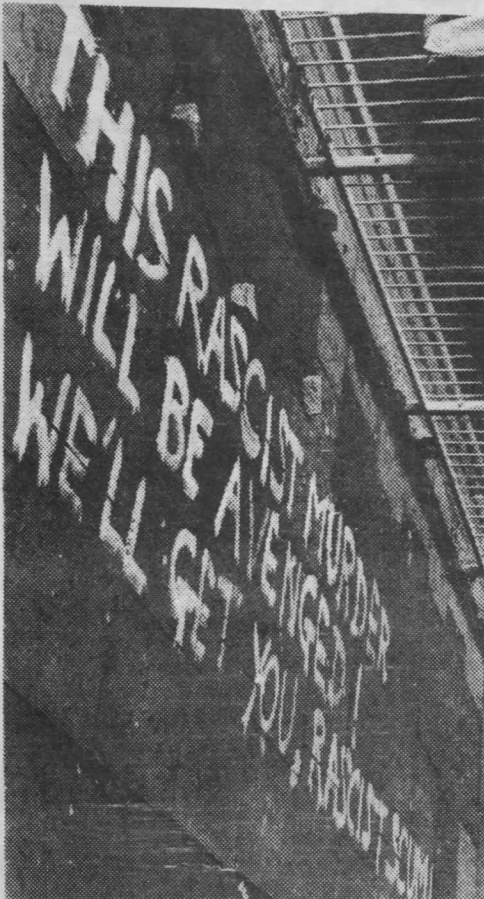
WOMEN'S LIBERATION

MANIFESTO.

35p



continued from page 1



Where Gurdip Singh Chaggar was struck down, a simple warning remains ...

Furthermore, we have been told by our 'responsible' and 'moderate' leaders and elders, that we should suffer these indignities quietly, and should not give vent to our anger.

On Saturday, following Gurdip's death, Southall exploded. Neither the 'moderates' nor the police could control the situation; particularly around the Dominion Cinema black youth ruled the streets. People like Padda and Rai who told us to calm down and cool things, were told by us to get lost.

#### The Demonstration

The I.W.A. leadership, the communist party, the community relations bosses, and the priests were embarrassed and disturbed by the explosive reaction of the youth. They wanted to go back to business as usual, where they could hobnob with the ministers and members of parliament, and appear on liberal television programmes, and tell us how we must obey the racist immigration laws, and how we must lose our identity to integrate into the white society. Somehow they had to re-establish 'peace and order' and the young blacks, must be restrained and told to cool it. So they organized many demonstrations; they asked the police to give us more 'police protection' - the very same police who harass us on the streets day

in and day out, because we just happen to be black and often are unable to get a job. They went to Callaghan and licked his boots! Yes. Callaghan, a leader of a government which had encouraged racism by passing racist immigration laws.

In these demonstrations, these moderates and boot lickers carried placards with such slogans as 'One Race, the Human Race' and 'Peace and Harmony'. Now, of course we have nothing against demonstrations, but demonstration which avoid the real questions that effect us, are not only meaningless, but are positively harmful.

Ever since immigration control came into effect, there have been demonstrations, but they have achieved very little. Demonstrations with empty slogans such as 'Peace and Harmony' we know will not stop racist thugs attacking individual blacks who happen to walk a long lonely street at a lonely hour. It will not stop racist thugs in the East End, Tower Hamlets, Walthamstow, Bradford etc., throwing bricks through the windows of our houses. They will not stop us being condemned to do menial and low paid jobs, regardless of our skills and abilities. To talk of 'peace and harmony' is to disarm us. In reality there has never been peace and harmony, and there can never be peace and harmony, between blacks and racists whites. As long as we are treated as second class citizens, pious declarations of 'one race, the human race' will settle nothing. They do not change our conditions in any way.

It is very much like the Christian priest who asked the blacks in South Africa not to be violent, to pray to God and to turn the other cheek in the face of apartheid. That would only create false hopes in the minds of black people, and hold us back from organising ourselves to face the racist violence that is going to increase in future weeks and months.

In any event, what does 'one Race the Human Race' mean? Sid Bidwell, Vorster, the South African Prime Minister, Enoch Powell, Gurdip Singh Chaggar all belong to the human race. By chanting this aloud, do we resolve the problem of racism? No. ! This was obviously used by people like Rai, and Padda, to stop us from organising ourselves and the community to meet racist violence effectively.

#### Better Police Protection

Harassment by the police of our community is a daily occurrence. The arrest of two brothers at the situation on Sunday 6th June, was an example of this. It is true





.Police harassment and the big demonstration

that they were released, but we only won a partial victory because one of them was charged with assaulting the police. What happened after that? In the days that followed these incidents, police picked up youth, particularly the most militant ones. Yet the 'leaders' of the community call for better police protection! From whom do we need protection? What were the police doing all this time? Were they so naive that they did not know there was racist violence? Or were they too busy harassing black youth, trade unionists, Irish Freedom fighters etc.?

It is nonsense to believe that the police will protect us. The police are a part of the State that promotes racism through the racist immigration laws!

Remember it was Enoch Powell who was invited to speak at the last annual police federation meeting. Calling for better police protection is also a false call because under that guise, the police can harass and interrogate any black person. Today we see the police vans wandering everywhere in the evenings picking up black youth indiscriminatorily.

#### Immigration Control

These leaders also call to Callaghan, Jenkins etc., and ask them to protect the Immigrant Community. Have they forgotten that it is these very labour leaders who have stalked up racism by passing Immigration Acts and Control?. What does immigration control mean?

It means preventing black and not white immigrants. And once you accept that we must stop black immigrants then the next logical demand would be to 'send the blacks home'. Therefore, we must not only oppose Immigration Acts, we must also call for their repeal. The real reason that there are no jobs, houses etc., for workers both black and white, is that the economic system in which we live puts profits before people. Because the prod-

uction is geared to make 5 to 7% of the population amass wealth at the expense of the vast majority of the people.

#### Blood for Blood?

A lot of our brothers and sisters say that the only answer is blood for blood. We are right in saying that nobody should come and insult us. We are right in fighting back and making sure that no racist dares to hit us. But killing any white person would solve nothing. Some of our brothers say 'if they kill one of us, we must kill one of them'. These brothers have even got their arithmetic wrong. We haven't got so many brothers and sisters to lose. Besides we will be isolated from these anti-racist whites, who sympathize with us, and also will fight with us. Remember Kevin Gately died demonstrating against the National Front. As a minority we need all the support we can get.

#### The East End Experience

The Bengali Community is under severe attack from the racists and fascists like National Front and the National Party etc. In fact a day does not go by without a brother and/or sister being attacked. Here are some examples:-

On May 7th Mr. Sariman Halder was stabbed by a gang of thugs in Toynbee Street. They made no attempt to rob him. He suffered a punctured lung. Attackers drove off in a van.

On May 14th Mr. Uddin was arrested. Broom and hammer taken from his home. He was charged with possessing offensive weapon. (Quoted from Race Today June.)

The Community as a whole is very small as compared to Southall, but they are better organized. We can learn and must learn from their experiences. Patrol cars are any night. Routes are decided and each car meets with the other at hourly intervals. The function of the patrol car is to patrol the area and the whole operation is financed by restaurant owners and others.



For example'..... As we turned down Toynbee Street, our driver spots trouble. Two young Asians are being followed by four young white men. The doors of our car fly open before anyone has a chance to say a word. The car screeches to a halt alongside one of the Asians who is about 6 yards ahead of the now running gang. We jump out through all four doors. The gang is obviously unprepared for an attack on more than 2 unarmed Asians. They shout to each other, 'Pakis', turn tail and run. Our driver tries to get back into the car and chase them'. (Race Today).



"their organisation, their strength"

#### What We Must Do

We must have no illusions in people who say 'One Race, the Human Race', and 'Peace and Harmony' and 'better police protection'. On the other hand 'Blood for Blood' doesn't provide for any long term solution.

The only way to protect ourselves is to organize ourselves in defence committees. This must be supported by those white workers who are against racism. However, these committees cannot last long if they are not supported by substantial sections of the black community. The youth in Southall are isolated in two different ways - firstly by the I.W.A. leaders and other community leaders who condemn us as mischievous elements. Secondly, by systematic arrests of the youth by the police. We must prevent this by assisting all those arrested on false charges and call for the release of all black people, arrested on racist grounds.

ORGANIZE SELF DEFENCE IN BLACK AREAS  
HANDS OFF BLACK PEOPLE  
REPEAL OF ALL IMMIGRATION ACTS.

## Fables of G.K. Reddy

Immediately after the Emergency, especially in the recent period, all good opportunists have been heaping praise on the self-proclaimed empress of India, Indira Gandhi. They have congratulated her for her "iron will", "courageous initiative", "traditional honesty", "democratic decisiveness", etc. And now, hotfooting behind the heels of these flights of fancy, comes the pronouncement that India's foreign policy is "one of the greatest achievements of Mrs. Gandhi".

A certain gentleman by the name of G.K. Reddy, one of the most prized of the Indian ruling classes flatterers, has enthusiastically spelled out this hitherto unknown aspect of the Madame's personality. In an article of unashamed servility and distortion in the Hindu of 5th June, our ready Reddy "analyses this great achievement". He writes that Mrs. Gandhi has been instrumental in "reviving the country's faith in itself" and has "compelled the world to recognise and respect India's importance". In trying to justify his assertions this servile gentleman presents "proof" so ridiculous as to make the very paper they are written on to rustle in indignation. For instance he states that "there has been no shades of bonapartism or bismarkism in India's dealings with neighbouring countries". In fact he says that "the policy of improving relations with neighbouring countries has been on the basis of sovereign equality. Well there is no doubt that Mrs. Gandhi's dealings with Sri Lanka, Burma and Indonesia has been on the basis of sovereign equality of the capitalists and landlords of those countries (especially in Sri Lanka where Indira provided armed support for the ruling class' sovereign equality in the 1971 JVP uprising). However in the Madame's dealings with Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sikkim, etc., only a cretin totally devoid of grey matter could deny the Bismarckian and Bonapartist element. After all, how else can one describe the situation of almost the entire Bhutanese police being composed of the Indian CRP and the Bhutanese administrative and political affairs being directed by the Indian ruling class?

Another gold medal goes to the honourable Madame for "**breaking** the vicious circle" of relations between Pakistan, China, Bangladesh and India. There is also a wide

continued on page 10



# STRUGGLE OF THE MINORITY TAMILS — AND THE POLITICS OF THE ETA

Elam Tamils Association (ETA) is an organisation based in London almost exclusively supported by the Ceylon Tamils resident in Britain. According to their published literature as well as verbal statements, their main aim is to fight for a separate socialist state, Elam, for the Tamils in Ceylon. Considering the oppressed state of the Tamils, particularly the plantation workers, this demand is understandable. To avoid false accusations and debates let me at the outset declare my support and solidarity with the struggles of the Tamils in Ceylon.

ETA calls for the unity of all Tamils irrespective of caste, class or political beliefs to achieve their goal. It calls for the merging of oppressed and oppressor, landlords and landless peasants, money lenders and the poor, socialists and capitalists. We said before, and we repeat: such unity is a conspiracy and will only benefit the Tamil capitalists and the potential Tamil capitalists, and not the Tamil workers and poor peasants.

The ETA Newsletter - summer 76 - hails the inauguration of the Tamil Liberation Front in Ceylon. It is interesting to note who the three co-presidents of this front are. Firstly, S. T. V. Chehanayagam, understandable in the circumstances but an anti-communist. Next, G. G. Ponnampalam - the rich 'gentle' man who lead the T.C. which supported the U.N.P. Government in 1950 to disenfranchise the one million odd plantation workers and declare them stateless. No one in his/her right mind would think that this character is now going to fight for the emancipation of these plantation workers. Lastly the traitor of the estate workers Mr. Thondaman, the puppet used by successive governments to put down the estate workers.

It is important to understand that Tamils are not oppressed by the Sinhala regime alone. (Equally important, the Tamils are not the only people oppressed by the Sinhala regime.) They are oppressed in many other important ways.

If you belong to the 'low caste' in Jaffua, you are the poorest and most oppressed in the region. You may ask, oppressed by whom? Not by the Sinhalese workers and peasants, not even by the Sinhalese capital-



Workers queue for their ration of bread

ists, but by the 'high caste' Tamils. The 'low caste' are exploited both economically and socially, discriminated in schools, temples, shops, cafes, employment and so on.

If you are a Tamil in the plantation area, the oppression is even more severe. How is this possible, you may ask? Firstly by the state of Sri Lanka, secondly by the Sinhalese, and finally by the Ceylon 'Jaffua' Tamils. Everyone knows who becomes the cheap slaves (wrongly called servants) in the households of the ruling elites - Ponnampalam and company. Of course not to forget the real culprits, the British plantation owners who initiated the plunder of the Sinhalese peasants by robbing their lands. The super-exploitation of the plantation workers not only benefited the British and Sinhalese but also the Ceylon Tamils. This is not to be forgotten.

If you happen to be a woman, particularly in Jaffua, you cannot rise above the level of housewife. You become a commodity, the price (dowry) being fixed by the well tried commercial law - supply and demand. The oppression of women among the Tamils in Jaffua today

is worse than in any other area.

If you are a citizen of Ceylon not belonging to the Bandaranayake or Senanayake clans (now, of course the Pereiras and the Kenmamans to be included) you face the total repression of the state machine.

If you are a Ceylonese of any sort, you have to face the Big Brothers - British and American Imperialism.

If you are lucky enough to have had some education but are unemployed and escape from Ceylon to earn a living in the Metropolitan countries, like England, where the plundered wealth of the colonial countries, like ours, was put to use to build an advanced Industrial society, you run into another problem. The colour of your skin does not match up to theirs: the evil called Racism, brought about and fostered by Imperialism.

Therefore we see that we are faced with oppression of not just one kind but of many kinds. It is absolutely essential to have this in perspective so as to be able to work out a correct strategy to liberate the oppressed, possible

continued/



only on the basis of the unity of the oppressed. Otherwise we will end up with an army that includes enemies, traitors and informers as well as friends.

## ETA politics

The true nature of the ETA was revealed clearly at a recent ETA meeting. The speeches were generally emotional and nationalistic in tone, with historical distortions. For instance, one speaker said that the British 'had to bring South Indian Tamils to work in the tea plantations because the Sinhalese were too lazy to work.' He chose to leave the real culprits, British Imperialism, clean. Is this the ETA view on the history of Ceylon? Another woman speaker declared that the role of women is confined to nursing brothers and husbands so that 'they can do the job for us'. What a contrast between this and the women in Vietnam!

Another speaker demanded (from whom I don't know) the return of the old Tamil Kingdom. Does the ETA really believe in going back to those dark and oppressive feudal days? Very different from a separate socialist Elam! Then, one Mr. Magarasingam hailed Henry Kissinger as the champion of peace and freedom, and went on to quote from him, of all people.

We consider Kissinger a representative of U.S. Imperialism, which subjugates the people of the world, and certainly not a friend of the oppressed Tamils. ETA can't subscribe to this view and at the same time claim to be socialist. Next speaker from the British Liberal Party pleaded ignorance and apologised for therefore having to be brief. He was too brief to report anything. Then spoke the Reverend father who, among several pledges of support for the oppressed in South Africa, gave a golden piece of advice to the Tamils - that is we should use the institutional, like the U.N. to obtain our freedom. These two gentlemen, one whose party supported the racist Immigration Acts etc., and the other from the church - the role of which in the colonial world is not to be forgotten - were given great prominence at this meeting. Do we have to give a platform to the representatives of British Imperialism? Do we have to be told by white 'masters' that we are oppressed?

Let them first of all come clean in support of the black

people in their own country. We don't need to be told by whites who supported racist legislation what we should do.

## Separate Socialist Tamil State?

If one looks at the Indian sub-continent today, we see that all four countries of the sub-continent are under repressive capitalist rule, and tied to Imperialism. This being the case a small state in the north of Ceylon, declaring itself socialist will (if it is not crushed at birth) straightaway antagonise Imperialism and the adjoining capitalist countries, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and above all, Ceylon. It will be a grave error not to draw the correct lessons from the JVP uprising in 1971. We all know how this movement was crushed instantly.

The only way a separate Tamil state can survive is by declaring itself capitalist and serving the interests of foreign powers and a tiny minority of Tamil capitalists. The people to benefit under such a system would be Ponnampalam and co. The vast majority of the people would remain subjugated and exploited. Everything will work the way the Tamil capitalists have been dreaming. This is the logic and dynamic of the slogan 'Separate Socialist Tamil State in Ceylon'.

Having gained the exclusive right to exploit the Tamil workers and peasants, the Tamil ruling class will of course ally itself with the Sinhala ruling class in order to defend each other in case of organised assaults by the workers and peasants. For the Sinhala and Tamil workers and peasants, nothing will have changed except for a reshuffle amongst their masters. No, the Tamil and Sinhalese working classes must unite today and not wait for the emergence of a Tamil ruling class.

If you are disillusioned with the politics of the ETA as I was, two alternatives are open.

Firstly, fight from within for:

1. a democratic organisation which allows free and open discussion by all, and holds elections for its leadership.
2. Truly socialist policies and solutions for the minority problem in Ceylon - e.g. take up class issues and class demands,



JVP: brutally crushed

fight against the 'unity' of the oppressed and the oppressor.

Secondly, come and discuss this and other issues with the Asian Socialist Forum. The Forum is a democratic organisation which recognises and fights against all forms of oppression, and seeks socialist solutions to the problems of the Indian sub-continent.

In case you want to know, my choice was the last one.

**Murugiah**

## JOIN the CRIPP

Campaign for the Release of Indian Political Prisoners

If you would like more information please write or call at:

22 Boundary Rd.,  
London, N.W.8.  
Telephone 01-328-2332.

Brochures, News Digest, Posters, badges, etc. available now.

berth given to "Mrs. Gandhi's dramatic achievement of breaking the ice and starting the thaw with China and bringing Bhutto to the negotiating table to discuss (?) Bangladesh". In this, there is some element of truth. It has always been the policy of the Indian ruling class to exploit relations between the big powers - one has only to look at the alternating love/hate relationships with the U.S. and the Soviet Union in order to gain material aid. This is what is called 'non-alignment'. Now that detente has taken effect, Mrs. Gandhi has had to alter the structure of her non-alignment. In the words of G.K. Reddy, Mrs. Gandhi has had to reckon with "the realisation that the big power that has benefited the most in extending its influence in Bangladesh has been the U.S.... and that the diminution of Indian and the Soviet Union's influence has not helped to extend China's prestige there". Our admirably devious Madame has exploited the situation well. She has not only won the support of the USSR but has also brought about the normalisation of relations with China and West Pakistan - the latter was achieved by dangling the carrot of Bangladesh. Mrs. Gandhi has told Chairman Mao and the upstart Bhutto that "Bangladesh is still the odd one out which continues to nurse imaginary grievance, partly to gain time and partly to gather its own wits... and that normalisation of relations should help make matters a little easier in dealing with Bangladesh"!!



Indira and Bhutto  
start honeymoon

Mrs. Gandhi's next achievement was to bring about "a solidarity movement in South East Asia to achieve stability", or so G.K. Reddy tells us. What this really means is that Mrs. Gandhi is helping to lick the U.S. imperialist's wounds incurred in South East Asia by building an alliance of non-communist nations (SEAN - South East Asian Nations) to stop the march of communism. The recent events in Singapore is evidence of this fact. The motivation for this is Mrs. Gandhi's desire to appease the U.S. imperialist's by attempting to bring about relative stability not only in India but also in neighbouring countries - this is a plan to attract U.S. investment and aid. This also helps explain the frenzied rush of Indian trade delegations to the U.S. and all corners of the Western world.

In conclusion let us examine the balance sheet of India's foreign policy. In spite of the ruling class's pretensions of non-alignment, its foreign policy is geared to opportunistic alliances with imperialism in order to obtain concessions for itself - and at the same time shift the whole burden of these policies onto the Indian masses. The representative of the Indian ruling class, Indira Gandhi, truly speaks with a forked tongue. Precisely because of this and many other well known reasons the necessity of a sweeping away the parasitic ruling class and imposing a democracy of the Indian working class and the poor is all the more important. Through the realisation of this fact, the Indian foreign policy will naturally be determined by the recognition of the struggles of the working classes and oppressed peoples of all nations.

Pyare Lal



I don't like the way you press fellows damage the reputation of our rule by giving exaggerated accounts of all this.



# Landless Labourers in Punjab

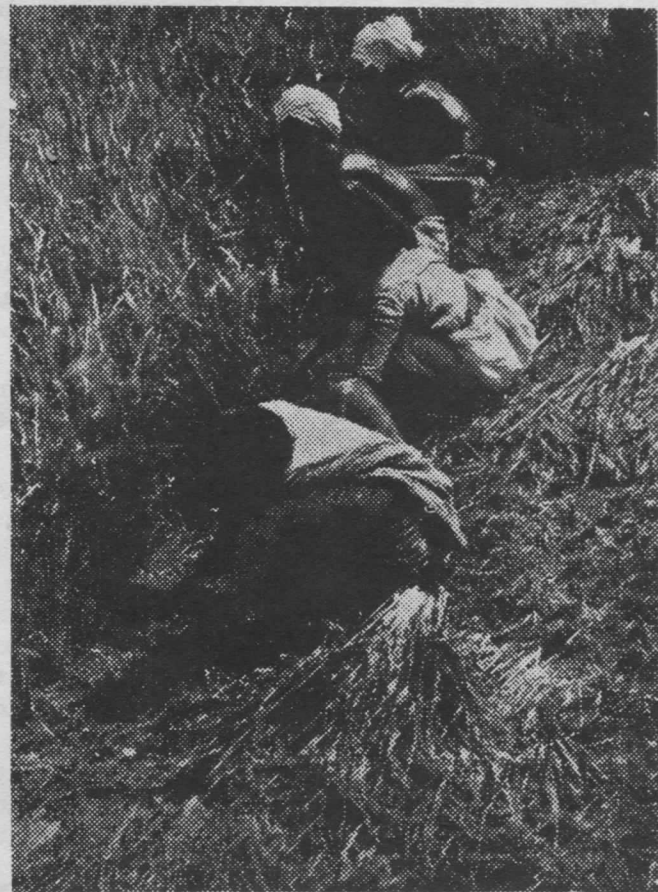
Every year the months of May, June, July and August (during the period of wheat harvesting and sowing) are marked by rural tension which has often in the past resulted in violent struggles between the rich peasants and landlords on the one hand and the landless labourers on the other.

In the Punjab 33% of the rural workers are landless farm workers who belong to the lower classes (untouchables). The farmers Jat Sikhs, who in the past have fought bitterly against the just demands of the rural proletariat, have now as a result of the economic and political crisis have joined the ranks of the landless agricultural workers. It has been estimated that "the number of landless labourers have doubled and that of the marginal workers has trebled in the last ten years). This process has been accelerated by the growth of capitalist mode of production, especially during the so called "green revolution", when millions of labourers lost their plots of land. Even today the only income which the landless labourers receive is from selling their labour power.

The schemes which have been introduced for the distribution of land for cultivation have provided very little response from the rural proletariat. The Punjab Government has claimed that 73 thousand acres of surplus land has been allocated to the landless. Also 40 thousand acres of inferior land and 25 thousand acres of 'Nazul' land has been distributed. In addition, the Government claims that by December 1976 one lakh of inferior and 'Nazul' land would be allocated to the landless.

Under the scheme for the provision of housing for the landless, free housing sites of 100 sq. yards were allocated to 'eligible' persons. The Punjab Government claims that 3 lakh 'eligible' persons have been allocated free housing sites, 300 co-operative building societies have been set up and 13,000 houses have already been completed. To facilitate this Rs 84 lakh have been allocated in the form of loans at an interest rate of 4%.

At first glance the figures are impressive but fail to reveal the depths of the problems of the rural proletariat. In the districts where the land has been distributed the rural proletariat have not yet occupied the land. It appears also that they have no intention of doing so, since they



**Landless labourers—irregular work and little wages** are often threatened with violence by the landlords. They are also reluctant to build houses outside the villages in which they live. Where they have occupied plots of land, the poor have been unable to afford to construct houses on these sites.

They have accumulated debts **owing to the money lenders**. At the same time they have no intention of taking credit from the societies which have been set up under the scheme, because their experience in the past has shown that they do not get loans from these societies, which are controlled by rich farmers and traders. (according to a Government survey in 1972, more than 12 lakhs families were in debt in the state). Even when **some** farm workers receive loans, they quickly become debtors because their capacity for repayment is limited because of the very low wages they receive.

Today in Punjab, the major demands of the rural proletariat are for better working conditions and wages, and not for a share in the land. In 1975 the Punjab Government announced the revision of the wages of agricultural workers, from Rs.4.65 to Rs.5.65 per day with meals, or Rs.6.70 to 7.70 per day without meals. During the harvesting period, the daily wages range

from Rs. 10 to 15. Subsequently, the landless labourers who have made contracts with the rich capitalist farmers are tempted to break them. This creates tension between the farmers and agricultural workers. During this period, spontaneous agitation erupts on the part of the labourers on the question of their wage demands. At this time the farmers' position is weaker because it is urgent to complete the harvesting and threshing before the first rains. Tension also arises because of the hostility of farmers against the lower castes and their just demands.

In the past, the big capitalist farmers have used three methods to break the resistance of the rural proletariat, during the harvesting period. Firstly, by carrying out harvesting with the help of the 'loyal workers', although this has proved difficult in recent years. The second method has been for the farmers to do the work themselves on each others fields. And finally, by social boycott of the workers. For instance, not allowing the workers to graze their cattle in farmers' fields, and sometimes by denying the use of village roads to the landless labourers. Also violence is frequently used against the rural proletariat to break their resistance.

Even though 33% of the agricultural workers are landless, very little action has been taken by the traditional left around their basic demands. Instead, the

left in Punjab has been pressing for land for cultivation and redemption of debts, which since 1970, has not been a significant demand of the workers. The CPI land-grab movement in July, 1970 was totally unsuccessful because it failed to arouse interest among the workers. Since 1972 the main demands in Patiala, Dara Baba Nanak border area, and in 1973 in Gurdaspur and in the Taran Taran area of Amritsar district in 1975, were for higher wages and better working conditions. Because of the increased militancy of the rural proletariat, it has become clear that the rich farmers in the future will use the Zamindara union and the Punjab Kisan Dal against the workers, if they fear that the unrest is likely to spread to other parts of the state.

On the other hand, the traditional left because of its lack of understanding of the capitalist relations in the rural areas, still lay emphasis on less relevant demands. Consequently when the spontaneous movement of the rural proletariat for higher wages and better working conditions etc., erupted, confusion ensued in the left. It is because of the lack of organisations among the rural proletariat, that the rich capitalist farmers have been able to resist the demands of the rural proletariat.

Mohan Ram

# BANGLADESH WHO'S LEFT

Bangladesh is a country which produces large surpluses of food grains, and yet the vast majority of its inhabitants are perpetually on the verge of starvation. Moreover, unemployment, severe lack of housing, plagues and extensive poverty continue to exist in spite of the abundance of natural resources. This is a reflection of the total inability of the ruling class, in the midst of a severe socio-economic crisis of their own making, to solve even the most fundamental economic problems. Further than this, it is historically clear that the ruling classes can NEVER solve this crisis; the only class that can lead the way forward out of this quagmire is the Bangladeshi working class under the leadership of its vanguard. However what is the effectiveness of the leadership of the working class at this time? What are they doing, in fact, to lead the way forward?

JSD and the latest crisis

The November military coup was catalysed mainly by one factor - colonel Abu Taher, who combined his job in the army with the leadership of the Biplapi Gana Bahini (Peoples Liberation Army - the armed wing of the Jatya Samajtantrik Dal). The JSD at this juncture raised a number of democratic demands including the demand for a radical change in the structure of the Armed forces. They said "For many days, we were the army of the rich classes who have used us for their own interests. August 15th 1975 was an example of that. This time we have revolted not for the benefit of the rich and not under their leadership. We have revolted this time with the masses of the country. From today onwards the armed forces of the country will organise themselves as defenders of the interests of the poor classes in the country." However the faith that the JSD had in Zia cost them dearly - after the



November 7th coup the leaders of the JSD were slung into jail while its cadres retreated underground.

In spite of the suppression by Zia, the JSD remains the most effective opposition, for whatever that is worth. The Mujibites have either been eliminated or have fled abroad. Furthermore, the JSD, though its tactics in the rural areas of liquidating 'dacoits' and the thugs of the BAKSAL (Bangladesh Krishak and Swarik Awami League - Mujib's only 'official' party) has achieved certain popular support. But what is more important is the fact that the JSD rhetoric plus collaboration with the ruling class, has proved to be just as ineffective as Zia to lead the way forward. That is the most we can say of it.

#### Moni and the BAKSAL

The Communist Party of Bangladesh does not function any longer. During Mujib's short reign the CPB under Moni Singh's 'leadership' joined the BAKSAL. The reasons for the CPB's actions were opportunistic. Moni Singh decided that since Mujib was such a 'towering' figure (99% majority in Parliament) it was better for the CPB to hang on to his coat-tails and pick up the crumbs rather than suffer his wrath as others had done. It did them little good. Not only did they fail miserably in the BAKSAL (one seat out of a hundred and twenty five) but after Mujib's downfall they were either eliminated or, like Moni Singh, fled to Moscow to lick their wounds.

The only working class organisations that consistently opposed both the terrorist BAKSAL and Zia's dictatorship were the CPB (Marxist) and the Maoist Purba Bangla Shorbohora Dal of Siraj Sikdar. Sikdar was killed a year ago and the party has degenerated into extreme left adventurism. It concentrates on the very same tactics of rural armed struggles that led the Naxalites into oblivion. While the CPB (M), like its counterpart across the border the CPI (M), are content to make the odd declaration in opposition to Zia.

#### Whither the Red Flag?

Among the most vociferous supporters of Zia are the far left Maoist parties. Their sole motivation for this support is their psychotic hatred of 'Soviet Social Imperialism' on whose shoulders they lay the blame not only for the present, but also for the future, crises! Toha's Purba Bangla Samyobadi Dal is the Maoist's main spokesman. What is unique about Toha's rhetoric is that never a

shred of evidence nor any element of substantiation is presented to prove the accusations against 'Soviet Social Imperialism'. There is little doubt that the Soviet Union does have an 'interest' in Bangladesh. However by their indiscriminate magnification of this, the Maoists underplay the dangers of Zia and U.S. Imperialism. And as we have seen, they actually ally with these reactionary forces. Perhaps it would be appropriate to remind Toha that it was Mao himself who declared that "the reactionary forces can easily wave the red flag in order to attack it." On this count, perhaps the Chairman himself should jog his memory.

multana bashini



Left? Nothing left?

Under this smokescreen of the Maoists, the Bengali Right is regrouping rapidly. Their slogan, like the Maoist's, is national unity against 'foreign' interference. Once the rightist forces have consolidated their re-groupment, the first to get the 'chop' will be Toaha and his cohorts - just as Mooni and the CPB did during Mujib's reign.

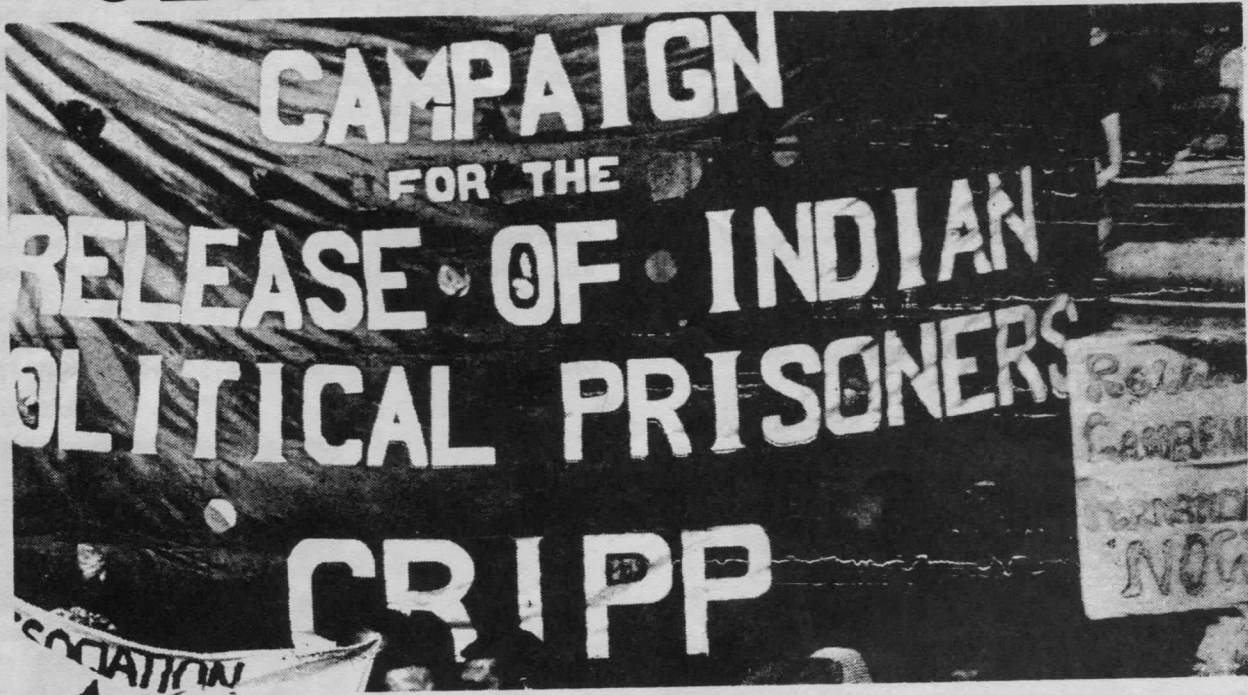
The balance sheet of proletarian leadership is as clear as it is tragic. Not only has it been unable to offer any clear perspectives, but more importantly, it has failed to assess the present crisis.

The struggle that has to be waged now, is a struggle for democratic demands. The masses have to be organised into struggle under democratic slogans. Therefore it is imperative to form a united

front of organisations of the working class and poor to demand the restoration of all democratic rights, the release of all political prisoners etc. This is the first step a revolutionary Marxist party has to undertake in order to direct the struggle which must necessarily end in the formation of a Red Bangla.

Begum Azir

# RELEASE GEORGE FERNANDES!



Ever since the Rail strike of May 74 the Indian Govt. began a campaign of harassment against George Fernandes, the Gen.Sec. of the railworkers union and the leader of the Socialist party. This reactionary campaign culminated last June with his arrest in Calcutta. He has since been confined in Delhi's Tihar jail under conditions of torture and extreme mal-treatment.

The events prior to his arrest, read like a nightmare. Immediately after the Emergency, Fernandes, went underground in order to escape the inevitable fate of being thrown into jail, as others less cautious than he had been. At the same time, the government launched a campaign of terror on Fernandes's family, to reveal George's whereabouts. On December 22, Michael Fernandes, one of George's brothers, and a trade union leader, was arrested under MISA. On May 1, of this year, Lawrence Fernandes was the next member of the Fernandes family to experience Madam's jails. His imprisonment was accompanied by the uniquely Indian brand of torture. According to a letter written by Fernandes's mother, to the President of India (published in full in CRIPP NEWS), 'besides beating him with

clubs (until five of them were broken to pieces), they used a banyan tree to clout him with and booted him and slapped him.' In Mrs. Fernandes's simple plea in this letter, she says 'is it moral or right that my family should be so harassed and tormented for the political views held by my son George Fernandes?'

George Fernandes is a political prisoner. But his case is by no means unique. Even before the Emergency, there were between 40,000 to 50,000 political prisoners. Now anywhere between 100,000 to 200,000 people rot in Indian jails for the same 'crime' as committed by George Fernandes ..... that of holding political views in opposition to the ruling Congress Party.

The Campaign for the Release of Indian Political Prisoners (CRIPP) is a united front of working class organisations concerned with the plight of George Fernandes and thousands of others like him. This has a consistent record of struggle for its three main demands - End All Prison Killings, End of All Forms of Torture, the Release of All Political Prisoners! These demands should be supported by all working class organisations and progressive individuals.

RELEASE GEORGE FERNANDES NOW! RELEASE ALL INDIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS!  
SMASH THE EMERGENCY!



## Soweto

In the last few weeks, black militancy erupted again in South Africa. The spark was the insistence by the white regime on making the black students learn in Afrikaans, the language symbolising apartheid. The students of Soweto refused to accept this attempt by the white regime to make the blacks bow down to apartheid. Peaceful demonstrations began, but the South African police moved in and opened fire, killing several people. The demonstrations turned violent and spread to many of the major townships in which blacks are forced to live in corrugated iron barracks. The police who, in the words of the South African regime were "very restrained", killed over 170 people - according to government sources - and left thousands wounded.

South Africa, the goldmine of capitalism, where black people are exploited to the bone in order to create fat profits for the imperialist countries, was condemned by those same imperialist countries for this action. The imperialist countries are obviously keenly aware that such actions provoke the oppressed into action which rocks the boat: one of these days, the boat is going to overturn, liberating the blacks and hammering another nail into the coffin of capitalism.

## Hijack

The recent hijack carried out in order to free Palestinian freedom fighters held in prisons around the world was foiled by the Israeli military.

## NEWS in BRIEF



Soweto: struggle for liberation

This action has been praised by governments and media alike. Labelling the freedom fighters as "terrorist" the real issue has been obscured: the war between the oppressed Palestinians and the Zionists. Only a few weeks ago the Israeli military was busy robbing more land from the Palestinians to give to Israeli farmers. Many women, men and children, fighting to keep the land that was rightfully theirs, were killed in this operation. The Palestinians are fighting for their right to live in the country that has been theirs for thousands of years. Trying to hide this fact by calling the freedom fighters "terrorist" will not change the fact that imperialism has dug its own grave in the Middle East by trampling upon the Palestinian people.

# SUBSCRIBE TO

## SOUTH ASIA

# NEWSLETTER

I would like:

more information about the Asian Socialist Forum ☐  
to subscribe to the South Asia Newsletter ☐

yearly rates: British Isles.....£2.20  
(including Europe.....£3.20  
postage) Other.....£4.00

All cheques & P/O's  
should be made  
payable to:

SOUTH ASIA NEWSLETTER

22 Boundary Road,  
London N.W.8.

'Raju'

They are coming.  
 Everytime  
 the machine  
     runs down,  
 they come.  
 A jellied mass,  
 ruled by those  
     who lie hidden  
 urged by words  
     that come easy.

They came in '36,  
 they came to Newark,  
 the same colour, the same signs,  
 new faces  
     dripping the same words.

They are coming.  
 the night has risen,  
 the knife  
     has tasted blood.

open your eyes,  
 organise.  
 clasp the shoulder,  
 standfast.

\*\*\*\*\*

NOTES ON 'Raju' AND 'organise'

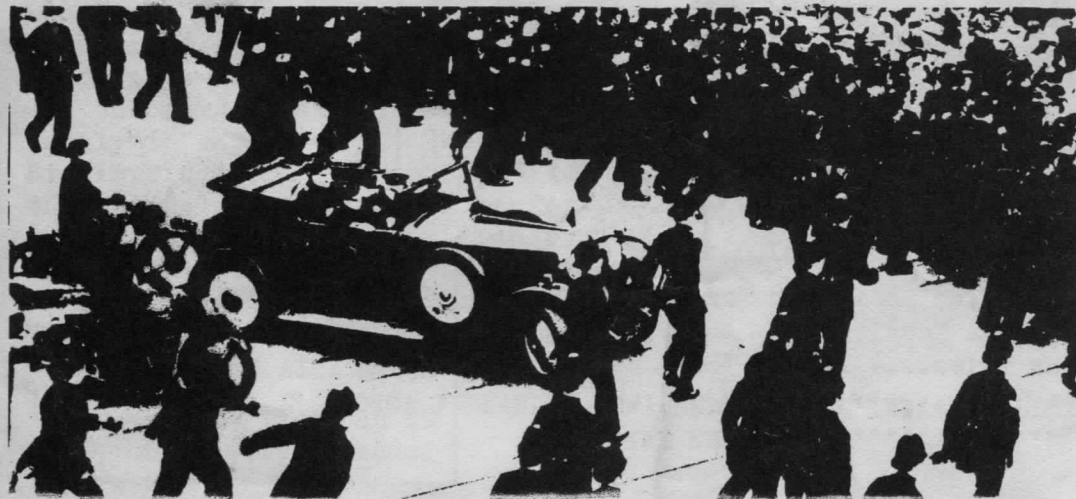
The two poems printed above, though written at different times, have a connecting thread running through them. The first one, 'Raju', begins with stating the reason for the racist attacks (the capitalist machine breaking down), and ends with a prescription for such attacks - analysis ('open your eyes'), unity and organisation.

The second poem, 'organise', picks up the same theme and takes it to its logical conclusion - only by smashing the present system, 'by changing the earth', will racism, an integral part of capitalism, be eradicated.

At the present time, it is important to reach a scientific understanding of 'why racism' instead of indulging in emotional talk which will blind the 'pupil of our eyes'. The harrassment of black people, they being blamed as the cause of the present economic crisis, only serves to divert attention from the real culprits - the ruling class. To this end, the latter ('those who lie hidden') will use all possible means, including the mass media to exploit the prejudices of the white people (prejudices which are a result of Britain's colonial past). We should not fall into the same trap. The other point which the poem makes - and one which is particularly relevant in the present time - is that Asians are by no means the only people to be harrassed. The Blacks, the Puerto Ricans and the American Indians of the U.S.A. have faced (and still face) such racist attacks; race riots broke out in the city of Newark in the 60's. In Europe the migrant workers from Turkey and Algeria (amongst others) also live and work in a hostile environment.

In England itself, the people from the Carribean face similar attacks and discrimination. Attacks and marches such as the one that took place in Bradford, were launched on the Jewish community in 1936.

Imperialism does not confine its bloodthirsty activities to a particular nationality or country. All exploited peoples are the subject of its murderous intentions. Bearing this in mind, we must realise that our allies are the exploited peoples and the progressive white people (especially workers). Unity and organisation are essential so that our feet march in unison, 'in rhythm'. It goes without saying that unity within ourselves is of fundamental importance; only then will we be able to stand up and say: No, we refuse to be scapegoats for the crises which are of your own making. When such a time comes about, we should be sure of our eventual destination - the building of a new and better society, where even the sky will have to be built again.

organise!

organise  
 the pupil of your eye,  
 the angle of your thumb,  
 the rhythm of your feet.

organise!  
 organise to struggle!

struggle to climb the hill,  
 to carve the sea,  
 to change the earth,  
 to build the sky.

organise to struggle to change.

# ORGANISE!