

CLASS STRUGGLE

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Colin Roach: No Cover-up

Colin Roach walked through the door of Stoke Newington police station on 12th January 1983. Moments later, a shot rang out, and he was dead.

The police say he shot himself, but his family have testified that he was in good spirits before his death, and certainly gave no indication that he had any wish to take his own life. The local black community firmly believes that the police were responsible.

If the original police statement (which said that they were satisfied that Colin Roach had shot himself) did not allay suspicion, the actions of the police and their loyal allies since Colin's death have only tended to justify it.

The campaign calls for a public enquiry into Colin's death. They want an independent body as possible to try to get to the truth. Yet the state rejects this. Why reject it if there's nothing to hide?

OBSTACLES TO JUSTICE

In justification of this position, the upholders of "British justice" say that an inquest can only investigate the cause of a person's death; if it finds that he or she was "unlawfully killed", it cannot point out who was responsible. Moreover, the jury at an inquest is selected by the Coroner's office, who is a policeman, and it has to be guided by the summing-up and recommendations of the Coroner - hardly a recipe for an independent and just verdict!

In case the jury should find that Colin Roach was

"unlawfully killed", there's no guarantee that any further action will be taken against those who are responsible, as the decision on whether or not to take proceedings against them rests with the Director of Public Prosecutions, a government appointee.

THE INQUEST

The inquest is due to take place on April 18th at St Pancras Coroner's Court, Kings Cross. The room where it will happen is small, seating only 40, so not many people will be able to attend, especially once the press have taken a sizeable portion of the seating. This makes a nonsense of the claim that the inquest will be public, especially given the consistently hostile attitude of the white press towards the demands of the Roach Family Support Committee and the family themselves.

The family and the Committee have called for the inquest to be transferred to larger premises, and Hackney Council Chamber for use instead, but the Coroner has turned down this call.

THE LYON SQUEAKS

In the House of Commons, Alex Lyon, MP for York and former Labour Home Office minister, refused to sign a motion supporting the Roach family's demands, and felt moved to attack the campaign. He referred to it as "spurious" and said "all the evidence is that this young man killed himself." He claimed that the campaign was prompted by activists in the black community, supported by "a number of people on the left who ought to know better."

According to this view, Colin Roach's family and friends, and the local community in Stoke Newington would have been quite happy if they hadn't had "activists" stir them up; Lyon also seems to think these activists can't help themselves, but white leftists should be above this kind of thing! And this is a man who poses as a socialist, an anti-racist and a friend of the people! If Lyon believes there is no cover-up, why can't he call for a public enquiry?

HISTORY OF CRIME

Stoke Newington police have a record of racism (see last month's 'Class Struggle'). Only intense pressure can win the demands of the campaign: a full, independent public inquiry and the dropping of all charges against those arrested on demonstrations. Hackney Council recently met a third demand of the campaign by withholding its payment to the police - why, the campaign asked, should the police be paid from the pockets of the public when the public have no confidence in them?

But looking at the record, how can local people believe that the Stoke Newington police will change? And the history of the police elsewhere in Britain - especially in areas with a large black population, shows that Stoke Newington police are different from others only in the degree of racism they show, not in quality. The spreading of this understanding is a challenge to the authority of the British state. Out of people's rejection of it, will be born a new order of class and national justice which will be the work of the masses themselves.

Building an Irish Solidarity Movement

A GREAT BEGINNING

'Class Struggle' correspondent.



On Saturday 12 March, nearly 600 people staged a long and spirited demonstration through working class areas of north London demanding 'Victory to the Irish People! Troops Out Now!'. The demonstration was organised by the Co-ordinating Committee to Build an Irish Solidarity Movement and was sponsored by 21 Irish Prisoners of War in British gaols, Scottish Republican prisoners, Welsh Republican prisoners, black prisoners and English prisoners as well as a broad range of other political forces (a detailed listing was carried in the last issue of 'Class Struggle').

WORKING CLASS SUPPORT

This extremely militant demonstration raised slogans against the British Army, RUC, the Prevention of Terrorism Act, in support of the prisoners in Britain and the north, and other slogans. Local working class people reacted very warmly to the demonstration. Many of them took leaflets, bought newspapers, and a number of them joined the demonstration for varying periods of time. Banners carried on the demonstration were: West London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool, and Dundee Irish Solidarity Committees, Bristol TOM, Luton Sinn Fein, People's Democratic Front, student supporters of the Organisation of the People's Fedaii Guerillas, Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!, Essex University Students Union, Revolutionary Communist League, Bangladesh Workers' Association - London, Revolutionary Communist Group, North London and Bradford Irish Solidarity Committees, Scottish

Republican Socialist Party, Glasgow Irish Freedom Action Committee, Tyneside Action Committee on Ireland, and South London Irish Solidarity Committee.

RALLY

At a rally in Whittington Park at the end of the demonstration, Michael Holden, member of Sinn Fein (Britain) and shop steward spoke of the many forms of British repression against the Irish people, and said:

"This very week the PTA was renewed despite the protests, and some crocodile tears, of Labour MPs who are, we know, responsible for its introduction back in 1974, and who continually voted for its retention until this very week."

Drawing attention to the well-known phrase that any nation that oppresses another can never itself be free, Michael said:

"That is the message we must take from here into the workplaces and into the home of every worker in this country, black and white."

Referring to a recent statement from Owen Carron MP that unity between Republicans and socialist groups in Britain was the most valuable contribution to Irish freedom to be worked for and strived for, Michael said that therefore it is up to all of us to "build a strong, united Irish Solidarity Movement in Britain."

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700 IN PRISON STRIKE

'Class Struggle' correspondent

On February 28, over 700 prisoners - mainly in top security prisons - in Britain staged a successful one-day strike to demand:

1. Half remission;
2. Prisoners to be told the reasons for parole refusal;
3. 4 visits per month;
4. A food and toiletries parcel each week;
5. Own clothing;

6. Earnings to be supplemented by private cash for use in prison canteens;

7. Three hours association every evening.

Apart from the second demand regarding parole all these rights have been fought for and won by prisoners in the six counties of Ireland. There is no parole in the north of Ireland.

Prisons affected by the protest included Parkhurst, Albany, Gartree, Long Lartin, Hull, Wakefield and Market Harborough.

At Albany all 300 prisoners took part and at Parkhurst the figure was 243 out of 261.

ON-GOING STRUGGLE

The strike is part of an on-going struggle by the prisoners for their rights. In January 1982, prisoners staged a three day strike. The most recent strike was supposed to last for two days, but on the second day all participants were locked in their cells awaiting disciplinary hearings. Indeed, the depth of feeling amongst the

prisoners on their demands is shown by the large numbers willing to risk punishment by taking part in the protest. Commenting on this, the prisoners rights organisation, PROP, said:

"The most important demand is for half remission which northern Ireland prisoners have had for seven years."

PROP also commented: "This is a highly responsible, disciplined protest, based on a withdrawal of labour."

SABOTAGE

In the aftermath of the protest there came to light some of the attempts by the authorities to derail it. This included

victimising prisoners and creating provocations as an excuse for a clampdown. An example of this is the February 23 claim that a gun had been found in Wormwood Scrubs, which gave an excuse for confining all prisoners to their cells. Also, some prisoners - including Irish POWs who have always been in the vanguard of the prison struggle - were moved hastily to other prisons.

After the strike, other prisoners were moved, fines were imposed, "privileges" were withdrawn, and threats were made of loss of remission. But the prisoners remain undaunted. They deserve the support of all of us.



Wang Doudou

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM DEVELOPS IN THE EAST

Year Of Karl Marx

The need for Communists to study deeply and develop a concrete creative revolutionary line was heavily emphasised by the Communist Party of China at a special meeting to commemorate the centenary of Karl Marx's death, held on March 13.

Speaking at the meeting, the Party's General Secretary, Comrade Hu Yaobang, said that: "Both revisionism and dogmatism run counter to Marxism in that they separate the subjective from the objective world and divorce theory from practice. Marxism is a developing science; it is the guide to revolution. Its vitality lies in its constant analysis and study of new situations and problems that arise in the course of practice and in its integration with concrete revolutionary practice at different times and in different countries. This is the well-spring of the unceasing enrichment and development of Marxism and the basic guarantee of its ever-growing revolutionary vigour."

MAO ZEDONG THOUGHT

This was exactly what Comrade Mao Zedong had done in formulating a correct line for the Chinese revolution, which could not be derived from any foreign model or abstract principle. Today, Comrade Hu Yaobang said, the Chinese have "re-embarked on the road of integrating the universal truth of Marxism with the actual realities in China under the new historical conditions. This is the only correct road opened up for us by Comrade Mao Zedong, our personal experience has made us appreciate keenly the brilliance of his thinking and pract-

ice and the tremendous wisdom and strength he brought to the Party and people when he adhered to this correct road through decades of activity. It has also made us realise that, deviating or departing from this correct road in the evening of his life, even such a great Marxist as Comrade Mao Zedong could not avoid going astray and making distressing mistakes. Therefore, by setting things to rights we mean restoring Mao Zedong Thought to its true essence and upholding and developing it. Some people are prattling right up to now that we have abandoned Mao Zedong Thought. This only shows that they have no idea of what Mao Zedong Thought means, that is, no idea what Marxism means."

In a pertinent attack on obscurantism and philistinism, Comrade Hu emphasised that Marx's theory had stood the test of time precisely because it rests on the foundation of his painstaking study of all the sciences, including natural science: "Generation after generation of scholars, young people, activists in the workers' movement, national revolutionaries and other people seeking change have continued to draw inexhaustible strength and confidence from Marxism. This would be inconceivable in regard to any flash-in-the-pan 'new trend of thought'."

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

Comrade Hu's argument clearly shows that Marxism has a strength to confound its enemies not only because it has a firm basis in the whole body of human knowledge, but also because Marxists are ready to face up to fresh problems as they arise. Speaking, in this spirit, of recent developments in the international communist movement, Comrade Hu stated:

"For more than three decades since the Second World War, the world communist movement has followed a tortuous course of development. It has scored magnificent successes and victories, but has also experienced severe setbacks and failures, undergoing a bewildering process of turbulence and division. This complex historical phenomenon has given rise to a wide variety of reactions throughout the world. Some people have gloated over the setbacks, whereas others have lost their confidence, describing Marxism as being in a state of 'crisis'. However, amidst such shouts of 'crisis', the Marxist parties and organisations of many countries, braving all kinds of attacks, have heroically and calmly carried on the fight. In the tortuous

universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the revolution in their own countries. Facts have proved that on the questions of how to handle correctly the relations between the parties of various countries and of what specific road of revolution to take, the Marxist parties in different countries have a much deeper understanding and are richer in experience and their level is clearly higher than before. Fundamentally, this has created the most important condition for the greater development of Marxism."

Drawing to the end of his speech, Comrade Hu referred to the importance of learning anew. "As we commemorate the centenary of the death of Karl Marx," he said, "we are happy to see that



Tian An Men Square, Beijing, China (Photo: 'Class Struggle')

course of development all true Marxists and far-sighted people are discerning a most essential positive feature i.e., politically and ideologically more and more Marxist parties and organisations have dared to break with blind faith, to emancipate their minds and to think for themselves, thus becoming able independently to integrate the

in China today, the central task of the communist movement initiated by Marx and Engels has become the struggle to bring about a new situation in all fields of socialist modernisation and to turn the country into a modern, powerful, socialist state with a high level of democracy and civilisation. This grand and

arduous task is one of the greatest creative undertakings in the history not only of the East but also of all mankind. SCIENCE

Comrade Hu went on to refer to the work Marx and Frederick Engels had put into mastering the latest developments in maths and science.

"Recalling this experience, Engels said: 'I went through as complete as possible a 'moult' as Liebig calls it, in mathematics and natural sciences.' What was meant by this 'moult'? The famous 19th-century German chemist Justus Liebig had said: 'Chemistry is moving forward at an incredible speed, and chemists, wishing to keep up with it, are in a state of constant moulting. The first feathers, unsuitable for flight, fall out of the wings, but new ones grow in their stead and flight becomes more powerful and easier.' This refers to the precious enterprising spirit of scientists who strive constantly to update their knowledge, never cease in their research effort and dare to destroy the old and establish the new. Why can't the effort being made by us Chinese communists and people to learn anew be compared to moulting? China, with its one billion people, is like a giant roc whose 'wings obscure the sky like clouds'. Once the old feathers unsuitable for flight fall out of the wings and new ones grow in their stead in the process of learning anew, our country is bound to soar to the skies more powerfully and with greater ease, flying over one peak after another towards its goal."

"The great ideal of communism advanced by Marx and Engels inspires the world proletariat and all oppressed peoples and nations in their struggle for emancipation and inspires all progressive mankind in its struggle for a bright future. These struggles are converging into a worldwide, irresistible historical tide propelling social progress."

GHOST OF GOEBBELS Takes Next Step

In our last issue we had occasion to expose the ultra-left and sectarian "Revolutionary Communist Party", in particular for its sham anti-imperialism and its violent physical assaults on communists. The RCP continues its attempts to disrupt communist and anti-imperialist work in Britain, in particular the building of a united and non-sectarian Irish Solidarity Movement.

The March issue of "The Next Step" (paper of the RCP) contains an article entitled "Split Down the Middle" that purports to analyse the Irish Solidarity Movement in Britain. This article contains every trick of bourgeois hack journalism - for example it gives an almost recognisable critique of certain policies of the Troops Out Movement, and then by sleight of hand attempts to impute them as well to the Irish Solidarity Committees. Additionally, they never actually refer to the Irish Solidarity Committees by name, but refer to them throughout as "the RCG" in blatant contravention of the truth.

This is in fact the outstanding feature of the article, which contains little or no political content. Not only is it full of distortions, evasions and ironical comments more fitted to the accusers than to the accused. It is also full of sheer, unadulterated lies. It seems as though the RCP has taken it upon itself to pick up the mantle of the late and unlamented Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Minister of Culture, in particular his theory that the

bigger the lie, and the more often repeated, the greater chance of it being believed. It is that aspect of the RCP article - its sheer lies - that we will pay particular attention to in this article.

ANSWERING THE LIE MACHINE

LIE NUMBER ONE: "Both TOM and the RCG have turned what remains of their energies against anti-imperialists." Anyone familiar with the work of the ISCs (RCG=ISC in RCP speak) knows this to be complete bunkum. The main work of the Committees is conducted every weekend on the streets. Additionally, a great deal of work was done to ensure the success of the 12 March demonstration (which as we shall see the RCP admits after a fashion). The London ISCs are now working towards an all-London rally on April 25th.

LIE NUMBER TWO: "In December they both announced that they will be holding demonstrations." The March 12 demonstration was called by the November 20 Conference, a fact well known to the RCP because they were there and refused to vote for it.

LIE NUMBER THREE: "For its part, the RCG spent the weeks leading up to the Bloody Sunday demonstration talking about its plans for March and demanding speaking rights for the January commemoration rally." It is true that the ISCs requested a speaker at the Bloody Sunday Commemoration. This was agreed to, but denied on the day, not least due to RCP/IFM meddling.

But the implication that the ISCs did not build for Bloody Sunday is utterly untrue. The Committees all worked hard for the demonstration participating in mobilising committees, holding street meetings, holding public meetings, arranging transport. In some areas (such as south London) the local ISC took the initiative in cooperating with the local TOM branch in arranging transport. Local meetings had an average attendance of 40. ISC participation in mobilising committees was often in the face of hindrance (e.g. failure to send invitations) by the RCP/IMF who were prominent in the mobilising committees. One such meeting they initiated in south London was deliberately held to coincide with a well publicised SLISC public meeting where Sinn Fein were speaking. The RCP/IFM initiated meeting was an ill-disguised farce lasting less than 10 minutes. The RCP initiated meeting in north London was cancelled on the irrelevant pretext that "the Sinn Fein speaker had not turned up."

LIE NUMBER FOUR: "The 'forces' which these two groups represent were conspicuous by their absence on the day of the demonstration." Firstly, there were quite a few TOM banners on the demonstration. Secondly, the contingent mobilised by the ISCs was 160 strong, the same size as the RCP/IFM contingent. When the march passed through Chapeltown black and white youths joined the ISC contingent swelling it to 200, larger than the RCP/IFM contingent.

LIE NUMBER FIVE: "Since January these two groups have spent all their time attacking anti-imperialists." This is

essentially the same as Lie Number One.

LIE NUMBER SIX: "TOM has changed its tune and argue that its demonstration will now be under the slogan 'Voices for Withdrawal'." In fact the demonstration initiated by the Troops Out Movement is being organised around the slogans: "Britain Out of Ireland! Self Determination for the Irish People!"

LIE NUMBER SEVEN: "Instead they (TOM and the ISCs) invent spurious reasons to organise their own efforts which just happen to coincide with anti-imperialist mobilisations." Here the RCP imputes to others what they themselves are guilty of. They called a "Week of Action against the PTA", early in March, after the March 12 demonstration had been called. They even called a "Smash the PTA!" rally on March 12, which they later cancelled faced with the failure of their disruptive campaign. (Incidentally, their "Week of Action" was conveniently held just after the PTA had been renewed.)

LIE NUMBER EIGHT: "At the Bloody Sunday rally a leading RCG member threatened prominent Sinn Fein activists with physical violence." This is the filthiest, most disgusting lie in the whole article. The RCG has given unconditional support to the Republican Movement for longer, and more consistently, than any other organisation on the British left. This has cost them nearly 100 arrests, including three under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. This foul lie is the desperate move of sectarians whose days are numbered.

IRONY

The "Next Step" article is also richly ironical. Crudely para-

phrasing Marx it states: "The IFM has no interests apart from those of Irish freedom and the liberation of the working class." Really? How interesting then that the South London Irish Solidarity Committee should recently have come into contact with a comrade expelled from the IFM for not agreeing with the politics of the RCP! The "Next Step" writes: "If they were serious anti-imperialists, TOM and the RCG would have mobilised for the commemoration of Bloody Sunday and for the 8th May protest against the H-Blocks." Actually it is the RCP/IFM who will go to any lengths not to support the initiatives of other forces.

The words and deeds of the Irish Solidarity Committees show that they will support anything that has the goal of building solidarity for the Irish people's struggle. The Solidarity Committees will be supporting both of the demonstrations called in May to support the struggle of the Irish people. This is a correct method of work.

HONESTY AND COMMUNISM

At the 11th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, veteran Chinese communist, Comrade Deng Xiaoping, said:

"The minimum requirement for a Communist is to be an honest person, honest in word and honest in deed. Deed and word must match and theory and practice must be closely integrated. We must reject flashiness without substance and every sort of boasting. There must be less empty talk and more hard work."

How miserably short of these basic requirements the RCP fall!



SOUTH AFRICA: PRISON EXPERIENCES PART 2



By Melville Fletcher.

I was by now feeling extremely demoralised when suddenly I heard a group of people singing the 'Internationale'. Then I realised that they were comrades of many years standing who had been sentenced to long terms of imprisonment the year before. I had been arrested along with about seven or eight other whites from Durban, all of them very new to left wing politics and for the first few days we were allowed a daily half hour exercise period together on condition that we did not communicate with each other. But later the others were all transferred to various other prisons and I stayed on in Pretoria. I was kept in solitary for 23 hours a day with two half hourly exercise periods...the light was never switched off at night and I was allowed no reading material and denied all contact with the outside world, except one brief visit from an uncle and aunt. A thick glass barrier separated us and we had to shout to make ourselves heard and every word was noted by the two 'screws' who were present on this occasion.

After two months of this, I was taken to the interrogation centre at Compol Buildings in Pretoria. My interrogators were not only highly professional, but obviously enjoyed their job. They first made it quite clear to me that they had complete control over me and were not accountable to anyone. As one of them said jeeringly: "Here you have no smart-alec Jewish lawyer to defend you."

This time I was questioned about a conspiracy in which I was alleged to have defeated the course of justice by not only committing perjury the year before when my close friend, the lawyer and leading Marxist theoretician Roley Arenstein, was on trial, but had contacted state witnesses and by one way or another had compelled them to give conflicting evidence, with the result that Roley Arenstein was acquitted. They also wanted to know about my membership of the South African Communist Party. They seemed convinced that I had played a rather important role in the SACP which, although flattering, was not true.

INTERROGATION

I was always interrogated in the presence of three members of the special branch. One fired the questions and the other remained silent. This is apparently standard procedure. On the first day, my interrogator, Captain Swannepeol, bellowed at me and threatened to "break every bone in my body", but I could tell that it was simulated rage by his eyes. It takes an actor of Oscar-winning standards to lie with the eyes.

After several hours of this, all three of them would suddenly get up and walk out leaving me alone for about 20 minutes. Then, in would come the nice guys with cups of tea and cigarettes. The theory behind this is that the first batch of interrogators would have reduced one to a pulp and at the first display of friendliness, one would start babbling. In the kindest tones they would tell me that they had for some time been very concerned about my welfare, that I was obviously being used by Jews etc. When this didn't work, they too would walk out and the whole thing would start again. Their last ploy was to show me a police identification docket with the photo and name of a friend of mine, implying that he had always been a member of the special branch. After several weeks of this, during which time I was alternately abused, threatened or cajoled, I was told by Capt. Swannepeol that as a result of talks he had had with the Durban special branch, he was now convinced that I had never played a prominent role in the SACP and I was returned to Pretoria Central.

By now I had established a rather weird relationship with a very young 'screw' whom I shall refer to as Pimples. He was about 23, short and fat with watery eyes, moist lips and his face covered in pimples. He was the only 'screw' in Pretoria who ever spoke to me except to

get remission, even to the extent of getting their fellow inmates into trouble. One morning, whilst I was having a shower, a convict came up to me and said that he heard on the grapevine that there was going to be a search that day and as political prisoners were not searched, would I keep a packet of 'dagga' (cannabis) for him until the search was over, and then return it to him.

Later in the day a search did indeed take place, but not as I had expected. In fact, mine was the only cell that was searched and the 'dagga' was found. I noticed that during the search, the two 'screws' seemed awkward and embarrassed, as if they didn't particularly like what they were doing. They confiscated the 'dagga' and for several days I heard nothing more about it, but was in a state of considerable suspense. By now I was beginning to enjoy more and more time in the exercise yard along with the other convicts and a number of them seemed excessively friendly telling me, amongst other things, what respect they had for communists and how interested they were in the subject. My replies were always guarded and non-committal.

CONTRADICTIONS

One of the 'screws' was like me, from the Cape and spoke with a strong Cape accent. It was this that first gave us something in common and led to us occasionally exchanging anecdotes about the Cape. Later he told me that he had been trying for years to write an examination that, if passed, would put him in line for promotion,

man delegation visiting the island.

Seychelles

The Indian Ocean state of Seychelles has called on the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) to join forces against the South African apartheid regime.

The appeal was made by Guy Sinon, Secretary General of the Seychelles People's Progressive Front to PAC Chairman John Nyati Pokela who was head of a three-

A similar appeal was made to the ANC two weeks before when an ANC representative delivered a message from ANC Chairman Oliver Tambo to Sinon.

The ANC and PAC are two major liberation movements in South Africa. The two organisations both recognised by the Organisation of African Unity, have been fighting for the same goal, that is, to overthrow the racist regime in South Africa.

I shall never forget the last time we spoke. I was due to be transferred from Pretoria to the Fort in Johannesburg and he came into my cell and said: "Don't take it the wrong way, but I'm bloody glad you are leaving. You see, before we had all those talks, life was easy, but now you have gone and turned me upside down and I don't know what is true and what is not. I feel that if you had stayed here much longer, I would have become a bloody commie myself. I see now why people like you have to be locked up, but anyway, good luck."

THE FORT

After Pretoria Central, the Fort was almost a pleasant place to be in. The 'screws' were the usual lazy and incompetent lot as in Durban. Again I was to have been kept in strict solitary confinement, but as this always causes extra work for the 'screws', I was allowed a certain measure of leeway, not due to their humanity... it was just that they didn't like the extra work that this would have involved. This was both a good and a bad thing. In the first place, having been in strictest solitary confinement for so long, it was wonderful to occasionally be able to have one's exercise period in the company of other people, and to be able to read a smuggled newspaper from time to time. The negative aspect was this: several of the long-term convicts would stop at nothing to

but he had failed on each occasion because his English was bad, and would I give him lessons and write an essay for him? This I gladly agreed to. There was just something about this 'screw' that rang true, and gradually I came to the conclusion that I could trust him. And my trust was not misplaced. Suddenly he began to enforce the regulations more strictly and I was no longer permitted to exercise with the other convicts. I assumed that his laxity had come to the attention of his superiors and this was why he was being more strict. But I was wrong. One evening he came into my cell and briefly put me into the picture. He told me that he was strictly enforcing the regulations for my own good; that a number of long-term prisoners had contacted the special branch and had struck a deal. If they could persuade me that they were genuinely interested in communism and could get me to start giving lectures on the subject, they (the special branch) would then charge me with propagating communism, in violation of Act 44 of 1950. My 'pupils' would then give evidence against me, and if I was convicted they would receive considerable remission. But first, they were to get me in a vulnerable position... hence the request earlier by that convict, for me to hide his 'dagga' for him. The 'screw' said that at the time of them searching my cell and finding the 'dagga' they knew what was going on but were

not particularly worried although they thought that it was a dirty trick. But, he continued, this plot to get me convicted now involved them, because if I was to be brought to trial, the question would arise: "How could someone, supposed to be held in strict solitary confinement, have the opportunity to conduct political classes?" The reply would be that the warders allowed me to mix with other convicts; an offence for which they could lose their jobs, but it would also carry with it the insinuation that they were sympathetic to me on an ideological level, which would prevent them from getting employment elsewhere. He concluded by saying that as a warder, he resented the special branch for their arrogance, but he never thought that they would stoop to such depths to get a conviction. I then thanked him and emphasised that we were now in the same boat and would have to cooperate for our mutual welfare, with which he heartily agreed. For the first time in my life I had experienced a practical example of 'using contradictions amongst the enemy', as Mao Zedong aptly put it.

Nothing more happened for about ten days, except that the two section 'screws' from time to time gave me such luxuries as hot water to shave with, newspapers and tea. Then suddenly one morning I was told to get ready as I was to be taken 'elsewhere'. This elsewhere proved to be the head offices of the Johannesburg special branch, where I was ushered into the presence of Captain Johann Coetzee. I had known Johann Coetzee since 1957 when he was a sergeant who took shorthand notes at our meetings. He was a very urbane and erudite man and I was interested to read in the South African daily, 'The Star' of January 28, this year that in May 1983 he is to be appointed to the highest position in the South African Police, Commissioner of Police. In characteristic fashion, he politely offered me a seat and then quietly informed me that he was considering charging me with being in possession of 'dagga' whilst in the Fort and of carrying on communistic activities among the convicts. He also hinted that this was being done with cooperation from the warders and that he had several sworn statements to this effect.

He then asked me if I wished to say anything, to which I reminded him of the Afrikaans saying - "Stilby is soms die beste antwoord" (Silence is

sometimes the best answer). He then told me that for the rest of my 180-day period I would be confined to cells in Marshall Square police station to where I was duly taken. The cells did not have doors but iron grilles, with whites on one side of the corridor and blacks on the other. Every night, and right through the night, I would hear hundreds of blacks, arrested mostly for petty offences: for not having the right documents or night passes, being herded into the cells to the bellowing and raving of the 'screws' who seemed to regard them as wild beasts. As far as being kept in solitary confinement, the rules were strictly adhered to and on occasions I did not even get the exercise periods I was entitled to. Two incidents stand out clearly in my mind whilst being held in Marshall Square. One was a particularly nasty 'screw' who would place my dinner on the corridor just out of hand's reach. Like all jail food it was stodgy and tasteless and covered with hot lard. As long as the lard was hot one could manage to eat it. But after about 20 minutes the lard would congeal and it then tasted vile. It was at this stage that he would push it under the grille. Hungry as I was, I could never manage to swallow more than a few spoonfuls. The other incident was as follows: I was beginning to get very depressed and to suffer from head-aches and insomnia. When I mentioned this to the 'screw' and asked to see a doctor he said he would attend to the matter. Later in the day he brought me a jam jar full of aspros. That really frightened me. I had read in the papers about detainees committing suicide whilst in detention. Now I knew how it was done and I was resolved to get a grip on myself and not give way to depression.

TO ENGLAND

At the conclusion of my 180-day stint I was given a rail warrant to Durban and told that my banning orders would still be enforced. I knew that as soon as they expired they would be renewed so I reapplied for an exit visa which was granted in November 1966, and the following month I arrived at Heathrow Airport.

FREE NELSON MANDELA!

Some 600 people took part in a 24-hour picket of South Africa House in London on Friday 18th March and Saturday 19th March from 5.30 p.m. - 5.30 p.m. to demand: "Release Nelson Mandela! Release all South African Political Prisoners!"

Organised by the City Branch of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the picket had banners from left groups, trade unions, student unions, gay groups and Irish Solidarity Committees. Other support came from Greenham Common women, Chile Solidarity Campaign, Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the Roach Family Support Committee. The Deputy Mayor of Nazareth visited the picket and it was announced at the Black Book Fair by leading Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa'Thiongo. It was also attended by six Members of Parliament.

Pickers collected 1,000 signatures on a petition calling for the release of all South African political prisoners and kept their spirits high by

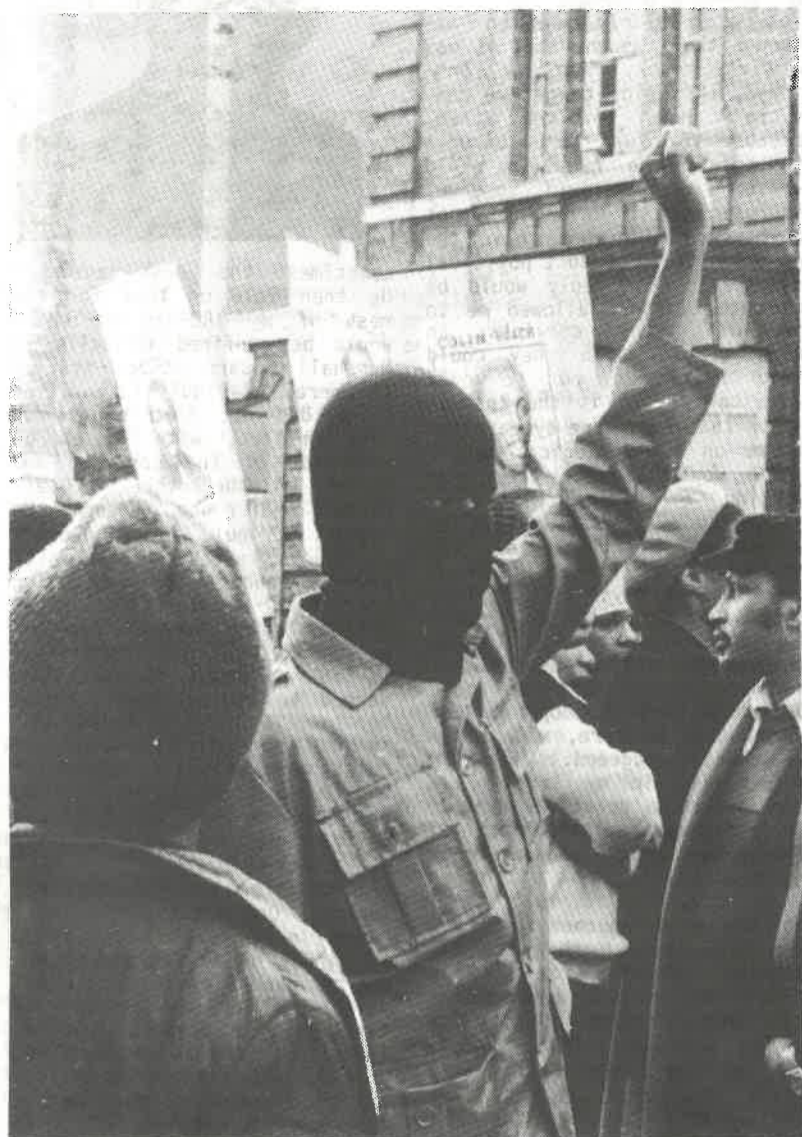
singing African freedom songs and impromptu picket songs. Militant slogans were shouted in solidarity not only with the freedom struggle in South Africa, but also stressing unity with anti-imperialist struggles in Namibia, Palestine, El Salvador, Ireland and elsewhere. Repeatedly raised was the slogan: "ANC - Colin Roach. One Struggle, One Fight!" Mrs Nellie Knight, another black victim of Hackney Police brutality, addressed the picket on Friday night. Other speakers included a representative of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

This successful picket grew out of the success of the 86-day non-stop "Free David Kitson! Free All South African Political Prisoners!" picket. As with that picket unemployed black and white youth were well to the fore.

Simultaneously with the London picket, 24-hour pickets were held in Nottingham, Dundee, Leeds and Manchester.

FORWARD EVER

BACKWARD NEVER!



The Roach Family Support Committee has pursued its demands for an independent enquiry by meetings, marches, pickets and demonstrations. Right from the beginning, as news of Colin's death spread through the community, black youth took to the streets to express their anger. Since then they have organised a petition

and benefits in local youth clubs, as well as weekly protests. On April 17th, the Black Theatre Cooperative also is holding a benefit.

In the face of the growing support for the Roach family based firstly in the black community but drawing in local white people, anti-racist organisations, and some councillors and MPs, the police have attempted to smash the campaign. They have been round youth clubs

warning black youth to keep away from protests. The number of people arrested mainly on demonstrations is now over 80. On the March 12th demonstration, for example, Mr Roach was arrested and at one point, police also grabbed hold of Mrs Roach but finally let her go. When Mr Roach was finally released around 9.00 on Saturday evening, he showed a blood-stained handkerchief to those waiting for him outside as a sign of his brutal treatment inside. Some leading black activists have now been arrested more than once and harassed at other times. K.'Ace'Kelly

for example, was arrested for the second time on March 12th and beaten up. There has also been one attempt to run him over and he has been picked up by police 'on suspicion' as a form of intimidation.

A further step was taken after March 12th. Another arrested on that day was a local councillor, Dennis Twomey, who knew Colin and who has consistently supported the Roach family. He was held by police till Monday and then brought to court. The police asked for, and got, conditional bail: the condition being that Dennis Twomey did not take part in any demonstrations or pickets in the Hackney area. He correctly refused to accept this condition and was remanded for a week. This decision was later in the week overturned by the Appeal Court but it shows how seriously the police are attempting to stop the campaign. As in the notorious "gagging" of the Bradford 12, and other cases, they want to stop people speaking out.

The reaction has been to fight back. Pickets are organised outside every court hearing to defend those arrested and demand that all charges are dropped. The spirit of resistance is expressed in the Roach Family Support Committee bulletin:

"We have been oppressed from time, and it is about time we begin to resist and resist again, and this is why our

campaign for an independent enquiry ...will continue until we are satisfied.

"After the New Cross Massacre: THIRTEEN DEAD NOTHING SAID, and the 1981 UPRISINGS there can be no turning back, the only way is forward."

The slogan of the Grenada people's revolution 'Forward Ever, Backward Never!' has been taken as their own by the black people of Stoke Newington in their continuing fight for justice.

Those arrested need your support on pickets at court hearings. For details of dates and times, contact:
Roach Family Support Committee,
50 Rectory Road,
London N16 7PP.
Tel: 01-254-7480

KEEP THE FUNDS COMING IN

At the beginning of March the Roach Family Support Committee had received £1,298 and expenditure was £910. Their bulletin says: "With Home Secretary William Whitelaw's fudging on the demand for an independent enquiry, the campaign must go on. Therefore the Roach Family Support Committee appeals to supporters of the campaign for money to keep the campaign alive and vigorous and buoyant."

Send donations to:
The Treasurer,
Roach Family Support Committee,

'we're not slaves now'

The following letter from Mrs Knight to the Roach Family Support Committee, is reprinted from the RFSC Bulletin No.2.

My sympathy goes out to the Roach family on the death of their son Colin Roach. I am a mother and know the burning heartfelt feeling that goes on inside, losing loved ones in such suspicious circumstances.

We in the Knight Defence Campaign deplore the racist police and their activities within the black community. We have had enough of their brutal attacks and harassment. Only God knows how it pains my heart knowing that we are not recognised as children of God.

We have come a long way since they took our ancestors away from Africa and scattered us all over the world. But they will never get us back in chains again because we will fight to the end.

We must stand up, and fight together in brotherly love knowing the truth about Colin and others before him; the harassment and the brutality that black people in this society have to undergo. We have to stamp out such racist laws that uphold war upon us. By God's help, we will fight and win justice for all.

Mrs Nellie Knight.

EYEWITNESS:

We joined the March 12th demonstration after it had started from Hackney Town Hall and was moving along Mare Street. There could be no mistaking what it was about. Stretching halfway across the road was the big black banner of the Roach Family Support Committee. All along the march, people carried placards with Colin Roach's picture, in a black frame: Colin Roach - Independent Enquiry and No Cover Up! The march finished with a big red banner - We Demand an Independent Enquiry. As we moved along the bulletin issued by the Roach Family Support Committee was handed out to shoppers and local people.

The march was led and organised by black people, including Mr and Mrs Roach, and at least half of the five hundred or so people were local Afro-Caribbean people, many young but also older men and women. There were also Asian people supporting the march and the rest were white. Some of the black youth had their faces covered, with Balaclava helmets with only slits for the eyes.

The other thing that was obvious was the tension on the march. We knew the background to the death of Colin Roach and understood that the anger of black people at years of racist and brutal treatment at the hands of the police, had been roused by Colin's death. We knew too, that 58 people had already been arrested in the course of demonstrations and pickets.

The police completely surrounded the marchers. They just about trod on each other's heels and it was difficult to join the march from the pavement, so close were their ranks. Police vans and buses stood at every side street as the march went by and reinforcements hurried to block off streets, linking their arms. At several points helicopters hovered threateningly overhead.

It was as though there was need for protection from a counter-demonstration or racist attack. But of course this wasn't the case. The march went all the way from Hackney Town Hall to Stoke Newington police station and back. We didn't hear a

single hostile remark, except from the police, and many by-standers were sympathetic or joined in. The police were

there in opposition to the march and as it turned out, to smash it, if they could.

In spite of this, the march went on with only short stops to Stoke Newington police station. The slogans were to the point: 'Colin Roach: Murdered!' 'What We want? Justice!' 'What Dem Do? Murda!' 'What We Want? Justice!' 'Stoke Newington Police: Racist Police!' 'British Police: Racist Police!' At the police station we halted for about twenty minutes. There were more chants; two minutes silence in Colin's memory and a speech from a member of the support committee expressing their determination to fight for justice.

Meanwhile the police guarded the police station in close ranks. In the upstairs windows of the station, we could see a man pointing to people in the march and another taking notes.

After we moved away from the police station and were marching back to Hackney, there were frequent stops. The trouble started at the front of the march as police moved in to make arrests. The cry of 'Hands Off Black People' and 'Hands Off the Youth' was raised and staved off arrests for the time being. But a bit further on, the march came to a complete halt as police vans wailed and the police attacked the march and started hauling people off to vans and waiting buses. It was difficult to tell exactly what was happening at the back but the word came back quickly. "They moved in and pulled him out." "They arrested him for no reason at all." "They've taken Mr Roach." "They've smashed the window of the van." "They've got Councillor Twomey". The cries of 'Hands Off' and 'Racist police' reached a crescendo.



Police seize Mr Roach.

For a short time it seemed as though the march could disintegrate but then it was brought together. A middle-aged Afro-Caribbean woman was shouting: "They want to smash this march. Don't let them! Join in, join in!" Another black woman, who we later found out was Mrs Knight was shouting: "First they killed the son, now they arrest the father!"

As the police moved in, one of the jeweller's shops in the street started to pull down his shutters in a panic. Not surprising, as the bulletin says: "After one march the police issued a press release falsely claiming that marchers had looted a jeweller's shop. At the time they issued their press release, they knew it was false."

The march reformed and continued back to Hackney. After the arrests, more people joined in - some moving along with the march along the pavements. The police tried to get them into

the march under their control but they were ignored.

We got back to the Town Hall at 5 o'clock. The rally on the steps was brief as people were anxious to move on to City Hall police station where those arrested were being held. The speakers included local councillors and a member of the West Indian Standing Committee who spoke in support of the demand for an independent enquiry. Speakers from the Roach Family Support Committee stressed the need to fight for the enquiry, as the family demanded, as well as support those arrested. Mrs Knight, who herself just fought a long campaign against police brutality and injustice, probably got most applause, when she said: "They're waging war on black people. We may have come as slaves. But we're not slaves now. And we're never going to bow down again. We're going to fight again for our freedom, even if our blood flows in the streets."

FREE MARGARET PARCHMENT

By the Margaret Parchment
Defence Committee.

Mrs Parchment is a white Rastafarian woman who has been sent to prison for two years for allegedly wounding a police woman with intent. The reality of the case is that the police came round to her house at eight o'clock in the morning in search of her son who has been harassed since he was fourteen. The police woman who was supposedly intentionally wounded, and several other policemen, had jumped on top of Mrs Parchment causing her injuries. They left her lying on the ground, took her son to the police station, then came back for Mrs Parchment. They tricked her into going to Thornhill Rd. station by saying that her son needed her help.

Once Mrs Parchment reached the station, she was charged, strip searched and locked in a cell all day. The police man-handled her to the extent that when she came out that evening, she was badly bruised and both her hands and arms were swollen up.

'Innocent until proven guilty' is a myth that no-one, who has been dragged through this state's judicial system, believes any longer. Mrs Parchment, a grandmother of 43 years of age, was 'found' guilty and sent down for two years while the murderers of Barry Prosser, Colin Roach and James Davey walk free.

Throughout the trial, Mrs Parchment was subjected to ridicule on the grounds of her religious beliefs. The judge, when sentencing her referred to her character as 'pathetic'.

The black community in particular is fully aware of the way the police operate. The fact that they come to arrest people in the early hours of the morning; that they come in large numbers with dogs to arrest maybe one person; that they rope in other members of this family on assault charges is all common knowledge. Mrs Parchment's case shows this to be true. Once charged, innocent people have virtually no chance of being acquitted, especially if it is a case of their word against the police.

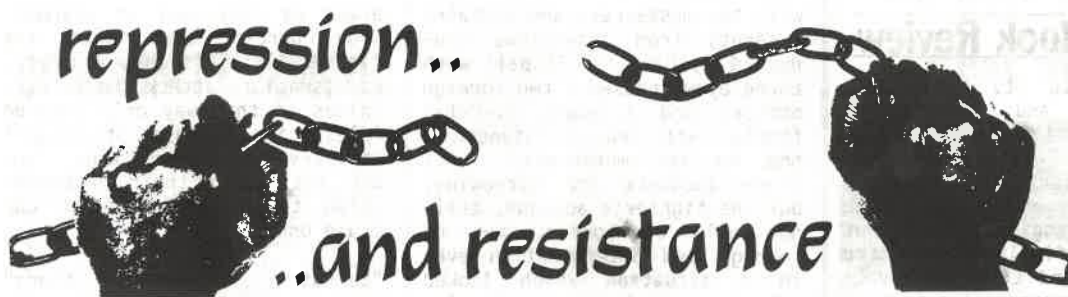
The police exceed their powers hourly, the new police bill will give them even more powers to abuse. Unless we take a stand against the state, and defend each member of our community

who is under attack, we will be criminalised in ever-increasing numbers. We ask you to support us and join in the campaign to free Mrs Parchment:

1. Come to weekly meetings at 7.00 p.m. at SPAM, Washwood Heath Rd., Saltley, Birmingham 8. (Next to Saltley Action Centre)
2. Make a donation to the Margaret Parchment Defence Committee.
3. Support our fund-raising and other events.
4. Sign the petition asking for Mrs Parchment to be freed and for an end to police harassment and frame-ups.

For more information, contact:

Margaret Parchment Defence Committee, c/o 16 Park Rd., Moseley, Birmingham 13.



Danny Speed, an 18-year old black youth from Tulse Hill in South London was given a lesson in British democracy by the Brixton police on February 25th. Danny suffers from sickle cell anaemia, a blood disease that only affects black people. Danny told his story to the black paper 'The Voice'.

"It was down in Railton road at about 6.30 in the evening. I was walking along the road when a police van went past me slowly - the police inside were all looking at me. Then they stopped and two of them got out.

"They told me they wanted to search me and told me to empty my pockets. They saw the card mum makes me carry round saying I suffer from sickle cell anaemia but they didn't take any notice of it. They told me to take my shoes and socks off then one of the policemen told me to take my trousers down. I asked him if he was serious and he said he was. I took them down then they told me they wanted to check my underpants. I refused to so one of them grabbed them and just pulled them off.

"I felt humiliated and the other policemen in the van - there were ten of them, all started laughing."

Danny was put into the van, one of the officers saying to him: "You'd better start talking, lad, because there's ten of us in here." They took him home to be 'identified' by his mother and brother and then left. But attacks of sickle cell anaemia can be brought on by exposure to the cold and the police strip search induced an attack. Danny said:

"The pain set in. I started sneezing, then coughing and I got a pain in my chest. I got a fever and I was paralysed."

Danny was hospitalised, put on a saline drip and given oxygen. His mother said:

"It's a disgrace, sometimes I just think I'll take my children into one room of the house and commit suicide. I didn't know these things could happen in a civilised country."

But the Speed family are not committing suicide - they are fighting back! They need witnesses to help them press a formal complaint. If anybody

saw anything they should contact: The Voice, 143 Mare St, London E8.

Phil Robins the black footballer who nearly died from injuries caused by police firing a Ferret CS gas cannister at him in July 1981, was released from prison this month. Phil was framed on a burglary charge after it became clear that he was going to pursue charges against the police. He was sent down for 18 months and has served this sentence with some remission. Phil will continue to press his claim against Oxford, head of Merseyside police for compensation. The campaign to defend Phil has been leafletting and picketing to demand his release. They have also taken up more general demands for stockpiles of plastic bullets and CS gas to be destroyed.

WE SAY NO TO INCREASED POLICE POWERS! The black community in Leeds like every other black community in this country, has long and bitter experience of the brutality and violence of the police. The anger of the people was expressed in street fighting with the police on Bonfire Night in 1975 and in the uprisings in 1981 and in numerous campaigns to defend

individuals attacked by the police. Now a new campaign has been started led by local Afro-Caribbean people to oppose the new Police Bill. Public meetings held over the last month in community centres in Harehills and Chapelton have heard legal experts speak out against the Bill and local people recount their anger at their treatment at the hands of racist police. On Saturday 19th March the Campaign Against the Police Bill organised a Day of Action to draw more people into the movement.

Fowzia, the black woman, who, being attacked on the street was charged with Blemish of the Peace and subsequently asked to show good cause why she should not be bound over to keep the peace ('Class Struggle' Dec/Jan) refused to be bound over. On appeal, the judge ruled that she had not shown good cause why she shouldn't be bound over, but rather than send her to prison, gave her a conditional discharge. Following this, she was recalled to the court, at a few hours notice because somebody had discovered that a conditional discharge was no longer valid, the state was intent on getting Fowzia fined or sent to prison. Whilst the prosecuting council was looking up law books to find some way of doing this, it was pointed out that decisions can only be rectified within 28 days of the original hearing. As this was the 29th day, Fowzia

was able to leave with no penalties imposed against her. Fortunately, the efforts of the state misfired this time, but we can be sure that they won't make the same mistake twice!

DEPORTATION NOTEBOOK

A 30-year old Zimbabwean, Mr Barbs Machaka who is under threat of deportation, has been on hunger strike in Ashford since March 3rd. Mr Machaka came to study here in 1974 and married a British citizen in 1982. He was arrested in October 1982 and taken to Ashford Remand Centre. He and his wife had temporarily split up and the Home Office claim that their marriage was one 'of convenience', even though Mrs Machaka visits her husband regularly and has said that she wants a reconciliation. She was told that her plea was not 'genuine' and that there were no 'compassionate grounds', even though Mr Machaka has been supporting the family of five children.

After being held in Ashford for 5 months, Mr Machaka went on hunger strike on March 3rd. He is now in a "serious condition", has been moved to Ashford General Hospital and is under constant police surveillance. His legal representatives were not allowed to see him until March 16th. The doctor in charge at the hospital has said: "...in the condition that he is in now, he couldn't stand the journey." But he went on that he (the doctor) would at some stage accept the Home Office's decision to have the man removed from hospital."

Mr W.P.Tay, speaking for Mr Machaka, said: "Mr Machaka has no intention of going to Zimbabwe and leaving his wife behind. He said he is prepared to die if necessary." But Minister of State, David Waddington has said that Mr Machaka will be removed from the hospital, subject to medical care, and be flown to Zimbabwe.



Halimat Babamba with Mustafa and Hakeem.

In the last few months there have been at least three hunger strikes in Ashford in protest against indefinite detention and deportation. The national press has only publicised the case of the Romanian, Mr Stancu Papusoiu, who was attacked and beaten up by prison officers last November as a result of his hunger strike. Last December both Turkish and Greek Cypriots went on hunger strike in protest against the threatened deportation of 1500 Cypriot people.

"There has been a crucial development in the campaign for Halimat Babamba of Leeds and her two children to stay in Britain....Halimat has always made clear that her children will be taken from her, that her husband's violence will continue and that she herself will be made destitute, if she is forced to return to Nigeria by a Home Office deportation order. This has now been confirmed by a leading expert in Muslim Law, Dr. David Pearl of Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge.

Dr. Pearl says of Halimat's husband: "Thus...he would have little difficulty in obtaining custody." He also adds: "So far as authority over the wife is concerned, the husband has the right to control the wife's activities such as whether she works and so on." (From a press release from 'Friends of Halimat Babamba.') The campaign is not convinced that this evidence will make the Home Office change its mind without massive support for Halimat's right to stay.

The threat of deportation on Ranjit Chakravorty, the Bangladeshi from Sheffield, has been lifted. He heard in February that the Home Office will let him stay. However this is only a partial victory for the campaign as the Home Office has specified that he will only be allowed to stay for another 12 months and on condition that he has a job in a welfare project in Sheffield. In a year's time Mr Chakravorty will face the same problem and have to fight all over again!

The Home Office has told Walter and Megan Wyatt, of Torquay, that the six-year old Iranian boy, Ali, who they have looked after since he was three months old, must leave the country because they cannot afford to put him in a private school. The parents of Ali and Kambiz, his older brother, went back to Iran in 1979 and have not been able to leave since. Walter and Megan Wyatt have been looking after the children since then. Kambiz is at a private school but Ali has settled down in a local state school. Mrs Wyatt pointed out that she and her husband have worked and paid taxes all their lives. Their only child died as a baby. The Home Office commented: "There have not been sufficient grounds to justify allowing the child to be educated at the state's expense."

A 25-year old Egyptian, Mr R. Kamal is at present being held in Risley Prison, waiting for an appeal against a deportation order issued on him. His marriage broke down and he has since settled down with a local woman from Liverpool 8. Two weeks after the birth of their daughter, Mr Kamal was arrested and taken off to Risley. Mr Kamal is planning to fight the deportation with the help of local people.

Another man driven out of the country when his marriage broke up is Mr Alpha Kamara, also from Liverpool who was deported on 29th January this year. This man first came to this country in 1976 for treatment, after losing his foot while working on a British ship. However this gave him no right to stay, according to the Home Office, and after a long fight, Mr Kamara was deported.

Compiled by 'Class Struggle' correspondents.

BEIRUT: FRONTLINE STORY. **Book Review**

Empty streets; silvery planes trailing white dots; refugees rigging up shelters in a public park; the crash of explosions hours after a ceasefire; the endless discussion of latest news and the speculation about the next military or diplomatic moves. These are images and sounds of west Beirut under Israeli seige.

From June to August 1982, Lebanese journalist Selim Nassib was in west Beirut as correspondent for the French daily "Liberation". He travelled to the battlefield, roamed the city

and talked to its inhabitants - Lebanese and Palestinian. Among those he spoke with were Lebanese and Palestinian Maronites - members of the same religious demonation as the fascist Phalangist party, but themselves firmly with the Palestinian and Lebanese revolutionary and progressive forces. Nassib visited Chatila camp, pounded by Israeli shells and bombs, but soon to be the site of even greater horrors when Israel's agents and allies moved in to massacre its people and those of neighbouring Sabra. The last part of the book deals

with the massacres, and contains excerpts from interviews conducted by Caroline Tisdall with three eyewitnesses - two foreign doctors and a young al-Fatah fighter who led resistance to the fascist murderers. All three accounts are harrowing, but the fighter's account, tells not only of horror, but of courage and determination even in a situation which looked utterly hopeless. A few Palestinians were able to gather together a handful of weapons to resist the fascists, and perhaps thereby save several thousands of lives. This fighter says of the Israelis: "As fighters they wanted to humiliate us. They couldn't beat us

armed so they beat us unarmed. "The hordes come when the fighters left" is what we say... For Israel to attack the Palestinians in this way only lowered Palestinian opinion of Israeli military prowess further, and did not shake their determination to fight for their own cause one bit.

"Beirut: Frontline Story" contains interviews with a number of Lebanese and Palestinian leaders, including Walid Jumblatt of the Lebanese National Movement and Abu Jihad and Yasser Arafat of the PLO, and is illustrated with photos which complement the text well. It is marred in one or two

places in the introduction and the 'boxes' in its text by factual errors or carelessness - e.g. the massacre of Deir Yassin took place on April 9th 1948 not April 10th; the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine dropped the word 'popular' from its title a few years ago, but these are minor details. If anyone wants to get some idea of what it was like to be in Beirut under seige, this is a great book to read.

(Published by Pluto Press: price £3.95. Beirut: Frontline Story can be obtained from New Era Books - add 25p p&p.)

HONG KONG

China's first issue of "Research in Modern History" for the year carries a signed article reviewing how Britain occupied the Hongkong region, pointing out that taking back the whole region to reunify the motherland was the common aspiration of the one billion Chinese.

According to a China News Service dispatch from Beijing, the journal said "they (the Chinese people) are determined to complete the mission given them and no force can stand in the way."

The area occupied by Britain includes three parts: Hongkong Island; Kowloon Peninsula south of Boundary Street (south Kowloon); and Kowloon Peninsula north of Boundary Street and south of the Shenzhen River (north Kowloon), and the

islands around Hongkong Island, Mirs Bay and Deep Bay (known as the New Territories).

The quarterly's article pointed out that the first two parts of Chinese territory were wrested from the Qing government by the Treaty of Nanking (1842) and the Convention of Peking (1860) under the policy of gun-boat diplomacy. In 1898, the British again took advantage of China's weak position as a result of Japanese aggression in China to secure for itself a lease of 99 years over the north Kowloon area and the some 200 surrounding islands.

"The three treaties by which Britain occupied the Hongkong region are all unequal treaties. The treaties are a record of the barbarous aggression committed by the British," the article said. It also praised the protracted struggle carried

out by Chinese people, including Hongkong compatriots, against British occupation of Hongkong.

The article noted that with the outbreak of the Pacific War, the Japanese were able to capture Hongkong "with little effort with only the Chinese keeping up the fight against the Japanese. When the Japanese surrendered, the British staged a comeback to continue their rule over the Hongkong region."

"But today, the era in which imperialism can play tyrant and do as it pleases is gone, never to return. The Chinese people have stood up. Vain attempts to hold on to this territory by distorting international law for the defence of unequal treaties, or extortion by saying that Hongkong is a key foreign dollar earner for China, are of no use," the article warned.

Culture of Resistance

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

"If the motto of past colonisers of the Third World was 'Divide and Rule' then surely the underlying theme of the First International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books was 'Unite and Celebrate'. Poets, playwrights, publishers, filmmakers, essayists and lecturers came together in London for what must surely be the most significant gathering yet of all those concerned with the printed word and image in the Third World."

This was the assessment made by poet Cecil Rajendra of last year's bookfair, in which he was a participant. If anything, this year's bookfair (17th - 19th March) was even more successful.

Over 20 years ago, the great black political thinker, Franz Fanon, showed how colonialism held onto its victims not only by physical force, but also by colonising the minds of the oppressed, making them participants in their own oppression. It took the explosion of Black Power movements, especially that in the USA, to give the necessary impetus to the blossoming of a wide-ranging culture of resistance and black self-assertion. Black literary

and artistic creations of the past were rediscovered, and regarded with admiration; new literature was absorbed eagerly by many just as soil long deprived of rain eagerly absorbs water and brings forth new life.

The second bookfair testified to the vitality of modern black culture. There was a great range of novels and political writing, the overwhelming majority of which was produced in the last 20 years. Overseas exhibitors included black publishers from the Caribbean, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Tanzania, Canada and the USA, and visitors came from at least as far afield.

BRIXTON UPRISING

It was significant that the bookfair this year took place in Brixton, almost two years after the April 1981 Brixton uprising, where young black working class people played a vanguard role in taking on the state's forces and showing the path which must be followed by all the working and oppressed people in Britain if they are to secure their freedom. The blending of physical resistance by black people with cultural and ideological self-assertion, helped by the integration of

black intellectuals with the black working class, is producing the total resistance which is the only answer to the total repression to which the British imperialist state is turning.

Imperialism is a decaying and corrupt system. Its fruits in the cultural sphere are as rotten as might be expected from the tree on which they grow. At the opposite pole to imperialism is the world of the rising oppressed; all that is good, all that is healthy accumulates and grows among them and in solidarity with them. In his speech at the opening of the fair, Darcus Howe, of the Race Today Collective, brought this out well when he contrasted the wealth of contemporary black writing with the poverty of modern western society's offerings.

The organisers of the bookfair (Race Today Collective, New Beacon and Bogle-L'Ouverture Publishers) were very pleased with the success of the fair and the many events organised around it. They want to make this an annual event, and those who participated in it and visited it certainly hope that they are able to do so!

FREE MATT LYGATE!

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Matthew Lygate was a member of the Workers Party of Scotland (Marxist-Leninist) and a socialist in the tradition of John McLean. He has spent the last 11 years in prison. Why?

In 1972 Matt Lygate was convicted with three others of a variety of offences connected with bank robbery. No-one who followed the case at the time was in any doubt that his charges were considered by the police, courts and government to be political. After a two-week kangaroo trial Matt was found guilty. As a first offender he was sentenced to 24 YEARS IMPRISONMENT.

8 YEARS FOR BANK ROBBERY 16 YEARS FOR SOCIALISM

The average sentence for bank robbery is 8 years, so 16 of Matt's 24-year sentence can be considered to be political. He has already served 11 years and his parole application has been turned down 3 times.

WHAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT SAYS:

"There are no political prisoners in Britain."

WHAT MATT LYGATE SAID:

"I would like to say that in the future a day will come when the roles of this court will be reversed, when the workers will sit on the bench and those people who have judged me now will be judged then"

WHAT LORD DUNPARK REPLIED:

"I don't look forward to those days with any longing, I must say."

THE FIGHT GOES ON

Whilst in prison, Matt has been a staunch fighter for the rights of his fellow prisoners. He led a strike in which the men refused to work outside in the winter until the authorities provided decent protective clothing. The strike was successful and all the prisoners got duffle coats.

On Thursday 13 January, the Free Matt Lygate Campaign was formed. Its members include family members, Scottish Republicans and members of the

Malaya

On 31 January, the Radio station "Voice of Malayan Democracy", broadcast an Editorial to greet the Malayan People's Army Day (February 1). The following is an excerpt:

"The people of all nationalities in our country clearly know from their own experience the hypocrisy of parliamentary democracy. Without the revolutionary army, the revolutionary force would have gone down in bloodshed; without the People's Army, the people would have nothing. It is this undeniable truth that has convinced the repressed and discriminated workers, peasants, small traders, hawkers, youths and students of all nationalities to take the risk, even during the frenzied White terror, to support the People's Army resolutely and unswervingly through all kinds of efforts and closely identify their personal fate and the future of the fatherland with the growing People's Army.

"The serious Soviet-Vietnamese hegemonist threat to the security of our country has yet to be eliminated. In such a situation, the evil conduct of the ruling cliques of our country, who entertain the illusion of wiping out the MPA, does not have the people's sympathy. Their evil intention shall never succeed. Although the people's revolutionary armed force now is still relatively small and weak, nevertheless the people in our country, who

have known it from their historic experience, will certainly rely on it in opposing any foreign aggression.

"The counter-revolutionary suppression of more than 30 years could not subdue our people's determination to wage a struggle. The people's revolutionary armed force cannot be eradicated. On the contrary, it will pose a growing threat to the reactionary force from day to day. Nobody can doubt this fact if he analyses the revolutionary war in Malaya. This shows that the MPA is the people's army of all nationalities in Malaya. It is the long tested people's revolutionary armed force which has a good organisation, a strong combat strength and very high political and military standards. Through its bloody struggles and heroic acts in the defence of the people's interest over more than 30 years, this army has inscribed a very brilliant page in the history of our people's revolutionary struggle.

"The task being shouldered by the MPA is noble but difficult. All kinds of difficulties continue to pose as obstacles on its road to progress. Nevertheless the tide of history cannot be turned back. The MPA is bound to be victorious in its struggle.

"In conjunction with Army Day, we sincerely hope that the MPA will continue to score new victories in its various tasks and battles and perform new deeds for the people's revolutionary efforts."

PROLETARIAN SOLDIER

A personal tribute by Steve Fullerton.

Tom Murray, Lothian and Fife Group International Brigade Association Chairman, died on 9th February, aged 82. I first met Tom in Paris in 1938 en route for Spain. He made a lasting impression on me with his self discipline and dedication to the cause. Always ready with good advice, I suppose I saw him as a father figure as he was then more than twice my age. We were together until we reached Spain after crossing the Pyrenees and in so doing, Tom practically carried another comrade whose legs seemed to have lost their power soon after we started the climb.

Glasgow Irish Freedom Action Committee. A vigorous programme of work was drawn up, including a march and rally, lobbying of MPs, production of fact sheets and fundraising activities.

Then a letter from the Secretary of State for Scotland arrived stating that Matt would get parole on 16 September. The campaign regards this as a victory and Matt's brother, Bill, told us that the family think that the formation of the campaign and its plans definitely had an effect. Discussions are going on in the campaign about its future.

It can be contacted: FMLC, c/o Box 15, 488 Great Western Rd, Glasgow, Scotland.

Tom became Commissar of the Machine Gun Company of the British Battalion. He took his duties seriously and by his exemplary conduct was an inspiration to all. When the rest of us could scarcely find enough water to drink, what little Tom found was also used for washing and shaving every day. When I was in a forward position with No.1 Company in front of hill 481 and had little to eat for a week, Tom appeared one morning carrying a small barrel of lukewarm coffee for us. He left it and went back at great personal risk over open terrain and under fire and returned with a sack containing bread and cigarettes. We lost touch during the 1939-45 war, he became Organiser with the Fire Brigades Union and I joined the RAF. He was active in his local Community Association and played a large part in having the houses and the area where he lived, upgraded. It was about this time, 1975-76 that he and the late Councillor Don Renton got in touch with some of us Brigaders with a view to commemorating the local volunteers' part in the war in Spain. The outcome was the setting up of two Memorials, one in Kirkcaldy and one in Edinburgh, largely thanks to the perseverance and energy of Tom. He was at one time Secretary of the Scottish/USSR Society and was a great friend of China.

(See also March issue of 'Class Struggle'.)

MOTHERS FIGHT

TO SAVE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

Two mothers are occupying the staff room of Nechells Junior and Infant School in Birmingham in protest at the Education Committee's decision on the 8th March to close the school. This is another step in the struggle that the parents have been waging for months. They have already collected a 10,000 signature petition, submitted letters of objection to the City Council, demonstrated and lobbied local councillors.

Nechells is an inner city area with a large national minority community. 50% of the children at this particular school are Muslim. The Muslim and English parents regard the school as the focus of the community and make use of its community centre and parents' room. Muslim and Christian festivals are celebrated at the school - a feature which the parents wish to maintain. The next nearest school is a church school, but the parents do not think that this will be a community school and are demanding the right to have their children educated in a secular, state school. The nearest non-demoninational school is one mile away and attendance would impose great financial hardships on families, in terms of bus fares and school meals. The cost for only one child in fares alone would be £10 per week.

A government report states that Nechells is the third most deprived area of England. It has the highest proportion of unemployed in England and the highest proportion of single parent families in Birmingham. The decision to close Nechells School will only increase that deprivation.

The Local Education Authority claim that Nechells School must be closed because of falling rolls - conveniently ignoring the fact that the nursery section is full and has a waiting list, the birth-rate in the area is increasing and people are moving into the area. Only last year, a quarter of a million pounds was spent on refurbishing the school - a rather large waste of money for a school that's about to close!

The parents are determined to fight to keep their school open. Public meetings are planned and they will demonstrate in London when the decision on closure is referred to the Secretary of State for Education. On Friday evenings a picket of local residents, parents and supporters is held in the street below the room occupied by the mothers. The picketers sing

songs in support of the fight, making up new words to reflect what their struggle is about. It is a spirited affair, and last week the picket was joined by over 50 members of a Welsh Male Voice Choir who rehearse in the school and support the parents.

The parents feel that they have some involvement in and control over the education of their children because of their relationship with this particular school. This is very important for the national minority community. If the closure goes ahead, the Asian people in Nechells will be effectively denied the right to education. They are faced with a non-choice - either send their children to a Christian Church school, which is unacceptable, or pay out money which they can ill afford to send small children to another school a mile away.

Education should be about meeting the needs of the people. Although this is not going to develop generally in Britain today, where individual schools do make some attempt to cater for the community, they should be supported. Community control of schools is one of the ways that the national minority communities in particular can ensure their cultural and religious rights.

SUPPORT THE DINNER LADIES

'Class Struggle' correspondent.

All around the country the school meals service is being dismantled - nibbled away at bit by bit. The latest bite has been in the London borough of Merton where both secondary and primary school meals are to be abolished. There are many areas now where primary schools are without a service, and as for those little bottles of milk drunk at break time ... those are just a memory.

The government removed the statutory duty on local authorities to provide school meals and milk in 1980, and has lost no time in depriving our children of food and women of jobs. Some 40,000 jobs have already gone and those left in work are under attack: for example in Somerset dinner ladies have just been told they will no longer get their retainer fee during school holidays. Women doing these jobs are very often single parent families or the main breadwinner in areas of high unemployment ... women who find hours of work especially diff-

icult to fit in with their other job of children and home.

The other thing suffering in these cuts is our children's health - especially those from families struggling to make ends meet in unemployment and low-paid jobs. There does remain provision for free school meals for low income families but only 60% of those eligible actually claim. Where sandwiches become the norm free school sandwiches will be even more obvious to schoolmates (and one suspects even more disgusting) and numbers taking them are likely to fall. The Black Report on The Inequalities of Health provides plenty of evidence of poor nutrition in many children. A decent midday meal is vital to those children who get no breakfast and chips for tea. The conclusion this report came to is that the only way to ensure adequate nutrition of the next generation is to provide a free school meals service for ALL children.

There is a fightback on the school meals front: in Merton recently there was a large march in protest and a petition of 50,000 signatures was handed in. Our children and their dinner ladies need all our support.

Harriet Mellor is a 73-year old Liverpool great grandmother who recently spent time in hospital because of her heart condition. She was also recently beaten up by the police. The police had come looking for one of Harriet's daughters who no longer lives with her. The police broke a window to get into Harriet's home (cutting her hand in the process) and said: "You're nicked." Harriet said that she could not be arrested because she had done nothing wrong and was afraid of leaving the house empty as she had had three recent burglaries.

The officer said to her: "Fuck you and your home. I don't care who breaks into your house."

Dolly Evason, 48, Harriet's friend, heard her cries for help.



Harriet with her friend Dolly who witnessed the police assault.

It was a normal 10-hour day on a dockside crane for Keith Pearson until a hideous apparition shocked him - "Mrs Thatcher, strikingly dressed in a two-piece lilac suit in violet with black shoes, and wearing a ruby and diamond brooch in the shape of the Union Jack." ('Daily Telegraph' 12.3.83.) She said afterwards: "It has been a wonderfully exciting visit. Morale is terrific. There is a great sense of optimism, a great sense of confidence." Mr Pearson's description was rather different: the instalment division would be closed in a month due to lack of orders ... "After 17 years with the firm I will be going on the dole with the rest of Maggie's army."

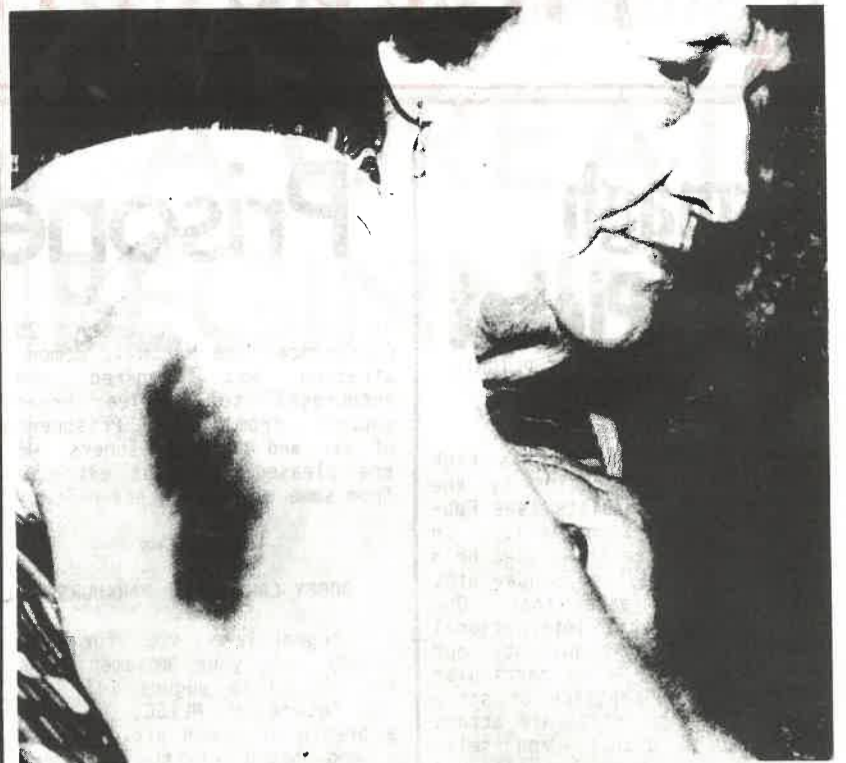
In 1977 unemployment benefit was nearly 40% of average pay. Since then its value has dropped steadily under both Labour and Tory governments. In 1982 the dole was only worth about 25% of average earnings.

The Nationality Act, which requires large sections of the national minority communities to apply for naturalisation, is likely to make a £3 million profit in this year alone. The naturalisation fee is £200 per person.

Last year the number of workers employed on building sites decreased by 6%. But the number of deaths on building sites increased by 10% to 148. Doing particularly hard and dangerous work, building workers are a very exploited section of the working class. The capitalist system seeks maximum profits and so as the crisis intensifies, work paces are speeded up, whilst increasingly safety procedures and provisions are swept aside. A huge number of building workers are drawn from the Irish community, showing how the British state survives on a combination of national oppression and class exploitation.

"We Don't Know

What We've Got In The Police Now"



Harriet Mellor shows her police inflicted injuries.

"I saw this policeman dragging Harriet, and asked him: 'What's the matter?' Mrs Evason said.

"She's nicked, that's what" the policeman told her.

When Mrs Evason protested that Harriet had not done anything, that she was sick and only just out of hospital, the officer said to her: "I couldn't care less. Go away, or I'll nick you as well."

Harriet took up the story again: "I told the police Dolly had got two kids. 'I'll nick them as well' the policeman told me."

Harriet told her friend to phone the Chief Constable and tell him to see what one of his policemen was doing.

When Mrs Evason had gone, the policeman dragged Harriet all along her lobby. He took his helmet off and said: "I'm getting this fucking bastard out, no matter how," while the other

policeman stayed outside, walking up and down.

"He called for a police car," Harriet went on. "When he arrived, the police car driver told me to get in the back.

"The one that nicked me never let up in the car. He swore and called me all sorts of horrible names....

"They took my jewelry off me, but never charged me. My daughter came in and asked what I had done. They wouldn't answer her. They let me out, and they never charged me.

"My face was swollen. My daughter took me to the Royal Hospital. I was there two hours. They gave me a heart test.

"I suffer from angina and they x-rayed me, and gave me some tablets. I've got the packet they were in."

Harriet has seen a solicitor and has had photographs taken of her bruises. She has two boot marks on her leg, severe bruising on her thigh and arm and finger mark bruises on her wrist. Harriet sums up:

"I never had any trouble with the police before. It's not money I want. All I want is to get him the sack. We don't know what we've got in the police now."

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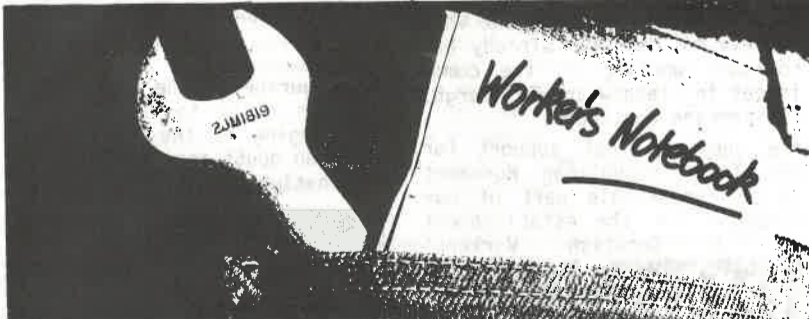
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Gay people will be one of the communities drastically affected by the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill when it becomes law. The Bill will give the police the power to arrest anyone they consider to be "causing an affront to public decency". As no actual offence even has to be suspected it is an obvious recipe for harassment. Gay people are already victims of police harassment. Last year police officers arrested, detained and questioned 27 gay men who were guests at a private birthday party in West London. No charges were brought yet they had to answer humiliating police questions about the minutiae of their sex lives. In Cardiff the police have even secured convictions of three men accused of having had sex together at the home where one of them lived. Or to take another example: When Northampton police raided a local gay club eighteen months ago all three hundred members present were made to pose for police photographs. Those who refused had their hands held while it was done. They were warned that if they did not cooperate they would be arrested and charged with breach of the peace. Complaints were made to the Chief Constable who replied that such methods were "normal procedure".

FREEDOM FOR IRELAND



Armagh Picket

"HIGHLIGHT OUR PRESENT PLIGHT EXPOSE STRIP SEARCHES"

Morale in Armagh gaol is high - but the persecution by the new governor persists (see February 'Class Struggle'). In their message to the picket held outside the gaol on Sunday 6th, the prisoners asked that: "Our sisters, on this International Women's Day, highlight our present plight - in particular exposing the practice of strip searches as a deliberate attack on women's dignity and self-respect." They also extended solidarity greetings "throughout the world, from Palestine to El Salvador, Ghana and Iran. We women rejoice on this day, whether it be on the streets, behind prison bars or secretly in our hearts. No woman should feel alone for our womanhood unites us all across the universe." They went on to reiterate their commitment to the struggle for national liberation and the equally important role of women inherent in that struggle: "In a new Ireland, we want to eradicate all forms of oppression, racist or sexist, and every woman has a part to play."

About 300 people, mostly women, picketed the gaol - and no sooner had we begun shouting than answering shouts came from the gaol. We roared back - and sheets, tablecloths and towels were waved from the top floor windows. It was good to hear them, and know that they could hear us.

WOMEN IN FOREFRONT OF STRUGGLE AGAINST ATROCIOUS HOUSING CONDITIONS

As in Britain, women's responsibility for the home (all the more acute in northern Ireland because of the number of men put away) makes them the leaders in the fight for decent housing. Margaret Keenan from Moyard, battling to get the flats demolished, and Kathleen Thibodeau from Turf Lodge gave some real inspiration in the no-holds-barred approach with which they'd tackled the Housing Executive. They spoke of their struggles at Pass Grove community centre, where Sinn Fein's Department of Women's Affairs had organised a photo display, covering various aspects of women's lives in Ireland and video films, on Saturday afternoon.

LINKS ESTABLISHED WITH WOMEN'S PEACE MOVEMENT

At a meeting of the delegations of women who'd come over from England, Scotland and Wales, six women from Greenham Common expressed their determination to bring the news of the Armagh women to the women in the peace movement. They spoke of how their experiences with the Special Branch and prison had opened their eyes to the nature of the British state. Sinn Fein women also expressed a desire to join the Friday April 1st "Embrace the Base" at Greenham Common. This link between the two struggles could be very significant in strengthening the support for the struggle of the Irish people and in building a stronger anti-Brit imperialist trend within the peace movement on the basis of recognising the links between women political prisoners.

Prisoners Support March 12

As with the November 20 Conference, the March 12 demonstration was inspired and encouraged to receive broad support from Irish Prisoners of War and other prisoners. We are pleased to print extracts from some of the letters below:

IRISH POWS

BOBBY CAMPBELL - PARKHURST

I congratulate you for the speedy your movement has set out, this augurs well for the future of NLISC, at last a breath of fresh air! I read - and heard of the thuggery which was used to intimidate - or rather - to try and intimidate you! Sinn Fein has this problem in the occupied 6 Counties of Ulster, comrades, so what does this tell us? For me as a volunteer of the people's army it means only one thing - 'Anyone who would hinder Oglagh Na H-Eireann or those who pledge unconditional support for the people's army - must have something in common with the enemies of Ireland and NLISC.' Continue as you have started comrades - I gladly sponsor the 12th March National Demonstration comrades, and if the enthusiasm shown can be continued - and other supporters - who, at present, are wondering why their own particular organisations aren't participating - come forward - then - I am certain we can build a Thatcher-Basher machine which will surely support all anti-imperialist causes. In Solidarity.

PATRICK HACKETT - ALBANY

I'm writing once again to assure you of my full support in your efforts. I sincerely hope that the demonstration on March 12th is a huge success. You deserve the full support of all organisations, Irish or otherwise,

Cont. from p.1.

ANTI-IMPERIALIST UNITY

The next speaker was on behalf of the Organisation of Iranian Students in England, Scotland and Wales (supporters of the Organisation of Iranian People's Fedai Guerillas). He stressed the common nature of the revolutionary struggle in Iran and Ireland and said:

"I hope that this solidarity campaign can grow bigger and bigger; then we can have much more support from the British working class against British imperialism."

The Iranian comrade was followed by the speaker from the Bangladesh Workers' Association who began by saying that the people of Bangladesh know British imperialism very well from their own experience. He said that the Irish people's fight was known all over the world and that, in particular, the great leader James Connolly, had set an example of how to fight British imperialism.

A MOVEMENT CAN BE BUILT

The speaker from the Co-ordinating Committee to Build an Irish Solidarity Movement said that the successful demonstration was "one more small sign that a movement in this country can be built that really does support the struggle

whose objective it is to bring about peace and justice in Ireland and indeed England and self-determination for the Irish people as a whole. Yours in solidarity.

VINCE DONNELLY - ALBANY

Thanks for your recent letter and news. Pleased to hear that you are advancing on all fronts despite the occasional hiccup.

Well you have my fullest support for the 12th March and also ALL the POWs here without exception have asked me to also pledge their fullest support i.e. McLaughlin, Bennet, Norney, Clark, Walsh, Blake and Paul Hill....

....'Divide and Rule' is the standard ploy of our common enemy, Imperialism, and we must rise above our own natural tendencies to debate miniscule issues and get on with the job in hand - a broad united front against the common enemy, consolidated and inching remorselessly forward. The advances by the proletarian army in San Salvador are of great interest and encouragement to us and I'm sure your committee will let your support for them be known.

Keep up the struggle and tell your fellows that their endeavours on our behalf, in particular, are much appreciated. Venceremos.

EDDIE BYRNE - PARKHURST

...I am happy to give my sponsorship ...

Nevertheless, I should like to offer my opinion of my future hopes for your recently formed Co-ordinating Committee. I would welcome arduous effort in eliciting the support and allegiance of such groups as

of the Irish people in words and deeds."

Saying that for most of the 14 years of the present stage of the Irish War "there has in fact been no effective movement in solidarity with the struggle of the Irish people", he went on to say that the November 20 Conference had resolved to end this situation, "once and for all". Events since the Conference had showed that a movement could be built, providing that it was built "from the ground up". Drawing attention to the common points between the struggles of black and Irish peoples, he said: "When these two movements are linked together, the struggle of the Irish people and the growing struggle of the black people there will emerge a really mighty force that can take on British imperialism." Ending with a call for greater unity, the comrade quoted from Irish Prisoner of War, John McCluskey, who in a message to the November 20 Conference, wrote:

"We appeal to all those political groups and individuals who claim to support the right of self-determination for the Irish people to come together and help to form an Irish Solidarity Movement. By showing full support with the Irish struggle you will also be helping the British working class. We are fighting the same enemy as you - i.e. the British ruling class."

follows: IFM, RCP, IMG, SWP, CPGB, WRP and additional branches of TOM.

I fully appreciate the vast political and ideological chasms which exist amongst many of these political groupings. However I am interested only in the positive efforts to bridge these chasms of misunderstanding. And it remains to be seen whether your committee can make a significant contribution to this vital task.

It is my fervent hope that your March 12th demonstration will bring together many other groupings outside those who partook in the 20 November Conference. I urge you to redouble your efforts to achieve that goal.

Yours for a politicised and unified working class.

KEVIN DUNPHY - WORMWOOD SCRUBS

... as a POW I am delighted to have the opportunity of sponsoring your (our) 12th of March demonstration. I shall be marching (in spirit) with you all the way, until victory. Slan anois.

Election Victory

On Wednesday 23 March, Sinn Fein stood for the first time in a local election in the six occupied counties of Ireland - and won! In a five cornered contest, the Sinn Fein candidate Seamus Kerr received 2,289 votes or 56% of the total. Second was the Alliance Party with 907 votes (mainly won because no other unionist stood) followed by the SDLP (who formerly held the seat) with 654. Gratifyingly the Workers Party came bottom with a mere 120 votes. Seamus will take

SAOR ALBA! SAOR EIRE!

A speaker from Essex University Students Union was followed by a speaker from the Scottish Republican Socialist Party (SRSP). Beginning his speech in Gaelic, the comrade went on:

"The Scottish Republican Socialist Party welcomes the establishment of a new Irish Solidarity Movement and we will be watching its development very closely." The SRSP already has comrades working on the committees in Glasgow and Edinburgh. The comrade continued:

"We consider that support for the Irish Republican Movement is an inseparable part of our struggle for the establishment of a Scottish Workers' Republic... We are not a British organisation and you must understand that we are very reluctant to come to England. But as a measure of the esteem in which we hold our comrades in Ireland, we have gladly taken the opportunity to attend this demonstration."

A speaker from the Revolutionary Communist Group made a vital point when she said that the "people of no property" will form the backbone of an anti-imperialist movement in Britain.

After a speaker from the London Irish Solidarity Committees, the speaker from the Revolutionary Communist League drew attention to the fact that this is the centenary year of Karl Marx, a great fighter for Irish independence. He went

EDDIE O'NEILL - ALBANY

'The Building of an Irish Solidarity Movement' is a necessary step towards the defeat of British Imperialism in Ireland. The defeat of British Imperialism in Ireland is a necessary step towards the liberation of the working class in Britain. Together we share the ultimate goal - Freedom. TOGETHER we can shorten the road. Venceremos! Fraternal greetings.

Support for the demonstration also came from Welsh Republican prisoners in Cardiff jail, who concluded: 'Eire Saor, Cymru Rydd! Free Ireland, Free Wales! R.Wrethman and Pete Wardlaw, Scottish prisoners sent greetings from Peterhead jail. Jimmy Anderson, an English prisoner in Wormwood Scrubs sponsored the march with the words:

"The way they conduct themselves, their dedication, courage and determination is awe-inspiring, and .. with soldiers such as them, Irish victory is assured. True warriors in every sense of the word. Venceremos!"

his seat on the Council and the unionists will now have to decide whether or not to walk out. He has said that he will attempt to represent all of his constituents.

Sinn Fein fought a vigorous and militant campaign that far outclassed those of all the other parties, and their victory confirms a number of trends. Not least it shows that the electoral support of last October was no "one-off" affair, and that the various measures being taken by Brit and Free State politicians to lifesave the SDLP are unlikely to have much effect. All this augurs well for Sinn Fein's participation in a possible Westminster election.

on to say that the Irish people's struggle is "part of the great struggle for independence through which the countries of the Third World are rising up for independence and national sovereignty."

The final speaker was from the Edinburgh Irish Solidarity Committee, speaking of her recent visit to Armagh for the International Women's Day picket, she said:

"The courage of the women POWs, and the reply to the chanting and singing of the picket left me in no doubt that Ireland will be a nation once again."

The rally heard apologies from Helen O'Brien (sister of an Irish Prisoner of War) who was unable to be present owing to illness, and extracts from the numerous messages of support and solidarity from prisoners.

Closing the rally, the Chair said that the slogan of the Grenada people's revolution 'Forward Ever, Backward Never!' had been taken up by the youth of Stoke Newington and added: "I hope that you will all take that slogan as our motto for building a new Irish Solidarity Movement."

GREAT SUCCESS

The March 12 demonstration was a great success and shows that a united, non-sectarian and principled solidarity movement is now being built in Britain.