

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Anti-imperialist paper of the Revolutionary Communist Group

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The Miners' Strike

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

The class struggle will not tolerate a lengthy stalemate between opposing forces. By the third week in January, December's temporary impasse in the miners' strike had been broken. The initiative has once again passed back to Thatcher and the NCB. Despite the unprecedented and heroic eleven-month struggle of the striking miners, their families and communities, the growing split in the NUM, the absence of active solidarity from key sections of the trade union movement and the purposeful scabbing of leaders of the Labour Party and TUC have left the mining communities with their backs against the wall.

But the fight will go on. A negotiated settlement will not and cannot be the end of the miners' strike. For whatever the conditions the NUM finally accept for a return to work, the political gains achieved in the hard-fought struggle will remain.

The mining communities and hundreds of thousands of their supporters, have come to understand the vicious class character of the British imperialist state as they have experienced its police, courts and prisons. Many now recognise the need for disciplined organisation to defend themselves against it. Forced themselves to fight with the brick, the barricade and the petrol bomb against Thatcher's national riot police, they have come for the first time to see allies in those fighting for freedom in the Six Counties of Ireland and in black people forced to fight against the racist police state in Britain.

Thousands of workers have come to know the character of the leadership of

the Labour Party and trade union movement and to realise that a new fighting movement can only be built after a decisive break with these leaders and the section of the working class which follows them. Perhaps the most important political development in the strike has been the critical and often leading role of the women in the mining communities in defending and sustaining the strike through organisation, demonstrations, street activities and defence of their relatives and friends in prison. A lasting advance for the miners and the working class movement can only be won if these gains are consolidated.

Thatcher wants NUM surrender

Knowing the danger that a Scargill-led miners' victory would mean for the ruling class, Thatcher has shown that she is prepared to go to any lengths and

to bear any necessary costs to beat the miners' strike. In July last year her Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, described the already large extra costs due to the strike as 'a worthwhile investment for the good of the nation' – by which he meant the gang of British and international profiteers whose interests Thatcher represents.

The costs are mounting rapidly. Already it seems likely that government spending for 1984/5 will overshoot expenditure plans by some £3.3bn – jeopardising the tax handouts that the Tory government had earmarked for its wealthy friends. At least £1.5bn of this extra expenditure was attributable to the miners' strike up till Christmas. Another £500m will be added if the strike continues into March. Andrew Glyn, an Oxford economist, has estimated that the total cost of the miners' strike so far is a massive £5bn, when all hidden costs including loss of output, taxation and increased social security payments are taken into account.

Much of the extra cost has been in the production of electricity. In her determination to avoid power cuts Thatcher has sanctioned unlimited spending. Spending on oil soars every day as the dollar strengthens and the pound weakens. In December 1984 the CEBG was burning eight times as much oil as in a normal December at a minimum cost of some £40m a week. Gas turbines, which are even more expensive to use than oil in the production of electricity, are normally used for only a few days a year to meet peak demand. It is now estimated that they are being used at least one day out of two. Further costs result from the extensive use of scab lorries to move coal and oil to power stations. In the Notts coalfield, due to the refusal of

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No Deportations!

The Home Office made clear its New Year resolution by deporting Ayse Halil, a Cypriot woman from London, forcing her to leave 2 of her children behind. Days later it moved to deport the Thapar family from Rod Heath in Cheshire who had by then gone into hiding. The Home Office is conducting a massive deportation programme against black people.

On 14 January the RCG joined a picket of the Court of Appeal which heard Manchester resident Kamal Kumar's application for a judicial review of his case against deportation. The judge was Lord Justice Laughton, former candidate for the British Union of Fascists and responsible for imprisoning the Cammell Laird workers in Liverpool last year. Laughton continually interrupted Kamal's barrister and within an hour dismissed the case and set a dangerous precedent for others in a similar

position to Kamal. He was married for over a year to a British citizen and according to Home Office regulations was entitled to remain in Britain. The Home Office, however, delayed considering his case until his marriage had ended. The Court of Appeal ruling on Kamal's case (and that of Muhammed Idrish, a NALGO worker from Birmingham) stated that the marriage must exist at the time the case is being considered.

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Defend the Embassy Picket

Every Friday night an important political event takes place outside the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square – the picket organised by the City of London AA Group. Over the last two and a half years thousands upon thousands of people opposed to apartheid – young, old, black and white, have come to participate in militant protest against apartheid. The picket has become a focal point for many in its struggle. It has been addressed by revolutionaries from South Africa, Ireland, Central America, Palestine, and many other countries. Speeches have been made on the picket by striking miners, hospital workers, Dunnes strikers, MPs, anti-racist campaigns, local councillors and anti-apartheid representatives from New Zealand, Canada, the Netherlands, the United States, Australia and Denmark and many local groups throughout Britain.

Its success has brought it many friends but also very determined enemies, the South African Embassy pressurised the British government to stop it. It failed. The Metropolitan Police tried to ban it. It failed. Most surprising of all, City Group faces the unremitting attacks of

the AAM Executive. This body has now decided it wants to rid London of this powerful political event once and for all. If City Group continues holding the pickets, it will be expelled from the AAM.

The AAM Executive has delivered this ultimatum in a letter sent to City Group

asking for 'unambiguous assurances' by 15 February, otherwise the Executive will propose that City Group is expelled from the AAM at the next National Committee meeting on 23 February.

The assurances demanded are: 1) that City Group should only organise activities in the City of London; 2) that membership of City Group should only be open to those who live or work in the City of London; 3) that City Group should not campaign or mobilise nationally; and 4) that City Group should propose the dissolution of the South African Embassy Picket Campaign (SAEPC). What this means is that City Group cannot hold pickets outside South Africa House and the picketers cannot join City Group unless they live or work in the City of London.

In November 1984, City Group replied to the Executive's original request for these 'assurances' stating that it was unreasonable to be asked to work only in the City of London – 1 square mile of London largely inhabited by bankers and stockbrokers. It did however agree to work in the City, Westminster and Holborn, which would include the area around South Africa House. City Group also felt that it should be left to individ-

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BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

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some groups of railway workers to move coal, an estimated 12,000 lorry-loads a day are being used to supply coal to the vital Trent Valley power stations.

All this shows that Thatcher is determined to force a crushing defeat on the miners and Arthur Scargill. Nothing less than total surrender will satisfy her.

At every stage, when negotiations have looked like ending in a compromise agreement acceptable to the NUM, Thatcher has stepped in to prevent such an outcome. Even now, when new negotiations had been informally agreed to by NUM General Secretary Peter Heathfield and Ned Smith of the NCB, Thatcher has publicly insisted that no negotiations take place before a NUM written surrender on the issue of uneconomic pits. In an interview on ITV on 24 January she said, 'The NCB has to manage... the NCB has to close uneconomic pits. It always has. It has decisions to take. That has to be clear from the outset'. She dismisses any talk of independent arbitration boards on pit closures. Such bodies can only be 'consultative' she said, ie we'll ignore them if they don't satisfy our requirements.

Sections of the ruling class, worried about the effects of the miners' strike on the economy and international confidence in the pound - its value has fallen by some 20% during the course of the strike - are arguing for compromise. Thatcher is determined to push aside this pressure and go out for total victory. Sections of the NCB management, anxious about the long-term effects of the strike on the industry, are also trying to find a negotiating position which stops short of demanding total defeat for the striking miners. They are only too aware that on their own estimate a hard core of at least 40% of the NUM (75,000) are prepared to stay out indefinitely, leaving the NCB with an impossible operational problem. MacGregor, however, was not hired at a cost of millions to provide friendly agreements. He was brought in by Thatcher to break the union in order to slash the size of the industry, leaving only highly profitable pits. Thatcher confirmed this on 25 January when she refused to deny that the vast majority of pits in the older coalfields, like those of Kent, South Wales and Scotland, would almost certainly be closed.

In spite of Thatcher's forceful intervention, the NUM Executive's public declaration on 24 January that they were prepared to restart negotiations with no preconditions has pressurised the NCB into agreeing to have talks about a possible agenda for future negotiations. These will start on Tuesday 29 January. The outcome remains to be seen.

There can be no doubt that if the miners are forced back on terms acceptable to Thatcher, tens of thousands of jobs will be lost, and scores of pits closed. Arthur Scargill's predictions at the beginning of the strike, about MacGregor's plans for the coal industry, were no exaggeration. Thatcher cannot be allowed to win. The strike cannot be ended on her terms. It is imperative that this message is put over to the trade union movement and to the masses of ordinary people who support the miners in a major effort to once again raise the tempo of resistance.

Threat to Labour's chances?

Thatcher is fighting a class war. She is determined to defend the interests of her class. Labour Party leader, Kinnock, and TUC General Secretary, Willis, know nothing of class war and seek only class collaboration, that is, peace at any price. Of primary concern to them, far more important than the miners' strike, is the Labour Party's popularity and its prospects at the next General Election - in other words the career prospects and status of themselves and their friends. The determined and militant fightback of the striking miners and their communities is nothing but an embarrassment to these leaders. To have taken the side of the striking miners, at any time, on the fundamental issues raised in the course of the strike - work-

ers' democracy vs ruling class democracy, workers' violence vs police violence, illegality vs legality - would, they believe, have undermined Labour's respectability in the capitalist media's popularity polls.

The miners' strike has become such a threat to Kinnock and those he represents that when a group of left Labour MPs staged a demonstration in the House of Commons calling on the government for a debate on the strike (something which Kinnock too had opposed as 'not helpful' at the present time - ie not 'helpful' to Kinnock) the sitting was suspended for 20 minutes. Kinnock later rounded on these MPs, the handful that have supported the miners, with vicious fury, accusing them of 'utter indiscipline' and 'self indulgence'. This action by Kinnock, supported by most Labour MPs, shows without a doubt that the Labour Party will not defend the interests of ordinary people in struggle even within the narrow confines of the parliamentary debating chamber. Labour MPs, if they were worth anything, should have been disrupting parliament, day after day, to put the miners' case.

The continuation of the strike daily opens up the split in the working class movement and destroys bit by bit the ability of leaders like Kinnock and Willis to pose as representatives of the whole working class. In a TUC debate on 17 December a terrifying spectre was raised: according to the TUC a failure to achieve a clear settlement in the strike could mean that 10-30,000 miners might 'permanently' stay out on strike. TUC leaders thought that this would present 'a dangerous feature which had never been witnessed before'. Dangerous indeed for the position of the likes of Kinnock and Willis that a significant section of the organised working class might break free of their stranglehold. The leaders of the Labour and trade union movement have shown throughout the strike that they have everything to lose from a Scargill-led victory.

The split in the working class over the miners' strike is not just between the reactionary leaders like Kinnock, Willis Basnett and Duffy, and the rank and file workers, but is a split that has gone deep down into the movement as workers have taken sides according to where their immediate interests lie. For every railway worker who has refused to move coal there have been others who have moved it, and hundreds of scab TGWU lorry drivers, earning in many cases over £1,000 a week, have profited from the strike. On the other hand railway workers at the key Coalville depot in Leicestershire who have blocked the movement of coal all the way through the strike fought for weeks to get mass support for their stand from their unions. Two were sacked and others disciplined for alleged theft; a signalman was sent home by management because he was said to be 'mentally unstable'. His absence was used to deploy a scabbing member from the newly formed 'Federation of Professional Railway Staff' to allow coal trains through for the first time in 10 months during December. A successful one day rail strike was called in support of the Coalville workers on 17 January in the Yorkshire and East Midlands region. And 200 workers at Waterloo station in London walked out against their unions' wishes.

At the power stations, key electricians and power workers have categorically refused to aid the miners, even with action that does not involve strikes. The scabbing of these workers has undermined the action of other groups of power station workers in the TGWU and the AUEW. 200 AUEW workers at Didcot power station have now abandoned their decision not to handle coal supplies.

What Thatcher and Kinnock, MacGregor and Willis have in common is a single-minded determination to isolate and defeat Arthur Scargill and the class politics he has put forward during the miners' strike. They must do this to prevent the split in the working class movement going deep enough to begin the process of creating a new fighting movement. Such a movement would be a pole of attraction for thousands and thousands of workers disgusted with the politics of the Labour Party and TUC and their leaders Kinnock and Willis.

Defend the gains of the strike

The period after Christmas has seen a massive propaganda effort by the government and the NCB to bring about a mass return to work. Adverts placed in local and Sunday newspapers, personal letters to strikers, added to Thatcher's total refusal to contemplate negotiations (for nearly three months), have been clearly designed to exert maximum pressure on strikers faced with a new year of hardship for themselves and their families. The propaganda campaign has been waged particularly hard in South Wales where only 281 (342 NCB figure) out of 19,600 miners are at work.

NCB figures for the return to work since the New Year show some 9,230 men back at work for the first time

week ending (3 days)	4 January	705
"	11 January	2,269
"	18 January	2,870
"	25 January	3,386

While this is lower than the return to work rate in November and even allowing for the usual exaggeration by the

must get under way. For some time now miners in key areas like Yorkshire have been bitterly complaining that funds for picketing, petrol expenses, and vans have been withdrawn by NUM officials. Such officials can be by-passed.

Food and material aid collections must be stepped up on a countrywide basis. Leading figures in the NUM and left Labour MPs who support the miners must go out to the people *outside* the mining areas to help bring this about. Many miners are being forced back to work through hardship, cold and hunger. This could be stopped if the necessary funds were collected. The miners' support groups have a key role in making this possible. Mass rallies, demonstrations and street collections should be organised throughout the country to build support for the miners amongst the mass of ordinary people who want to see Thatcher defeated. Don't allow labour movement officialdom and 'defeatism' to get in the way.

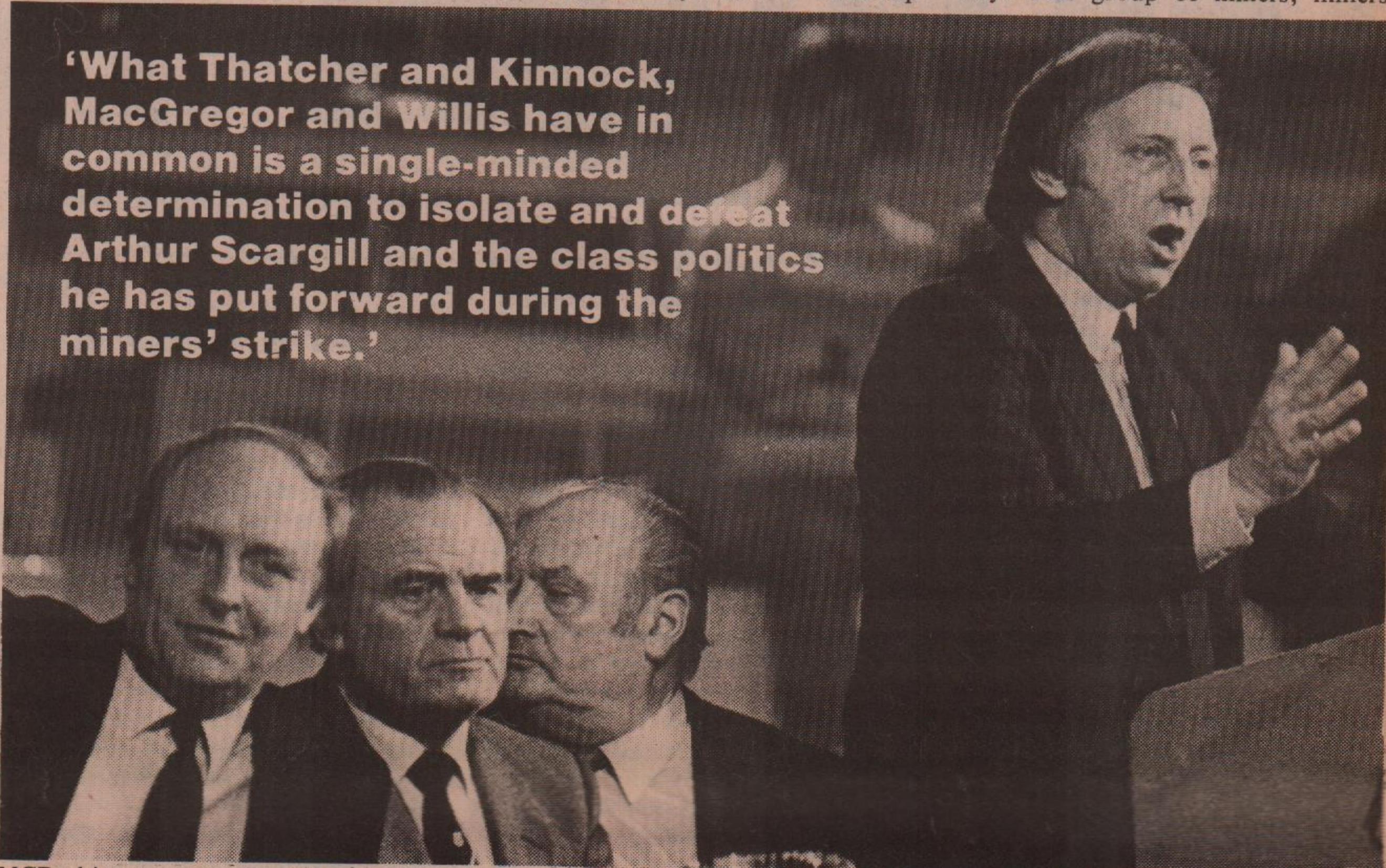
The women's support groups show what can be achieved. They are not waiting for permission from union officials to organise in support of the strike. In the last two weeks a three day march has been organised by a miners' wives sup-

ported imprisoned miners. Increased activity now will mean that solid organisation and experience exists to defend miners and other workers in the future. In Islington a small number of determined local activists (including FRFI comrades) collected nearly £800 on a mobile street collection for South Wales miners, built a demonstration of 1,500 people and have organised a picket on Wandsworth prison where a Kent miner has started a five-year gaol sentence - all in a period of a few weeks. Their success has encouraged many new people to be active in support of the miners.

After the strike has ended a political task of enormous importance faces those who have supported the strike: the defence of class war prisoners and the reinstatement of those sacked by the NCB as a result of convictions in the courts. Already 150 miners have been sentenced to gaol - one of them for 5 years and many more will follow. Over 500 miners have been sacked as a result of convictions in the courts. If these class war fighters are not resolutely defended then this and future struggles will be held back. The Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee is showing the way. This group of miners, miners'

'What Thatcher and Kinnock, MacGregor and Willis have in common is a single-minded determination to isolate and defeat Arthur Scargill and the class politics he has put forward during the miners' strike.'

JOHN STURROCK/NETWORK



NCB, this return to work still presents a major problem for the NUM. How the NUM responds to this is critical. In November the return to work was halted by mass picketing. So far a similar response has not been organised. This has allowed the less determined and less committed members of the NUM Executive to exert more pressure on Arthur Scargill and his supporters. One result has been the decision that the whole Executive takes part in the next set of negotiations with the NCB - clearly a weakening of the NUM's ability to hold out on the fundamental issues at stake. For some of the NUM Executive have wanted to end the strike at every available opportunity.

Another pressure on the NUM leaders is that the split in the NUM between strikers and scabs could lead to the formation of a breakaway union. The Notts area NUM decided to delete rule 30, which asserts the supremacy of the National Executive and rule book over that of the local area. Similar developments are taking place in the small areas of Leicestershire and South Derbyshire. In Notts the pro-strike General Secretary Henry Richardson was dismissed from his post, and in South Derbyshire striking miners have been expelled from the union. While efforts and concessions are being made to prevent the split, a continuation of the strike could lead to the formation of a bosses union which MacGregor and the NCB have said they are prepared to recognise.

It is crucial at this stage when negotiations are being considered to step up active support for the strike, both inside and outside the NUM. The new organisations which have been built during the strike - the women's support groups, and the miners' support groups in the towns and cities - can be consolidated in the next few weeks and start the process of winning back the initiative from Thatcher and the NCB. Mass pickets need to be organised again and a campaign to raise funds for this purpose

port group in North Derbyshire, and a mass picket and thousand-strong demonstration by the women at Hatfield Main colliery in Yorkshire. This repeated all over the country over the next few weeks would take the initiative out of the hands of those who do not want to carry on the fight.

The women's support groups in the mining areas and the miners' support groups in the towns and cities are a major gain of the strike. Their continued work will be crucial after the strike ends to prevent victimisation of strikers and to

wives and supporters (including FRFI comrades) has begun the work of defending local prisoners. Other groups must follow their lead and use their experience.

Whatever takes place over the next few weeks, whether the strike ends or not, the work must go on so the heroic struggle of the striking miners, their families and communists leads to lasting gains for the whole working class.

**Defend the gains of the strike
No victimisation of strikers
Free class war prisoners**

Olivia Adamson/David Reed

**Fight Racism!
Fight Imperialism!
and Irish Solidarity
Movement support
the miners**

Scotland On 20 December Edinburgh ISC held a successful public meeting 'Miners/Irish People - One Struggle! One Fight!'. On New Year's Eve Edinburgh FRFI held a street meeting and collection for the miners and on 7 January joined a picket line at Monktonhall. **Dundee, Glasgow and Edinburgh** FRFI hold regular weekly collections.

London on 22 December FRFI and ISC supporters played a major role in a mobile street collection held by Islington Miners Support Group. Nearly £800 was collected in 3 hours despite police attempts to move us on. The Big Red Band played throughout. FRFI supporters visited South Wales and Kent, where they handed over money and supported the picket line.

Manchester FRFI collects for the miners every Thursday 1-2pm, Market Street. Proceeds go to Fitzwilliam PAC.

WEEKEND OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE MINERS!

GO OUT TO THE PEOPLE!

DUNDEE 23/24 FEBRUARY
SATURDAY Assemble in City Square, 10.30am for day of activity - collections, rally, street theatre, social
SUNDAY Dayschool on miners strike, AUEW Hall, Marketgate, 10am registration. Speakers from FRFI Editorial Board, Fitzwilliam Miners Prisoners Aid Committee. Videos, food, creche, accommodation for those outside Dundee. Transport from Edinburgh, Glasgow. For details contact FRFI Box 40, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.

PROTEST OUTSIDE WANDSWORTH PRISON

Free Terry French and all imprisoned miners! Saturday 16 February 1-3pm Assemble Wandsworth Prison, Heathfield Rd, Wandsworth (nearest tube Tooting Bec). Supported by Kent NUM. **Islington Miners Support Group**

PUBLIC MEETINGS

'Miners in Gaol - Class War Prisoners' **London** Thursday 31 January 7.30pm, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street (nearest tube: Kings Cross). **Speakers:** Fitzwilliam PAC, Liz French (wife of imprisoned Kent miner) and Olivia Adamson, RCG.
Edinburgh Monday 11 March 7.00pm, Trades Council, Picardy Place.
Glasgow Thursday 21 February, 7.30pm Woodside Halls, George's Cross, 1.00pm Committee Rooms, Queen Margaret Union Glasgow University (near Byres Rd subway)

FITZWILLIAM PRISONERS AID

Following the traumatic experience of the Fitzwilliam 9 trial and the imprisonment of one of the community in December 1984, emotions within our community have been aroused. Having already been subjected to a violent police attack, Diplock style courts, severe financial hardship, even the complete siege of our village, the small community has stood firm behind the strike.

Eleven months into the dispute, having seen fellow miners and their supporters within the locality thrown into jail for the most trivial of offences, the community has formed the Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee (FPAC) to defend its class war prisoners. The FPAC are determined that our comrades in prison will not be left to stand alone - we realise that they are in prison for supporting the strike and their class. We must defend them before the government and the opportunist leaders of the Labour and trade union movement reduce our mining communities to poverty zones, resulting in more miners and their supporters being thrown into jail.

We in the FPAC unconditionally support the prisoners of the strike. In the future we will be organising vigils, donations to the prisoners' families and most importantly literature and letters of support to keep them informed of the current political situation. We are producing a bulletin in the near future for this purpose. Already there are many miners in prison. Only recently, Terry French, a Kent miner received a five year jail term for an alleged assault on a policeman, this is the harshest sentence yet meted out by the Tory judiciary on a striking miner. Home Secretary Leon Brittan has admitted to a nationwide total of 150 for 'crimes' related to the miners' strike, the heaviest sentence being five years. There could be many miners and their supporters in your area who are facing prison sentences. We in the FPAC would strongly advise people in other areas to set up prisoners aid committees and to build a solid movement to defend our class war prisoners.

A prisoners aid movement in this country would be a significant step forward in the struggle of all oppressed people. It would strike at the heart of our common enemy, those who criminalise and imprison innocent people who stand up for their democratic rights.

To enable us to carry out our vital work you could assist us in a number of ways. If you know of any miners in prison please let us know, also send them letters of support. Finance is essential and if you are able to make a donation, cheques, POs etc can be made payable to FPAC at 4 Rockingham Street, Fitzwilliam, Nr Pontefract, W Yorkshire Pat, Sandra, Peter, Cindy



ISLINGTON

Out on the streets

'We live in hard times which demand a hard response from a hard left... what is needed is a hard left of principled people prepared to support those in struggle.'

Tony Benn's speech to the 1,500 strong demonstration in Islington on 19 January brought into focus all the lessons of the strike for the miners and for all those who support their struggle. He told the crowd 'Don't wait for permission. If you wait for permission you'll wait forever!'

Benn described the work done in his constituency in Chesterfield where a Community Defence Committee had been set up comprising women's groups, TUs, Labour Party branches, the CP, the NCCL and even members of the clergy. They are working to link the miners' struggle with every other struggle - they are organising for a one-day stoppage on the buses with a miner on every bus to explain their case; they want the schools opened up to the miners and to the unemployed as well. They held a party in Chesterfield to welcome home miners who had served sentences for the strike.

Pat, of Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee, was given a tremendous reception for her first public speech: '... the young miner who was intended to speak here today can no longer do so... he is now languishing in prison after being arrested yesterday morning for allegedly breaking his curfew... Who the bloody hell are they to tell people what time to leave here and what time to go there... Yes, these so-called lovers of freedom, democracy, the rights of

the individual, that they are always preaching about. They are criminalising people who stand up for their democratic rights, the right to work, the right to travel the highway, the very right of basic human dignity is under serious threat from the present dictatorship in Number Ten.'

Build miners support in the community

The demonstration was built in only a few weeks of hectic activity - every organisation, campaign, local support group was contacted, door to door and street leafletting done with collections and sales of the paper and by fly-posting every available wall. Local activists, including FRFI, were instrumental in this process. The turn out was worth every bit of effort - people and banners turned up from every part of London, miners' contingents with their colourful banners came, and local people joined in.

The FRFI contingent doubled in number as it shouted and sang through the working class streets - 'Whose riot? Police Riot!' 'What do we want? Miners

out of gaol! When do we want it? NOW!' got the wholehearted approval of miners in front and of passers by. Contingents from Irish Solidarity Committees and from the City of London AA plus those of the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign and the Namibia Support Group brought home the need for internationalism in all struggles today. A message of support and encouragement from Nicaraguan miners to British miners was read out and David Kitson, recently released from 20 years in South African prisons, praised the British miners and reminded everyone of the way the apartheid state and British support for it oppressed the miners of South Africa

Annie Cooper, a miner's daughter and wife from Kent, had this to say about the needs of the struggle:

'What do the rich know about living from wage packet to wage packet? From Giro to Giro? Thousands have been arrested because they want to work, hundreds have been jailed for wanting to work... The money helps us to survive but not to win. We need action! Forward to 1985!'

The FRFI speaker called for demonstrations, pickets and rallies like this to be organised, winning the support from the thousands of unemployed, black people, Irish people, women and all fighting workers in struggle if the working class is to go forward. She called for support for the class war prisoners to be

organised. An FRFI supporter, an NUT representative speaking on behalf of members at her school, stressed the need for more activities on the streets so that trade unionists could come out and show their support.

Trade unionists had come out - Islington Trades Council and NALGO, a branch of the GMWU, and Finsbury Park NUR plus NUT members from several schools. But despite the exhortations of the many Trotskyist groups to the miners to organise this mass picket and that general strike, the majority of these left organisations could not organise themselves to bring a banner. The people will not wait for permission from the SWP, the WRP, RCP and others - they will demonstrate and organise when the call is made.

Thirty people signed up to join in the work of the Support Group when the call was made by Maggie in the collection speech - where she demanded not just money but every possible contribution from everyone there - whether in an organisation, trade union, tenants' group or as an individual.

Go Out And Organise

FRFI and other activists who built the march are determined to take the struggle forward with as many people as possible - with rallies, street meetings, benefits, collections and pickets to build the support among the people.

Maggie Mellon/Alan James

FREE THE CLASS WAR PRISONERS

Over 150 miners have now been given gaol sentences. This new wave of class war prisoners is the vengeance of the government for 11 months of magnificent struggle by the mining communities.

Over 10,000 arrests have been made and hundreds of miners face serious charges such as riot and illegal assembly which carry possible life sentences. Three men in Wales are remanded on murder charges. 17 men are now serving sentences of two years and over. Two Kent miners were sentenced to three and five years, ten Derbyshire men to two and a half and three years and five Staffordshire men to two years.

Terry French, who has got the longest sentence so far of 5 years, is a Kent miner, vice-president of his union branch. He has played a leading role in the strike locally and earlier in the strike in the march from Kent to Notts. Those who know him are in no doubt that the police and courts were determined to put him away. His first trial ended with a hung jury which indicates the unsatisfactory nature of the evidence against him. His wife, Liz French, has responded to this attack on her family and the strike by stating her determination to fight in his defence. Now allowed to see her husband for only 45 minutes a month she reported from her first visit that he was in good spirits and would not be broken by imprisonment. The prison authorities, alarmed by the vol-

ume of correspondence he gets, have tried to pressurise him to stop it. He is unmoved and says keep the cards and letters coming! His sister is circulating a petition for his release which states

'This is a petition against the severe sentences to two Kent miners for 3 and 5 years for GBH. Also for a fair justice in British courts. They have been made an example.'

Terry French intends to use his time in prison to study politics and economics. Far from breaking these new class war prisoners, the British state is going to find that many of them will be turning the prisons into universities of revolution.

In the past the British Labour and trade union movement has failed to do anything for imprisoned trade unionists. Des Warren, a Shrewsbury building worker, was gaoled in 1973 under the Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1875. He went on hunger strike for political status - this was refused by the newly elected Labour government. His health was ruined by forcible druggings and yet the trade union movement did nothing - his family were left to fend for themselves.

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! has written to miners in gaol, to their families, to Women Against Pit Closures, to the many women's support groups, and to other concerned organisations and individuals - we are offering to help with defence work, to co-ordinate the collection of information on the prisoners and to use our experience of prisoners' rights work to help those who want to work with us in defence of the prisoners. The list of miners in gaol which we are printing in this issue represents a small percentage of the total in prison. Action must begin at once. **The collection and co-ordination of the information about trials, sentences, treatment in prison, is vital.**

In Kent and Yorkshire, families and friends of imprisoned miners have made protests and begun to organise. If these protests are to be effective there must be co-ordination, the opportunity for meetings, sharing of information and the planning of united action throughout the country. This will show the government, its police, courts and prisons that in taking its revenge on the miners in this way it has only brought the end of its whole rotten system nearer.

Organise protests outside the prisons, cards and letters to the prisoners, support for their families, and all possible action to mobilise support for them and all class war prisoners.

**They are inside for us - we are outside for them
Free the class war prisoners!**

Maggie Mellon

MINERS IN GAOL

Rob Andrews, M Wyzille
HMP Ranby, nr Retford, Notts DN22 8EV

Todd Booth, Chris Hyman, John Wallace
North Sea Camp DC, Freston, Boston, Lincs PE22 0QX

A Edwards (4 months), S Meeth (4 months), Steve Gregory, Victor Gregory, Jimmy Lees
HMP Lincoln, Greenwell Rd Lincoln LN2 4BD

Mark Giore, John Ellis, Mark Grove, Peter Newbold, Billy Taylor
HMP Featherstone, New Road, Wolverhampton WV10 7PU

Dean Hancock 899410, Russel Shankland 883752
HMP Cardiff, Knox Road, Cardiff, CF2 1UG

Terry French, B73383 (5 years)
HMP Wandsworth, PO Box 757, Heathfield Road, London SW18 3HS
Chris Tazey, A29398 (3 years)
HMYO Chelmsford, Springfield Road, Chelmsford

Ian Black (6 months), Michael Eyrebowho, M Hobson (3 months), Neil Marshall (3 months), Gary Millward, S Neath, Paul Truman, Steve Wakefield
HMP Armley, Armley Road, Leeds 12

Peter Hurst (6 months)
HMP Haverigg, Millom, Cumberland
Andy Bradley C954 (9 months), Kevin Neal (2½ years)
HMP Sudbury, Derby DE6

Steve Goodall (2½ years), David James (2½ years), Peter Pearson (2½ years), Michael Southwell (2½ years)
Sudbury Open Prison, Derby DE6 5HW
David Gaunt (3 years), Paul Jones (2½ years), David Mason (2½ years), Philip Sterland (2½ years)
HMP Wellingborough, Northants

Ian Kestle (2½ years), Prison not known

Peter Cooper (6 months), Ron Staniland (6 months), Paul Brothwell (1 year)

Chris Thomas (Remand), Mike Winstanley (Remand)
HMP Strangeways, Southall Street, Manchester, M60

Jeffrey Budworth (6 months), Anthony Routledge (3 months)
Prison not known

William Bannister (Hanley), Raymond Patton (Bucknall), Gary Mould (Bucknall), Stephen Lowe (Trent Vale), Michael Jones (Longton)
Bill of Hemheath Colliery, Stoke on Trent, were sentenced to two years imprisonment on Thursday 24 January - prison not yet known.

Chapple and Murray - an obituary

In contravention of Labour Party policy, Frank Chapple and Len Murray accepted life peerages offered to them by Thatcher in the New Year's honours list. The Lords (as television shows in grotesque detail) is a repository for the corpse of every labour traitor you would care to mention from recent political history: a pat on the back and many thanks for services rendered to the British ruling class. Murray and Chapple are classic examples of the labour aristocrat with a legal title to the job.

The twin traitors deserted forever the working class whose backs they had straddled so long when, in a symbolic gesture, they crossed class lines and crawled on hands and knees into the chamber of the House of Lords: as if to make public the truth we had known all along, and which they had never attempted to disguise.

Len Murray rose from obscurity to replace Vic Feather as TUC General Secretary in 1973, and quickly became notorious for his phenomenal capacity for personal cowardice. He was the architect of the policy known as 'the new realism'. The 'realism' was accepting that the trade union movement was powerless to fight the removal of each of its democratic rights. A more accurate description would have been the 'roll over and play dead' policy - Murray was good at that.

Murray's first step was to overturn the decision not to talk to the Tory government. Murray's by-word was 'abide by the letter of the law', and this was demonstrated by his denunciation of the TUC Executive Committee's decision to support the NGA print union in its dispute with the Messenger

Newspaper group. The policy was overturned and the NGA sold down the river.

When the government banned unions at GCHQ Murray offered up a dirty no-strike deal, but by this time Thatcher was so convinced of his lap-dog nature she turned him down flat. She was right - the unions were thrown out of GCHQ while the TUC looked the other way. The miners' strike was the end for Murray. Try as he would he couldn't get them back to work, or Scargill into line.

Murray accepted a peerage with only partial embarrassment. He is 'a firm believer in a second chamber and an equally firm opponent of a hereditary second chamber'.

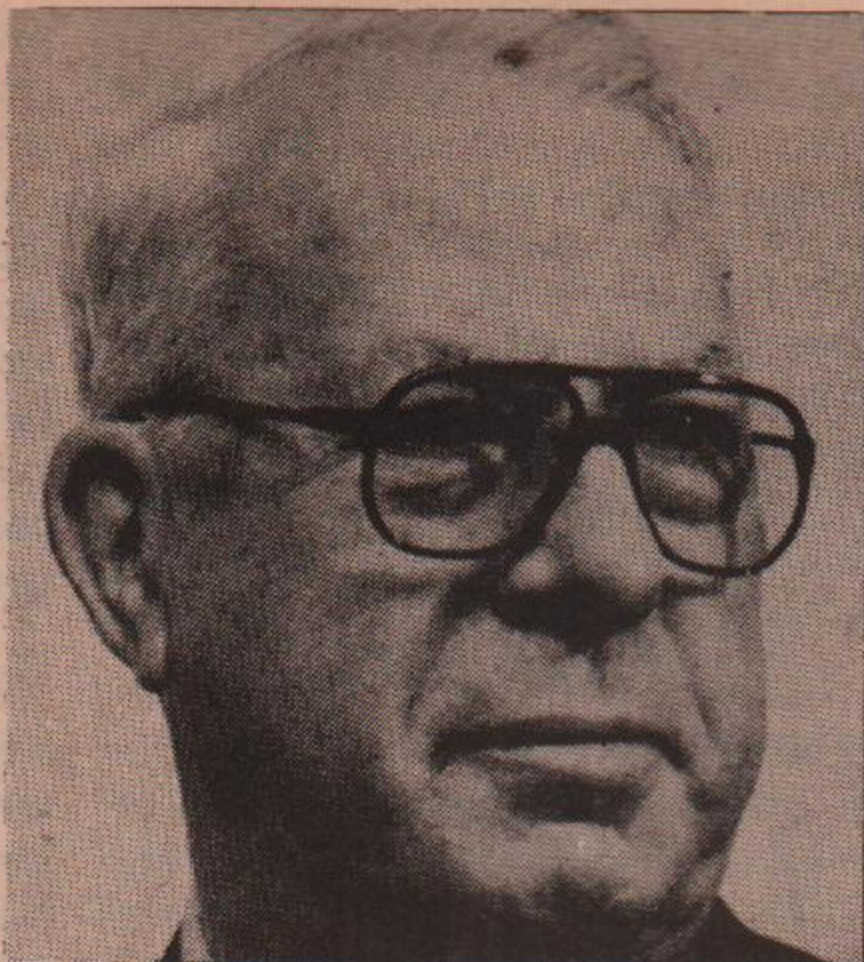
Frank Chapple unashamedly admitted his delight on receiving the 'last bribe'. Chapple began his career in the Communist Party of Great Britain and worked his way up the ranks of the EETPU - the electricians' union. In 1959 he renounced communism and set about 'exposing' communist influence within the union. He ruthlessly purged all left-wing militants from union posts using every available trick. He installed a right-wing cabal about himself and began to destroy the rights of his members by negotiating no-strike deals with employers.

Chapple undertook a campaign against the left-wing of the trade union movement and made a series of vicious attacks on Arthur Scargill. Finally, as chairman of the TUC, he moved far right enough to drop into the arms of the SDP. This man will go down in history as the scab's scab.

William Gray

MacGREGOR: SINISTER TRAILS

Wilberg mine in Huntington Utah was sealed off on 23 December leaving 27 miners, including one woman miner, dead inside; the victims of a methane fire. Safety conditions in the mine were atrocious: as a long-wall mine it should have had at least three entrances, it had only two. Spokesperson for the United Mineworkers of America (UMWA) accused the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration of providing only token inspection and light or nil penalties for offending companies.



National Coal Board Chairman, Ian MacGregor shares a hand in the fate of Utah's latest mining deaths. As chairman of

Amax, MacGregor led the move to break the UMWA on the US western coalfields, beginning with Belle Ayre colliery in neighbouring Wyoming (see FRFI 45). In 1974 Amax refused to renew a contract with the UMWA. The union struck and warned that if Amax won it would take away the miners' established right to elect their own safety committee with the power to close dangerous pits. The UMWA lost, and today just a quarter of the western miners are unionised. Result: a rising rate of mining accidents with the western mines suffering triple the national average! It will not have been lost on MacGregor that the Utah miners were killed as the company attempted a world record for coal extraction in a single day.

Sir John Nott, former Tory Defence Minister at the time of the Malvinas invasion, has been made chairman of Lazard Brothers. Lazards is the British extension of the New York based merchant bank Lazard Freres, of which Ian MacGregor is a part owner. Now Sir John and Lazards are earning a living selling off seven warship building yards of the state owned British Shipbuilders. While Lazards distribute these assets out among their friends in the City, MacGregor and Mrs Thatcher have something else to celebrate: according to the BBC, Ian MacGregor Jnr, the butcher's son, acted as an agent for the British government and sold off British Telecom shares on Wall Street. Who said that arrogance will surely over-reach itself? Trevor Rayne

BRITISH IMPERIALISM AT WORK - 1954

Government papers for 1954 were released on 1 January. They show that nothing much changes for British imperialism! The nationalist Nasser government in Egypt was viewed as a threat to British imperialist interests, especially concerning control of the Suez canal. So much so, that already in 1954 plans had been drawn up for the 1956 invasion of Egypt. With typical imperialist concern for the right of self-determination for small nations, the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden stated, 'If a situation arose which called for intervention by us, we might have an opportunity to set up an alternative government and we should be ill-advised to miss such an opportunity.' British imperialism's 'concern' for 'democracy' and 'justice' was also being practised in Kenya where the government decided to build a system of concentration camps to incarcerate supporters of the Kenyan liberation movement, the Mau Mau.

Also being discussed at this time by Britain, USA, France, Australia and New Zealand were plans that considered the launching of a nuclear attack on China, in retaliation for China's support of the Vietminh liberation forces in Vietnam. In July 1954 Britain had started to produce its own thermo-nuclear hydrogen bomb, the H-bomb, a decision the government concealed from Parliament and the general public. The government thought that the

manufacture of the H-bomb wouldn't have the support of public opinion, but as ministers pointed out, 'insofar as moral principle was involved, it had already been breached by the decision of the Labour government to make the atomic bomb'. So the manufacture of the H-bomb went ahead!

The racism inherent in imperialism, so apparent in Britain's disregard for the rights of oppressed nations, was reflected in the discussion within the government on immigration. Already in 1954 the main discussion was on ways of restricting immigration, discriminating against the employment of immigrants, and deporting black British citizens in the country. All of which rapidly became reality for black people in Britain.

In 1954 there was a militant dock strike led by the Stevedores or Blue Union. At the height of the strike, with dockers out in London, Liverpool, Hull and Southampton the Cabinet was holding daily meetings deciding whether to send the troops in or not. Arthur Deakin the General Secretary of the TGWU was in close collaboration with the government, advising Sir Walter Monckton the Minister of Labour on the effects of using troops as strikebreakers. His advice was that if troops were used the strike would spread, for this reason the government should hold back! Nothing much changes for British imperialism! Bob Shepherd

£165 MILLION SPENT TO SAVE £50 THOUSAND

A dispute involving computer staff at Newcastle Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) will probably cost Thatcher's 'let's cut back spending' government £165 million. 400 members of the Civil and Public Services Association returned to work on 21 January after being on strike since May 1984, the longest strike in the union's history. Originally, DHSS management hoped to save £50,000 a year by re-organising shift allowances, which would have meant a cut in wages of up to £14 a week. Although the threat of the cuts was withdrawn, no guarantees for new staff or for future arrangements were given.

The strikers were in fact severely pressurised to return to work by the CPSA National Executive Committee (NEC) when

they considered its 'continuation' as 'untenable' in December. Strikers responded with fury to the sell-out of their strike by CPSA General Secretary Alistair Graham. The NEC had refused to bring out staff at Department of Employment computer centres or to escalate the strike in any way. It's only effort was to sanction the payment of 50% strike pay. In a statement to CPSA members, Alistair Graham and his NEC put the blame on the membership:

'...Such escalation would ultimately have placed other members, in DHSS and DE local offices, in a position where they either faced disciplinary action or did work which would undermine the strike. There was, and is, no evidence of a willingness to face such a stark choice.'

Nigel Doyle

anti-social trends

This year's edition of *Social Trends*, the government's annual statistical survey, starkly reveals the effects of the capitalist crisis.

Long-term unemployment is increasingly the norm for millions: from 1983 to 1984 the proportion of the unemployed who had been jobless for over a year rose by 15%. By April 1984, 25% of unemployed men had been out of work for over two years. Predictably, the most oppressed groups suffered the worst: the 1983 Labour Force Survey showed 28% of black males unemployed, against 12% of whites. The unemployment rate for the Six Counties doubled from 10.7% in 1979 to 20.2% in 1983, compared with 12.9% for the UK as a whole.

Many who are in work do not escape poverty. In 1981, the last year for which figures are available, 680,000 lived in working families with incomes below supplementary benefit level. Nearly four million children lived below the poverty line. These figures must be worse today. The relative improvement of women's wages has now stagnated, at about 60% of male income.

Under Thatcher the richest 1% have actually improved their share of income after tax for the first time since 1949. This group owned 21% of all wealth in 1982: the poorest half of the population had 4% between them! Individuals amass enormous wealth: David Sainsbury 'earned' £70 million in 1984, taking his personal fortune to £487 million. The director of the British Oxygen Company can thank profiteering off the NHS for his £521,000 salary. These parasites eagerly await the £1.5 billion tax cuts Lawson promises in his next budget.



While the rich grow wealthier the homeless remain homeless

Social Trends defines the overall shape of a decaying capitalist economy. From 1971-81 numbers employed in manufacturing were 24% down, while those in banking rose by 27%. Public expenditure figures show vast cuts in housing and education, while law and order and defence budgets increase. The defence programme is a staggering £19 billion, above the combined costs of the NHS and the Social Services. *Social Trends* also indicates the results of this process. Since 1976 the number of new notified drug addicts has quadrupled. The prison population rose to 51,000, prison staff to 28,000. Local Authority manpower was cut by 3½% since 1979, but numbers of police, court employees and probation staff rose by 9%, 12% and 22% respectively.

Thus while millions of people look towards a future devoid of jobs, benefits or health care, the ruling class and their agents strengthen the forces of repression to protect their stolen wealth. Dave Burton

DOWN AND OUT IN PARIS

On 8 January it was reported that eleven people had frozen to death in France. Some were tramps, others homeless and poverty-stricken. One pensioner had been looking for wood when he died. On 14 January *Le Monde* reported that 55 people had died in France as a direct result of the cold weather.

15,000 people in Paris alone are homeless, of which it is reckoned only 7% have chosen the tramp's way of life. The majority are victims of unemployment. Many are between 20 and 35, and come from the provinces, looking for work and homes. The 'refuges' can offer only 5,000 beds. The homeless are thrown on the mercy of private charities. 'Emmaus' - a charity working with the poor - was inundated with calls for help. But where was the 'caring' Socialist government? Why did charities have to take the lead?

No-one in France sees the government as 'caring' any longer. The weather has in fact only heightened the misery of all the victims of Mitterrand's brand of capitalism with a 'socialist' label. Having thrown them out of jobs and impoverished them in the interests of a 'modernised economy', the so-called Socialist government leaves them to fend for themselves.

The French State's handling of the homeless did not change with the arrival of Mitterrand in power. Every night the police continued their rounds of metro stations and shopping precincts, throwing everyone out into the street. It needed several days of sub-zero temperatures and an appeal from l'Abbe Pierre, a well-known church figure, before the government even announced that the metro stations would be left open at night.

By the time this is published, we may be hearing statistics of death from cold here in Britain. Between Thatcher and Mitterrand there is little to choose. From the point of view of the homeless and poor there is nothing to choose. Sheila

SECRET SECRETS TRIAL

The trial of civil servant Clive Ponting, beginning Monday 28 January, is to be held in camera (secret) and with a vetted jury thanks to the machinations of Michael Heseltine. Clive Ponting is charged under section 2 of the Official Secrets Act for sending Labour MP Tam Dalyell copies of documents which exposed government lies over the sinking of the *Belgrano*.

At the committal hearing on 9 October last year, the Attorney-General said that the documents to be produced in the trial did not involve 'national security'. Therefore it was expected that the trial would be public and the jury unvetted. Then Heseltine, fearful of public exposure of his lying government, demanded that documents be introduced into the trial which did involve 'national security'. On this basis, Justice McCowan held a special hearing in chambers at his home on 19 January to allow the trial to be held in camera and justify the decision to vet the jury. 'National security' is now clearly seen to mean the security of the ruling class - which is what it always means.

Jury vetting, first publicly used against Irish Republicans in 1978, allows for the Special Branch to vet potential jurors and exclude any with 'extreme political views' - such as, for example, an extreme objection to a lying government covering up the murder of 368 Argentine sailors. The vetting process is secret, the hearing in chambers is secret and the trial will be held in secret. How wonderful it is to live in a democracy.

On Tuesday 22 January Navy department senior executive officer Ray Williams was given six months in prison for the 'offence' of selling information to the *Observer* which exposed padded contracts in defence spending. The government has clearly decided that the same fate shall be inflicted on Clive Ponting. Terry O'Halloran



POLICE FILE

● 'I feel that not enough training is being done to give the Special Branch proper training in the processes of political democracy. It is quite easy for them to think that anyone who challenges the existing order is subversive.'

Only a Labour MP could have spoken such a truism about this repressive and anti-democratic arm of the British state - it was David Winnick (MP Walsall N). A political re-education course for the Special Branch is not, so far as Police File is aware, on Mrs Thatcher's agenda. Winnick was speaking in response to the release of formerly secret guidelines to Special Branch operations, which say its duties include 'assessing whether marches, meetings, demonstrations and pickets pose a threat to public order, and helping the security services to guard against espionage, sabotage, and the actions of persons or organisations inside or outside the country which may be judged to be subversive to the state'. A wide brief, with the only proviso that 'data on individuals or organisations should not under any circumstances be collected or held solely on the basis that such a person or organisation supports unpopular (sic) causes or on the basis of race or creed'. The Irish and the peace movement might have reason to suspect that such a proviso was formulated strictly for public consumption.

● When South Wales miners throw concrete slabs from motorway bridges onto scabs it is an outrage, an act of terrorism, the 'worst example of violence we have yet seen in the strike' (tearful police inspector returns onion to breast pocket). Such horrors warrant page one treatment - but not when perpetrated by police. Eagle-eyed *Guardian* readers will have spotted a four column inch story hidden away on page 3, about policemen on a motorway throwing bricks and concrete at a stolen car during a high speed chase. The defending solicitor for James Cupit and John Owen of Liverpool claimed that officers rammed the vehicle his clients were driving, 'that bricks and other heavy objects rained down on the men from overhead bridges', and that Cupit was put in a police dog van and savaged by a dog. Sounds like attempted murder there Leon?

● Boredom on the picket line is becoming a severe problem for the police. What, after all, do you do when sitting in a section van hour after hour. You've 'read' *The Sun* cartoon page and I-Spy soon loses its attractions if you have a limited vocabulary. So our bright little boys have come up with the answer: revolting eating contests. Pride of place goes to those who can place a whole Mars Bar - sideways - into a suitable orifice and swallow; or devour two dozen hard-boiled eggs on the trot. One genius rammed a whole Spanish orange into his mouth, and, well I never, it stuck there. The red-faced PC was led off to hospital where the offending object was extracted. At the same time the opportunity was taken to remove his brain, but the surgeons found only a note, saying 'gone to lunch'.



On Friday 4 January the Conservative convener of Lothian Regional Council, Brian Meek, invited a South African Consul General to lunch in Edinburgh. The local Anti-Apartheid group called a picket of Lothian Regional Council HQ where the lunch was taking place. Edinburgh FRFI immediately mobilised over 20 people, representing the EISC, Edinburgh Latin America Solidarity Campaign, Chile Democratico and Women For Peace. The picket was 50 strong and successfully prevented the apartheid Consul General from entering the building at the planned entrance. Instead he had to sneak through the side entrance.
Lorna Morgan

An injury to one

Following on from the adoption of the resolution proposed by City Group AA at the recent AA AGM stating that:

'This AGM believes that all the struggles against apartheid cannot be separated from the fight against racism in Britain.'

supporters of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* successfully proposed that our local AA group and student AA group invited Viraj Mendis to speak on his campaign.

Twenty five people attended the meeting to hear Viraj outline the background to his threatened deportation. But as he himself pointed out, he is just one of the hundreds of people in Britain threatened by the racist immigration laws. Viraj, a supporter of FRFI, linked his own deportation to Sri Lanka, where the murderous regime has outlawed all socialist and progressive organisations and is massacring workers and the Tamil people - to the deportation of anti-apartheid activists in Britain to fascist South Africa. He urged everyone to take up the struggle for democratic rights and socialism.
Dundee FRFI supporters

Next shops boycott South African goods

The 'Next' chain of men's and women's fashion wear shops has decided it will cease stocking clothes made in South Africa when the present contract expires. 'Next' boss George Davies has stated that the chain will no longer be buying supplies from Cape Town manufacturers Rex Trueform, and that Anti-Apartheid protests had an influence on his decision.

As 'Next' shops were one of the first targets of the Anti-Apartheid Movement's consumer boycott campaign the response of 'Next' to pull out has been a welcome move for all anti-apartheid activists. But it is not the end of the matter, for Hepworths, a parent company of 'Next', buys about 5% of goods, worth £6m a year from Rex Trueform.

Anti-apartheid activists and anti-racists will have to make their protests louder and say to Hepworths 'Stop making profits from apartheid and be the "Next" to pull out.'

Sonny Taylor
Bradford Anti-Apartheid Group

'Each trade agreement, each bank loan, each new investment, is another brick in our continued existence'.

Hendrick Verwoerd, former Prime Minister of South Africa

'Every effort to isolate South Africa adds strength to our struggle' Nelson Mandela, imprisoned leader of the African National Congress

The world's biggest investor in apartheid, British imperialism, is also the third ranked trading partner with South Africa. South African exports to Britain total £750 million a year, nearly 6% of all imports to this country. Minerals and mineral products (such as gold and uranium) account for 48.5%, vegetables and fruit (John West, Del Monte, Sharwoods, Outspan, Cape and others) for 15%, textiles and clothing (brand names - Rex Trueform, Pat Shub, Country Casuals, Hermit yarns) for 10%.

FORWARD TO THE
PEOPLE'S BOYCOTT

British trade, like its investments, bolsters the apartheid regime which is intensifying its violent repression of the black majority.

The condition of black workers on white farms in South Africa and Namibia is akin to slavery. Average wages in 1982 were as little as R23 a month (£12). Farmworkers, like domestic workers, are not allowed to refuse overtime or approach an industrial court. Thousands of farmworkers who have been laid off because of the drought have been forced to move to the barren Bantustans, even though their families have lived in designated 'white areas' for generations. The courts operate quotas of 'idle persons' caught by the police without passes, who are sent as forced labour to work on farms. Of South Africa's 600,000 farmworkers, over 90,000 are prisoners working in labour camps, or sent onto the farms as a condition of their prison parole. They are used as slave labour, and many have died as a result of their conditions of work.

In the Western Cape, where the fruit which ends up in British stores is produced, the farmers kidnap truck loads of school children for forced labour. Whipping is commonplace, but brutality on the farms very rarely receives publicity. Last April, Welkom Regional Court reluctantly heard the case of two white farmers who had applied a sheep castrating device to a black farmworker's sex organs.

Workers in textile industries, mostly women, today earn 22% less than they

did in 1948. A qualified woman machinist in the Western Cape earns R54 a week (the minimum poverty line for a family is R76 a week).

The South African people have shown how to use the consumer boycott as a weapon involving thousands in struggle. A year ago 15,000 workers in the Ciskei bantustan who refused to travel on buses because of fare increases, won a great victory despite the torture and murder meted out by apartheid's stooge, puppet President Lennox Sebe. Workers at Rowntrees, Fattis and Monis and Simba-Quix have all called on their communities to boycott products in order to help them win strikes.

The liberation movement and the people of South Africa have continually called for a boycott of South African goods and a campaign to isolate South Africa in order to aid their struggle for freedom and democracy. The arguments against this are repeatedly trotted out: Paul Channon, a British Trade and Industry Minister, said in November 1983,

'the development of an active trading relationship with South Africa is a very important element of the Government's policy of seeking constructive engagement as the best means of encouraging peaceful change in South Africa.'

Britain has had an 'active trading relationship' with apartheid South Africa since the beginning of this century, not to encourage 'peaceful change' for

there has been none, but to aid and abet the racist South African regime in the enslavement of black people throughout Southern Africa. As the conditions for South Africa's black people have worsened and apartheid has become more entrenched, Britain and the imperialist west have grown rich from apartheid's profits.

Others argue that a boycott of South Africa merely makes the conditions for black people worse. But the black people of South Africa and their organisations are very clear that South Africa apartheid would not survive without aid it receives from the imperialist nations.

Now is the time to heed their call. The imperialists are giving all their support and aid to keep apartheid - and their profits - in existence. We have to make sure that the oppressed in Southern Africa do not fight alone. The Anti-Apartheid Movement has called for a re-launch of the boycott campaign. FRFI completely supports this call. But we are sure that the support which is needed to isolate apartheid will come from oppressed people in Britain - from the striking miners who are fighting the NCB and Thatcher's government and whose strike is being undermined by imports of coal produced under slave conditions in South Africa: from the women shopworkers (like the Dunnes strikers)

'The Shell Oil Company was recently the proud recipient of a \$200 million reward. From whom and for what? From the racist government of South Africa for never having heeded the UN Resolutions on an economic embargo against South Africa'.
New Times January 1985

who are low paid; from black people in Britain who know that racism in Britain stems from the same imperialist system which oppresses the masses in Southern Africa. Let's make this boycott campaign a people's boycott which involves the people on the streets of Britain in a mass campaign against apartheid. If we don't want to spend the next twenty-five years listening to the equivocations of trade union leaders and politicians who have spent the last twenty-five years trading with apartheid, then we should follow the lead of those who have no stake in apartheid - the oppressed in South Africa and the oppressed in Britain.

Andy Goddard and Leah Ndaba



City of London Anti-Apartheid Group held two successful pickets of South African Airways in Oxford Circus. The first time the police were there in force. The staff had to lock the doors for the duration of the picket and only expensively dressed whites were allowed through the police lines. The second time, the police were absent. The picture above shows picketers displaying the truth about apartheid to passers-by!
For the March Month of Action, City Group plans a Call to Action conference on 9 March and a Day of Action on 23 March. National AAM is holding a national Day of Action outside supermarkets on 23 March.
Charine

Dunnes workers still on strike

On 19 January a delegation of 10 members of City Anti-Apartheid Group, including four FRFI supporters, joined the picket line outside Dunnes Stores in Dublin. Six months before, on 19 June, Mary Manning was suspended from her job for following union policy and refusing to handle South African goods. 12 of her workmates came out on strike with her, and they have been on the picket line ever since.



Dunnes strikers on a visit to London at the invitation of City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, pictured outside County Hall with Ken Livingstone and Valerie Wise of the GLC, together with City Group and FRFI supporters.

Many of the workers at Dunnes Stores are young single women, poorly paid in a country with high unemployment - the management thought they would soon break the strike. But they did not take into account that those who are oppressed themselves will make common cause with the oppressed all over the world. One of the strikers, Karen, said,

'I know our conditions are nothing like those of the black people in South Africa, but Ben Dunne treats his workers like slaves. We can relate to the sort of conditions the South African black people live under.'

Ben Dunne is the owner of the large chain of Dunnes Stores, and he has been involved in the negotiations with the strikers. The last meeting lasted ten minutes when the strikers were told to go and get jobs somewhere else.

The strikers wrote to Garrett FitzGerald asking for support. But FitzGerald has now resigned from the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement because Sinn Fein is affiliated. Some of the women strikers say that FitzGerald is not interested in the people, and that with the help of

people like Ben Dunne, he is trying to break the unions.

The City Group delegation joined the picket line for the day, asking passers by to support Irish workers who were being harassed. Throughout the day we sang freedom songs and chanted slogans. Both City Group and FRFI sent solidarity messages to the strikers.

The Dunnes strikers are determined to continue their strike and to win support from wider and wider sections of Irish people. This is the first time in the history of the Irish and British Anti-Apartheid Movements that workers have gone on strike in support of the boycott against apartheid. The British AAM has re-launched the boycott campaign and these 13 women strikers have shown that it is ordinary people, oppressed people, who will make the boycott effective. These women strikers must not be betrayed - they need your solidarity now!

Donations and messages of support should be sent to: IDATU, O'Lehane House, 9 Cavendish Row, Dublin 1, Ireland

Richard Roques

Angola's propaganda war

The aim of the apartheid regime and their imperialist backers is to destroy the Angolan revolution. It is increasing its support for the counter revolutionary Unita by conniving with the arch imperialists, the United States, and by continuing the war of attrition it has waged against the people of Angola since independence in 1975. The People's Republic of Angola is also fighting a propaganda war. Angola has exposed the apartheid regime and made it absolutely clear that South Africa is the main obstruction to peace in Namibia and in the whole of Southern Africa.



Devastation at Cahama; the result of South Africa's last invasion of Angola, 1981

Angola categorically rejects the 'linkage' theory (to remove Cuban troops from Angola) which South Africa and the US claim is the paramount barrier to Namibia's independence. Proposals have been published stating that Angola is prepared to withdraw Cuban forces over a three year period, but only if South Africa accepts the four points that reaffirm the position of the Angolan people's government:

- The immediate withdrawal of South African forces occupying our territory.
- The immediate implementation of Security Council Resolution 435/78 leading to the true independence of Namibia.
- The cessation of South African aggression against Angola.
- The cessation of all logistical support for the Unita puppet bands.

These points clearly demonstrate Angola's internationalist stand with Namibia.

The publicity surrounding the proposals has angered the Pretoria regime. 'Pik' Botha (Foreign Minister) responded by saying that it had 'placed into question the Luanda government's ability to conduct serious negotiations'. The

apartheid regime has refused to accept Angola's proposals and has issued counter proposals demanding the complete withdrawal of all Cuban forces within twelve weeks. South Africa is also demanding a joint peace commission to monitor and verify the Cuban withdrawal, and that the Cubans should not be replaced by any other forces. Any communist advisors must be limited and their whereabouts and function made known to South Africa!

Since independence Angola has been fully supported by Cuba, and the Angolan proposals have been put forward in 'close co-ordination with Cuba, and at the same time the leadership of SWAPO have been informed'.

South Africa's most recent plans for Angola include 'establishing a so-called government of national unity with Unita'. Savimbi, leader of Unita, himself issued a warning last year that Unita would obstruct any attempt to find a peace settlement in Angola or Namibia if it did not include Unita. President Dos Santos has totally rejected any such suggestion, and in his new year message to the Angolan nation stated: 'We do not accept any purported government with South Africa's Unita lackeys'. He reaffirmed that 'We cannot sacrifice the

highest interests of our country and people for the benefits of imperialism.'

Unita took three Britons hostage in December 1984 after a major attack on the Cafunfo diamond mines in Lunda province. In February last year a similar attack on Cafunfo resulted in sixteen Britons being taken hostage. Reports later confirmed that British imperialism was directly involved both in their capture and their subsequent release in a blaze of publicity for Unita (see FRFI 40). Presumably Unita is trying to get the same deal again and, whereas Thatcher's response to liberation movements fighting for freedom and democracy - and even her response to the striking miners in Britain - has been to argue for 'no deals with terrorists' and no truck with violence, when it comes to pro-imperialist thugs like Unita deals are the order of the day. Britain's complicity in South Africa's illegal occupation of Namibia, the war against Angola, and its support for Unita is well established. What is more, it was recently confirmed by the British Foreign Office that the British government is supporting a proposal that the South African terror police, Koevoet, should be involved in policing independence elections in Namibia.

Unita's terrorism is affecting thousands of Angolans who are already suffering from the effects of drought. Relief supplies have been disrupted by Unita, and food is having to be flown to some areas. Unita's devastation has reached a stage where the United Nations Disaster Relief Office launched an international appeal for emergency aid.

President Dos Santos, speaking recently at the MPLA's policy making conference in Luanda denounced South Africa's continued occupation of Southern Angola and the attempts to 'liquidate the Mozambican revolution'. He also said that South Africa, by using Unita, had struck deeper into Angola. He said there was 'no longer any doubt that the vast plan of aggression and destabilisation was only possible because of the connivance of certain western countries'. The imperialist nations are conspiring to ensure that their ally, apartheid South Africa, maintains and strengthens its hold over Southern Africa. Progressive forces in Britain must join the side of Angola, SWAPO and the Cuban people in their struggle for freedom and justice and in the fight against apartheid.

Nomsa Langa

Defend the Embassy picket

continued from page 1

ual AAM members' convenience which local group they should work in. I also refuted the assertion that it organised nationally and explained that it had no constitutional right to propose the dissolution of the SAEPC which is a separate body.

In its latest letter, the Executive concludes that City Group has failed to give any of the assurances asked for, that it is not functioning as a local group of the AAM and is therefore in breach of the constitution in that it is 'clearly working against the interests of the movement by presenting itself as such a group'. There is no reply to any of the points made by City Group in their letter.

This mish-mash of bureaucratic invention is intended to hide the real political issues and destroy the political trend in the movement which stands for direct action. Yes, there are different political trends in the movement - it would be more surprising if there were not. The trend represented by the Executive wants to reform imperialism - in this case to pressurise the British government to change its policy on apartheid. In fact imperialist policy on South Africa is not a choice - support for apartheid is a necessity if imperialism is to survive. For evidence we need look no further than the Labour Party. Out of office it swings left to an anti-apartheid position. Once in power it is barely dis-

tinguishable from the Tories. The AAM must be well aware of this, since the perfidious dealings of several Labour governments over the last 25 years still reek in our nostrils.

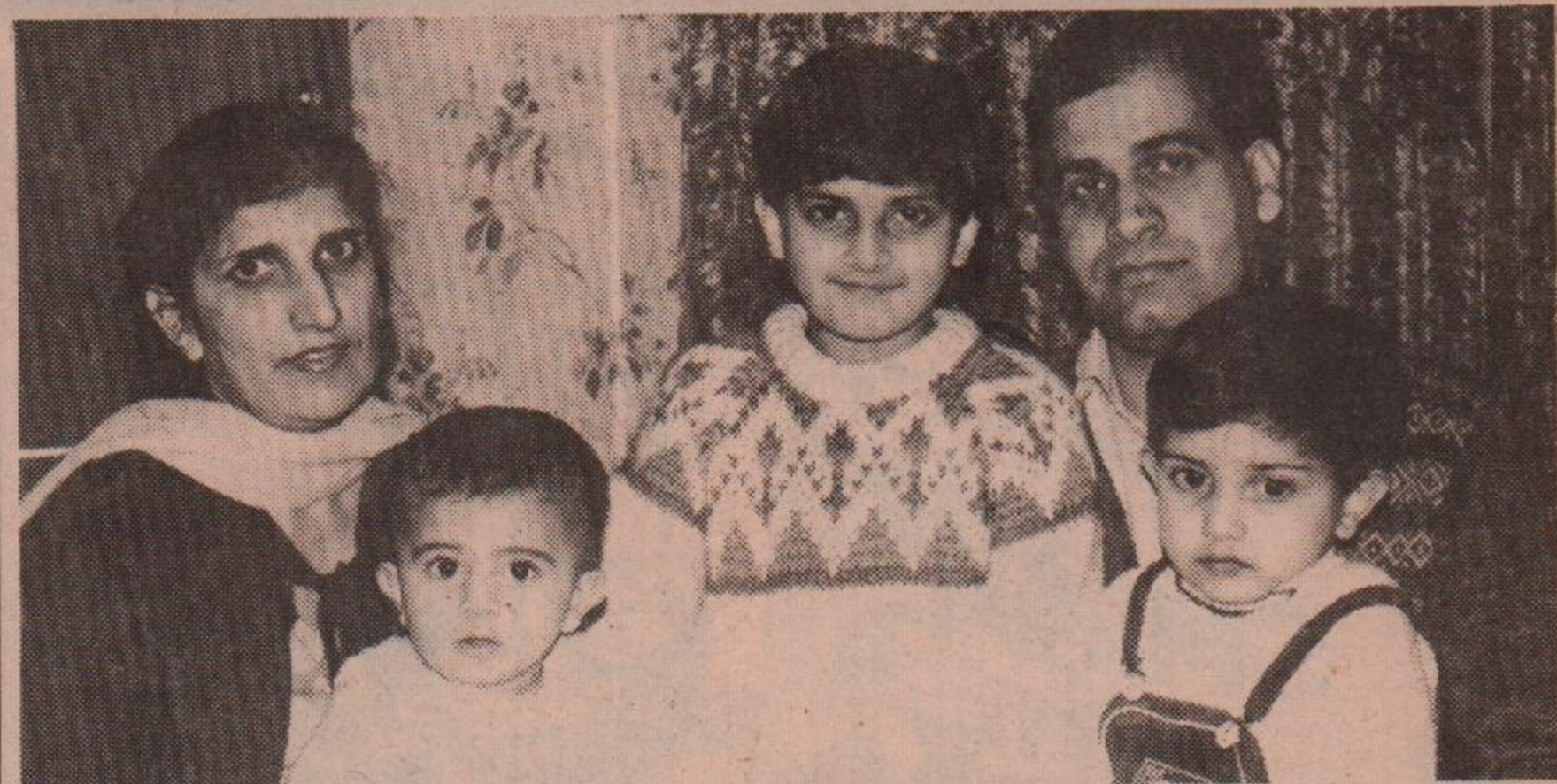
The trend represented by City Group sees a different way forward - mobilising working class and oppressed people to act themselves in solidarity with the oppressed in South Africa because they have a common enemy - imperialism. City Group has ably demonstrated that there is untapped support for the anti-apartheid struggle from broad sections of people in Britain, old and young, black and white - all that is needed is lively, militant activity. It is because of such activity - especially the Friday night pickets - and because of its uncompromising attitude to state and police collaboration with apartheid, that City Group activities have received considerable press coverage and widespread support. It is also because of this that City Group has incurred the Executive's wrath.

The AAM leadership will not come out into the open and say that City Group is threatened with expulsion for supporting the striking miners, or anti-racist and anti-imperialist struggles, although all these are constantly rumoured and gossiped about. The Executive will not openly state that its political differences with the RCG add virulence to its attacks, but prefers to invent its own

'Group Areas Act' and deal in rules and regulations.

RCG supporters have played a central role in City Group ever since its formation 3 years ago. We are proud of our political standpoint and openly, democratically argue our viewpoint at City Group meetings. It is because City Group is an open, democratic body that it has been so successful. The same openness cannot be attributed to the Executive. Whilst pretending to be politically unaligned and neutral, the majority of the Executive is in fact politically aligned to the Kinnock wing of the Labour Party and, interestingly, to the Morning Star wing of the CPGB. It is ironic that, at the same time as the CPGB is being torn apart, with accusations of undemocratic behaviour, bureaucratic manoeuvres and unjustified expulsions, the AAM Executive is fostering just such a split in the AAM. And the Kinnock wing of the Labour Party is, of course, well practised in the art of witch-hunting the left.

Over the last three years City Group activities have won many supporters for the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Whatever the outcome of this dispute, anti-imperialist activities will continue to win British people to the side of the oppressed in South Africa. It will be the greatest political tragedy if as a result of the AAM Executive's manoeuvres this cannot be done within a united anti-apartheid movement.



The Aslam family threatened with deportation. This is a particularly vicious attack as Mrs Aslam's parents, both in Britain, are severely ill and dependent on her.

Fees demanded for entry certificates

The beginning of 1985 saw yet another callous attack on Britain's immigrant communities and their relatives. As of 1 January applicants for entry clearance to the UK are being charged £10 for entry certificates. This charge seriously impedes Commonwealth citizens' rights to family life by providing a financial obstacle to family reunion - and makes a mockery of the government's persistent but totally unfounded claim that it operates a 'fair' immigration policy.

Announced ironically by Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe during the debate on overseas aid on 22 November 1984, this racist measure is designed to raise £1.5 million. It is typical of this government's approach to matters of immigration and nationality that there was no prior consultation whatsoever before the fee was announced, nor any debate in Parliament before it was implemented.

The fee was introduced by statutory instrument under the Consular Fees Act 1980 as the Consular Fees (Amendment No 3) Order on 19 December 1984. Conveniently for the government the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments (which would normally have considered such an order) met for the last time before Christmas on 18 December - the

day before the order was made. And under the parent statute - the Consular Fees Act - provision exists neither for parliamentary approval nor for annulment under the 'prayer' procedure.

While in line with Tory philosophy, the imposition of this fee is a disgraceful and shameful attack on the statutory rights of those least able to afford it. £10 represents about 30% of the average annual income of a family in rural Bangladesh - and it will surely only be a matter of time before this fee is increased to the astronomical level of fees currently charged for citizenship. This policy cannot and must not go unchallenged. The exercise of democratic rights must never be linked to an ability to pay.

David Prentice

Ealing LP demands black candidate

Black members of Ealing/Southall Constituency Labour Party are campaigning to replace Sidney Bidwell, the current MP, with a black candidate for the next general election. The constituency has a large black population whose massive Labour vote has guaranteed Bidwell's seat for 19 years. Some Labour Party wards, such as Northcote, Mount Pleasant and Glebe, have a majority of black members. In return for this support, the black leadership is demanding a black candidate for the next election.

This seems reasonable given the Labour Party has consistently used black people as no more than voting fodder and reneged on every anti-racist declaration made in the past. Not so for Bidwell. It should be recalled that, despite his un-called for left-wing and anti-racist reputation, this man supported immigration controls and put his name to a report that became a forerunner of the Nationality Act. He is organising a rear-guard racist action to prevent the CLP unseating him. Besides accusing the black dominated wards of malpractice, he is engaging in well worn bureaucratic manoeuvres. The reselection vote is scheduled after elections to the new General Management Committee. Bidwell has appealed to Labour's NEC to bring them forward so that the vote takes place while the old, and white dominated, GMC is still sitting.

Bidwell's fight has revealed him not as a representative of the working class or black people, but of white racists and a section of the local Asian petit-bourgeoisie. Speaking to the Southall Gazette he explained:

'I decided to stand again to prevent the seat being lost. Most of those Asian businessmen won't vote Labour when I am gone and people in the other half of the constituency won't vote for an Asian candidate.'

This is the voice of the Labour Party as a

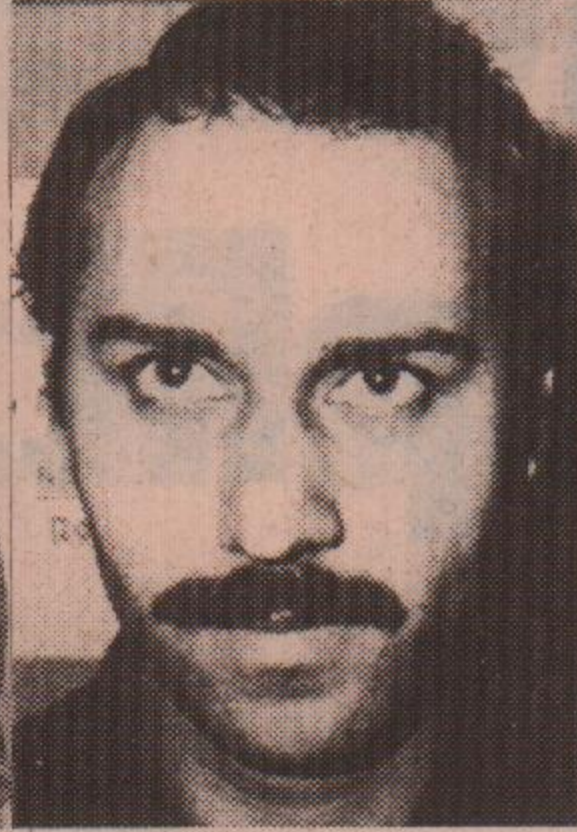
whole. In other areas with large black communities, activists campaigning to select black candidates are meeting the same racist response. In Warley East, for example, Andrew Faulds MP, denounced them as 'lunatics'.

Black Labour Party activists have every right to fight for the selection of black candidates. However, even if selected and even if a few win any Parliamentary seats, it will change neither the fortunes of black people nor the Labour Party itself. The latter's racist record proves it to be dominated by the most reactionary and opportunist section of the working class which has no interest in opposing racism or giving black people democratic representation. Only last year the Party's annual conference voted against a motion for black sections and past conferences have repeatedly voted against a call to end all immigration controls. Whatever 'victories' gained by black members in the Labour Party, the benefits will fall only to a tiny section. For the majority, racism, police harassment, racist attacks and deportations will remain the order of the day. And the Labour Party will, as it does today, look on indifferently until it gets to power... and then it itself will, as it has done in the past, organise the attacks.

Eddie Abrahams



Manda Kunda and her children



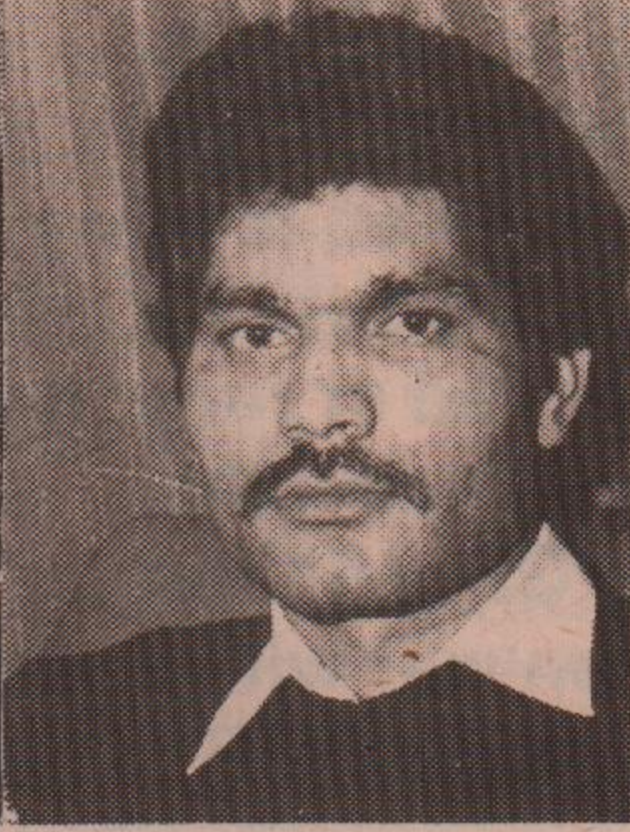
Masoom Ali Shah



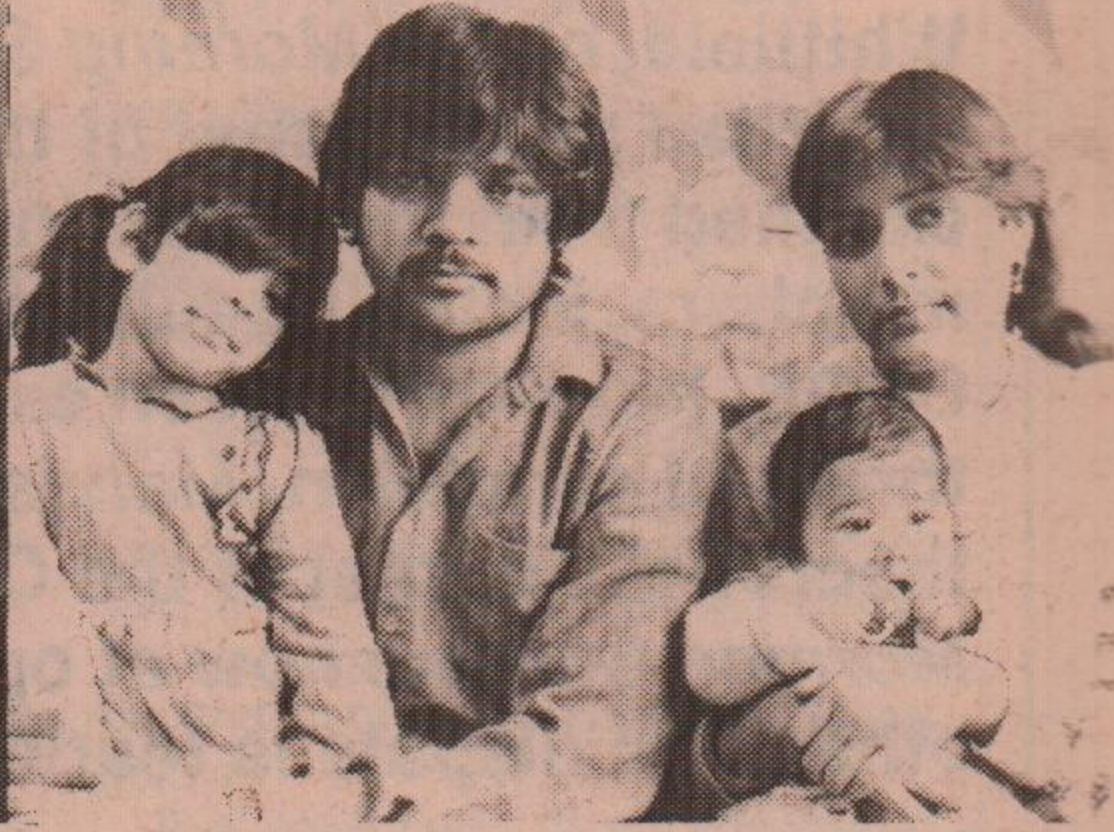
Nigat Butt



Manzura Bibi



Kamal Kumar



Rosmina and her family

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT DEPORTATIONS!

Manchester campaigns against deportation

continued from page 1

More deportations threatened in Manchester

Manda Kunda is one of the latest victims of Britain's immigration controls. She left her husband because of the violence he inflicted on her and her 3 children. Taking advantage of her plight, the Home Office is now threatening to withdraw Manda's visa mid-term and send her to Zambia. There she would find herself without support and in great danger. Under Zambian law, custody of her children would pass to her husband's parents, and without his permission she would not be allowed to work. Manda's is not the only case. Masoom Ali Shah came to Britain last August to do an OND in computer science. Even though his place at Salford Tech was confirmed and he had enough financial support, immigration officials ruled that he was not a genuine student and would probably abscond at the end of his term! On 15 November, he received an order giving him 3 days to leave the country. Students and legal representatives managed to get a 'stay of execution' pending a



Viraj Mendis, FRFI supporter, is under threat of being deported to Sri Lanka where he could face possible imprisonment for his support for the oppressed Tamil people. The VMDC is committed to united action and is mobilising fully for the 23 March demonstration.

court hearing. But the court ruled that he does not even have the right to appeal for a visa. Despite his 100% attendance at college and nothing but praise from his lecturers, the racist Home Office is trying to deport him on no more than speculation. So much for justice!

Racist and sexist attacks in Manchester

British immigration laws are sexist as well as racist. And the Home Office is using them to full effect denying virtually all fiancés the right to enter the country. Rosmina Banu Rander's case

shows the Nationality Act in action. She has a British passport and has been granted residency. Yet under the Act she is not a 'proper' British citizen, but a 'British overseas citizen' which means that Mohammed Azhar, her husband, can be deported. On Sunday 5 November immigration officials knocked on her door at 8.00am and three of them barged past and ran to the bedroom to see if Mohammed and Rosmina had slept together! This January it happened again - this time with 2 officials.

Even if a woman has full 'British citizenship' she can still be prevented from bringing her husband to Britain as in the cases of Nigat Butt and Manzura Bibi. The Home Office has to be satisfied that the marriage is not 'primarily for immigration purposes'. Nigat is a British citizen and was engaged to Tariq Mahmood in 1979. However, Tariq was refused entry to Britain on the grounds that his 'primary intent' in wishing to come to Britain was not his marriage! In 1984 Nigat visited Tariq to put in a fresh application. It will take at least another year to be considered. Manzura Bibi was actually born in Britain and has lived here all her life. In 1982 she went to Pakistan where she met and married Abdullah Shah. Abdullah applied to come to Britain. A year later they were both interviewed in different countries. He was refused on the grounds that his 'primary intent' was not marriage.

Resistance - Aslam Family Defence Campaign

Whilst Home Office attacks multiply, the scale of opposition is rapidly increasing with new campaigns being formed to take on the fight against deportations and for uniting families.

The Aslam Family Defence Campaign

(see FRFI 45) following its successful public meeting and demonstration in December is consolidating its firm roots in the Longsight community in Manchester. In just 10 weeks 8,000 people have signed the petition demanding the right of the Aslam family to stay. The government's perverse laws say that Adil Jamal, the youngest child, must leave together with his parents. Whereas Sabine and Leila have a right to stay! With the enthusiastic Asian youth playing a central role, the Aslam family can win.

ASLAM FAMILY DEFENCE CAMPAIGN SOCIAL!

7.30pm, Saturday 16 February, Longsight Youth and Community Centre, Stockport Road (near Plymouth Grove Junction), Manchester. **MUSIC, FOOD AND BREAK DANCE COMPETITION**

Manchester demonstration and rally

The only thing the Home Office will listen to is organised mass political force. On a scale never seen before, the people featured above along with the RCG and other organisations are fighting against the racist immigration laws. Unity is being formed in the struggle. In Manchester the campaigns have come together with Manchester City Council to call a joint demonstration and rally on **SATURDAY 23 MARCH** under the slogans 'FIGHT DEPORTATIONS! UNITE FAMILIES! FIGHT RACISM!' RCG supporters in Manchester and other areas are mobilising to get people to attend this important event. We urge all readers to do the same.

Chris Fraser and Viraj Mendis

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION AND RALLY

Fight Deportations! Unite Families! Fight Racism!
Saturday 23 March 1985
Manchester

Assemble: 12.30 at All Saints, Oxford Road, Manchester
Rally at 2.15, Town Hall, Albert Square

Activities all afternoon and evening at the Town Hall - films, videos, theatre, displays, speeches etc.

MANCHESTER ANTI-IMMIGRATION CONTROL CAMPAIGNS

Kamal Kumar Defence Campaign
c/o 443 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester 8. Phone (061) 740-0577 (10am - 6pm)

Manda Kunda Defence Campaign
c/o Abraham Moss Centre, Crescent Road, Crumpsall, Manchester M8 6UF

Masoom Ali Shah
c/o MANUS, 78 Waterloo Place, Oxford Road, Manchester. Phone (061) 273-5947

Aslam Family Defence Campaign
c/o St John's Rectory, St John's Road, Longsight, Manchester

Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign
c/o Box 38, 434 Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN

Nigat, Rosmina and Manzura
The Manchester Immigration Wives and Fiancées Campaign,
593 Stockport Road, Manchester 12. Phone (061) 225-5111

To contact FRFI in Manchester write to FRFI Box 38, 434 Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN.

St Pauls

Following the 1980 uprising in St Pauls, Bristol, Avon County Council drew up plans with the St Pauls Community Association for a Centre. This was to be the Council's sop to the black community denied adequate social and welfare facilities. The Centre would provide sports and music facilities, practice rooms, space for children's and adult's classes, workshops, a library, a creche, a kitchen and a bar.

The building was completed in December, and it looks good - until you go inside. It consists simply of a bare hall with two storerooms and a crypt. There are no changing rooms for sports and the sportshall is covered in kitchen tiles! The hall, sound-proofed to allow music to be played, also has an 8 second echo. The crypt has cracks in the floor already and has flooded with inches of water.

The community is furious and the Association has refused to take the building over. The Centre cost £550,000 and another £100,000 is required to put it right. Avon Council is refusing to release the money, and its treasurer, trying to cover up the whole shoddy affair, said that the Centre was the second or third best community building in the County. Calls have gone out for a government enquiry and the Association Chairman has called for a public investigation. Meanwhile on the streets there is talk of taking the building apart brick by brick.
Lynn



Anti-racists say Honeyford out!

'Cultural enrichment is an approved term for the West Indian's right to create an ear-splitting cacophony for most of the night to the detriment of his neighbour's sanity, or for the Notting Hill Festival whose success or failure is judged by the level of street crime which accompanies it.'

National Front? No, these blatantly racist views belong to Bradford headmaster Ray Honeyford of Drummond Road Middle School where 86% of pupils are black. Honeyford's racism first publicly appeared in an article on education published in the extreme right-wing journal *Salisbury Review* early last year.

Honeyford states that the 'roots of black educational failure are located in West Indian family structures and values' and also in 'the work of misguided radical teachers'. He also 'warns' of white children becoming an 'ethnic minority' in many inner city schools and concludes that:

'It is no more than common sense that if a school contains a disproportionate number of children for whom English is a second language (true of all Asian children, even those born here), or children from homes where educational ambition and the values to support it are conspicuously absent (ie the vast majority of West Indian homes, a disproportionate number of which are fatherless) then academic standards are bound to suffer.'

Honeyford's racist views not only show hatred and contempt for black people, but also lead him to openly discriminate against black pupils at his school. Asian pupils have been refused re-entry to the school after trips abroad while white pupils have been re-admitted. The right of Asian girls to wear tracksuits for physical education has been denied, and one black pupil was denied the signature essential to get his passport renewed.

Aware of the need to protect their children's welfare and education, parents organised the Drummond Parents Action Committee to campaign publicly for Honeyford's removal from the school. On 11 June 1984 the committee

organised a protest strike where 70% of the pupils at Drummond did not report for school on that day, reflecting the depth of feeling among the pupils against Honeyford. 30 November saw 200-strong militant demonstration of pupils, parents and supporters demanding 'Honeyford OUT!'

Following the demonstration, a large meeting was held in the council chamber with Director of Education Richard Knight, where pupils and parents put across their grievances against Honeyford and their determination to continue the fight. As one Asian ten-year-old told FRFI:

'We are all here to sack Honeyford. Well it has been so long... but we will go on fighting and demonstrating against him until he has been sacked.'

The Drummond Parents Action Committee are fighting a long battle to rid their school of racists. *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* urges all readers to give them your full support by writing and demanding Honeyford's dismissal to: Richard Knight, Director of Education, Directorate of Educational Services, Provincial House, Bradford BD1 1NP, West Yorkshire.

Donations and messages of support can be sent to: DPAC, c/o Jenny Woodward, 40 St Paul's Road, Bradford BD8 7LP, West Yorkshire.

Sandra Collins and John Stephenson

The crisis of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) has reached the point where the editor, Tony Chater, and assistant editor, David Whitfield, of the *Morning Star* – normally regarded as the paper of the CPGB – have been expelled from the Party. In addition leading members, including full-time workers for the CPGB, have either been expelled or face the threat of expulsion. *Marxism Today*, the theoretical journal of the CPGB, and the *Morning Star* are now at open war with each other. The dispute is tearing the CPGB in two.

Both sides accuse the other of abandoning *The British Road to Socialism* – the 1977 programme of the CPGB. On the one side founder members of the CPGB, Page Arnot and Rothstein, speaking for the *Morning Star*, state that:

‘... major articles in *Marxism Today*, directly controlled as a theoretical and discussion organ by the executive committee of our Party, flout the basic principles of the programme with constant revisionist propaganda...’

(*Morning Star* 4 January 1985)

On the other side the Executive Committee of the CPGB talk of the:

‘narrow and sectarian attitude of a section of members of the Communist Party and their essential opposition to the *British Road to Socialism*’

(*Focus* 17 January 1985)

A split in the working class movement

Given that both sides swear allegiance to the same programme, why has this dispute erupted with such fury? To answer this we must briefly look at the economic and political reality which has brought this long simmering conflict to the boil.

In an editorial our paper *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!*, written a few months after the re-election of the Thatcher government, we explain this reality and its consequences for British socialist organisations:

‘The growing economic crisis of British imperialism threatens the alliance that has tied the organised working class to the capitalist system in Britain. The attack on living standards, the growing unemployment and poverty is eroding the material conditions that have consolidated the political hold the labour aristocracy has over the whole working class. This process, while still in its early stages, has nevertheless led to a developing crisis within the Labour Party and trade union movement. This in turn has had its impact on the more radical elements of the new middle class – white collar, professional and technical

workers – and therefore on the British socialist organisations which draw their membership from such groups. Finally the more oppressed sections of the working class are increasingly demonstrating their independence from the traditional organisations of the working class. They have little faith and few ties to the organised trade union movement. Many not only did not vote Labour in the last election but large sections from among them did not vote at all. A growing split in the British working class is taking place. Socialists will now be judged by the side they take in what will be a growing and increasingly significant conflict of interests.’

(*FRFI* 33, October 1983)

Since this was written the miners’ strike has decisively confirmed our assessment. The split in the working class has grown ever more open as the irreconcilable divisions in the NUM and mining communities, between the striking miners and the scabs, have been mirrored throughout the Labour and trade union movement as workers have been forced to take sides.

A shift to the right – Eurocommunists

The Eurocommunist wing of the CPGB has recognised that there is a severe crisis within the traditional Labour movement. As Jon Bloomfield, leading Eurocommunist, writes in *Marxism Today*:

‘This crisis, cautiously spotlighted in the discussions of the late 1970s around Eric Hobsbawm’s article ‘The Forward March of Labour Halted?’, has accelerated with the recession and the political onslaught of Thatcherism. The question mark of the initial article has become redundant. Thus while the present truce to Labour’s internal struggles and the election of a charismatic leader are important, to overcome the broader crisis will require a more drastic, thoroughgoing process of renewal.’ (April 1984)

The main feature of the Eurocommunist standpoint is that support for the Labour Party has been in long term decline as

At the end of the The Split in the CPGB Great Britain

a result of the changing composition of the workforce, and the Labour Party’s failure to adjust to this change. In particular the Eurocommunists point to the decline of manual workers (skilled and unskilled) as a proportion of the workforce and the rapid growth of white-collar and professional workers. In ‘The Forward March of Labour Halted?’ (*Marxism Today* September 1978) Hobsbawm even speaks of a ‘new’ labour aristocracy of white collar, technical and professional workers which identified with the middle class. While these layers have increasingly been unionised since the Second World War they do not identify automatically with the Labour Party.

The most coherent explanation of the Labour Party’s defeat argued in *Marxism Today* comes from Andrew Gamble. With the electoral base of Labourism in long term decline and the failure of the 1964-70 Wilson government to implement its modernisation programme, Gamble argues that Labour came to be seen as:

‘the party of high taxes, controls, and bureaucracy ... identified ... ever more closely with the defence of the public sector and with the bureaucracies of the nationalised industries and the trade unions.’

As a result, the support for Labour has become disproportionately concentrated amongst ‘public sector employees, consumers of collective services and council tenants’. With large numbers of skilled workers moving away from Labour to the SDP/Liberal Alliance or Tories this support cannot grow. Gamble concludes that:

‘Labour has been retreating from being the party of the working class as a whole to being the party of particular parts of it’

(*Marxism Today* July 1983)

According to this analysis Thatcherism has not only accelerated the decline of the traditional working class through de-industrialisation and mass unemployment but has also won support through a populist appeal.

‘she has sought to speak directly to a working class audience on the side of the people against the bureaucracies of the trade unions, the nationalised industries, and the welfare state.’

(Gamble)

So while the immediate reason for the scale of Labour’s 1983 defeat lay in the split in Labour’s ranks with the formation of the SDP/Liberal Alliance and the incompetence of Labour’s leadership under Michael Foot, the fundamental reason was the long term decline of Labour’s support and the revival of a populist conservatism under Thatcher. The Eurocommunists’ solution to this crisis demands the creation of a broad anti-Thatcher alliance spreading way beyond Labour’s traditional support. Hence the left must ‘shift to the right’ in response to what they regard as a general political move to the right in British politics.

Crisis? What crisis? – the Opposition

The opposition is a coalition of anti-Eurocommunists now organised around the *Morning Star*. It has responded to the political arguments of the Eurocommunists by denying that there is any severe political crisis in the Labour and trade union movement. So Fine and others in *Class Politics an Answer to its Critics* write:

‘we fundamentally disagree with the thesis of a great shift to the right ...’

(page 1)

They claim that ‘the failure of the labour movement’ is ‘largely mythical’ (page 2). And that ‘there has been a strengthening and leftward shift in the union movement, although this is far from even’ (page 33). In their conclusion they say:

‘We recognise a considerable strengthening, unity and militancy in the workforce as organised in trade unions at the point of production. This has not been reflected electorally in the fortunes of the Labour Party with the renewal of the Tory Government and the rise of the SDP. It has revealed the extent to which the Labour Party is out of touch with and has failed to respond to developments in the trade union movement except in the negative sense of attempting to contain them ...’ (pages 62/3)

So while the Eurocommunists claim that the Labour Party has lost support because it is too left-wing, the opposition, in common with the Trotskyist left, claim it has lost support because it is too right-wing. For the opposition the traditional, industrial, trade-union organised workers remain the focus of the class struggle and nothing has occurred to alter this. Tony Chater claims that:

‘The miners’ strike is daily confirming one of the most basic principles in the Communist Party’s programme ... namely, the recognition of the leading role of the organised working class and, in particular, its industrial core in the broad democratic alliance of forces, ranged against capitalist exploitation.’

(*Morning Star* 20 October 1984)

The deep polarisation in the working class, the split in the NUM’s own ranks and the widespread scabbing by major sections of the trade union movement simply pass them by. Indeed to sustain this position the *Morning Star* is forced to lie to its readers. On 6 December, after the NUM decision to defy the courts, the TUC stated that ‘blatantly’ offering the NUM new premises, running costs and payment of wages of NUM staff ‘could not be contemplated’. The next day, the *Morning Star* carried the headline ‘TUC pledges “We will keep NUM going”’ (7 December). Need any more be said?

The British Road to Socialism

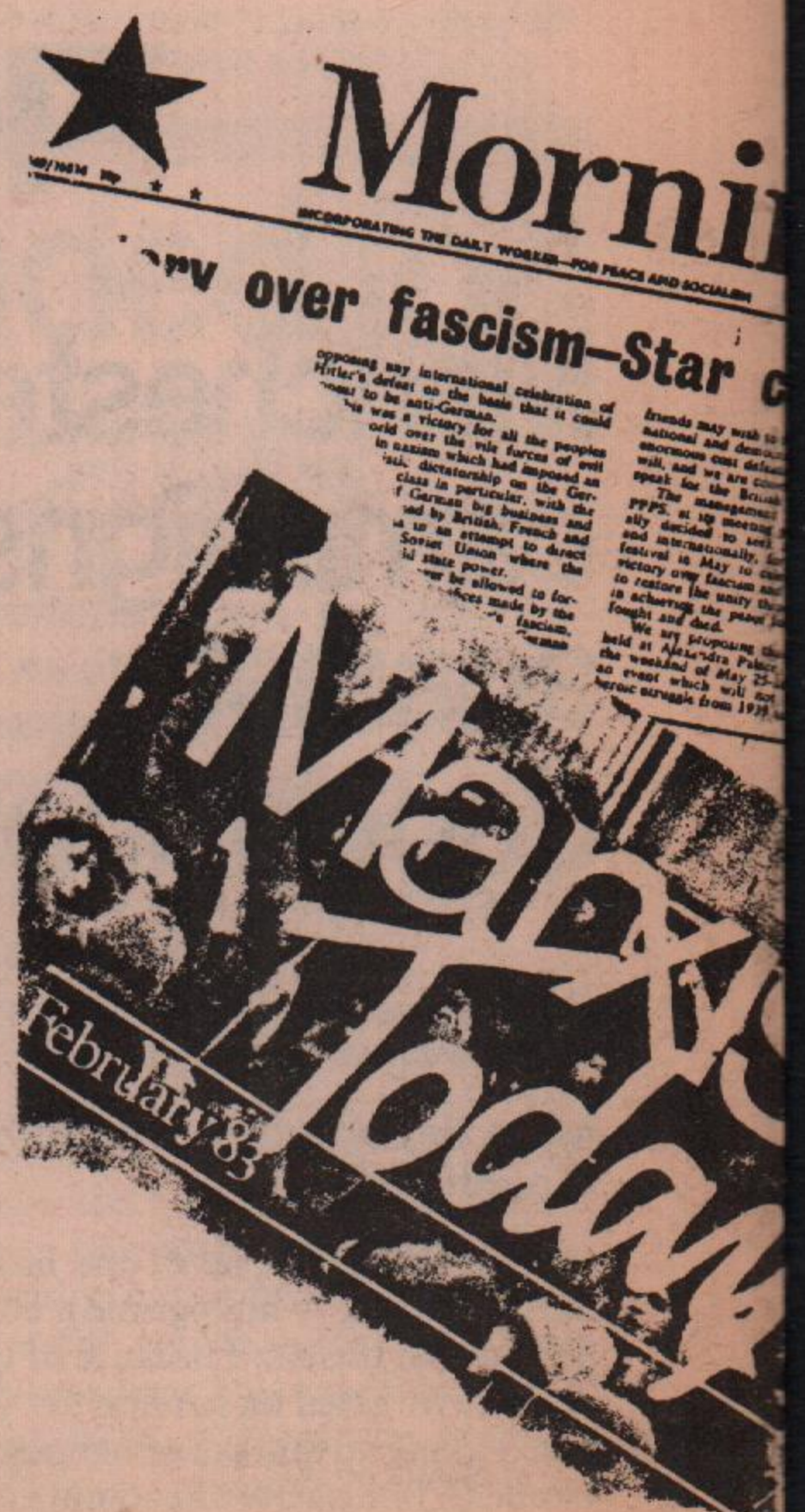
As we said above both sides claim to be putting into practice *The British Road to Socialism*. Of central importance to this programme is the electoral success of the Labour Party. As Eric Hobsbawm has argued:

‘In Britain there has been only one genuine mass party of the left, based on the working class and its movement, the Labour Party ... Like it or not, the future of socialism is through the Labour Party. This has been the basis of Communist Party policy since its programme *The British Road to Socialism* in the early 1950s, and was implicit in its policy since the middle 1930s.’

(‘Labour: Rump or Rebirth’ *Marxism Today*, March 1984)

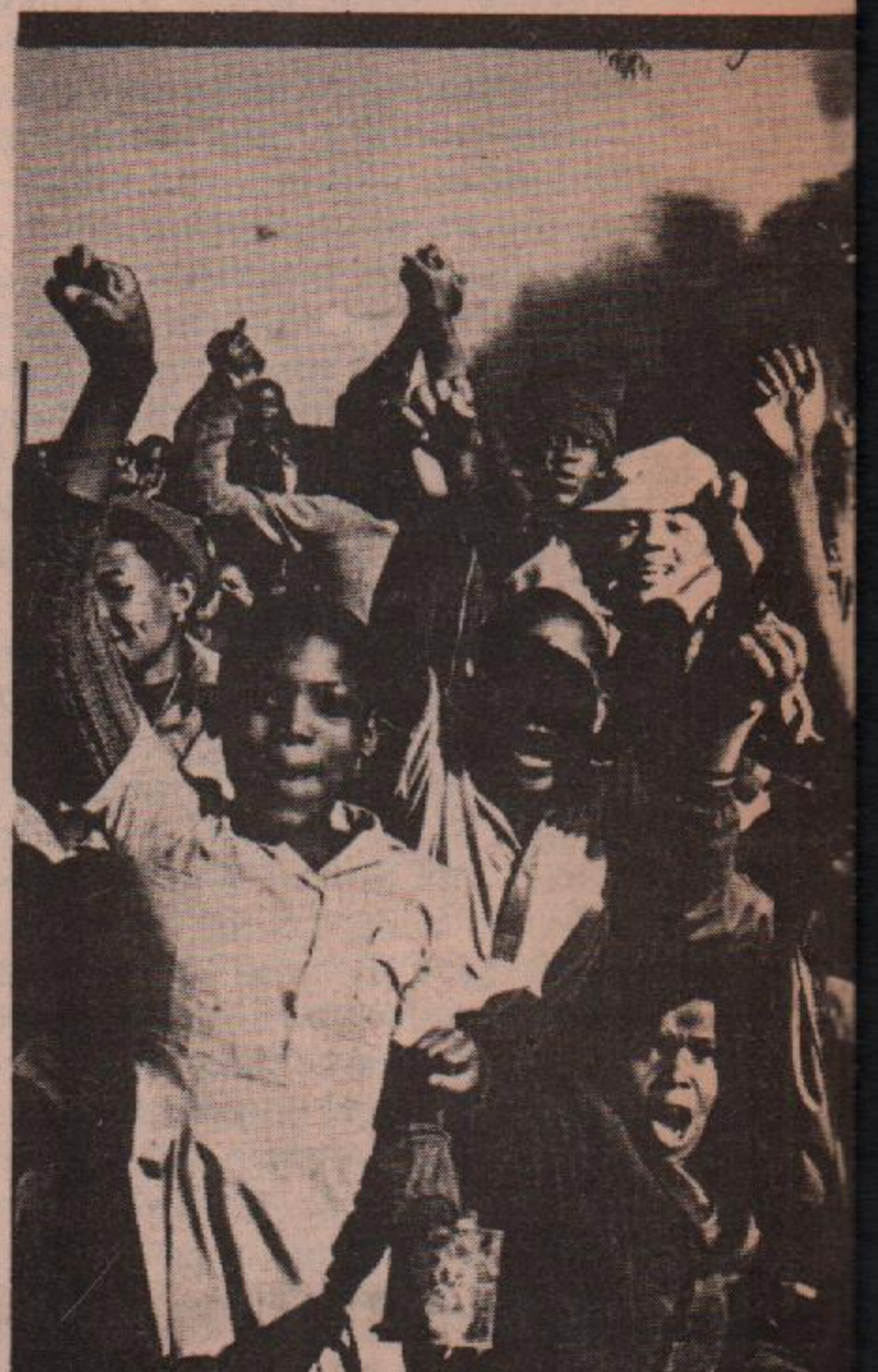
The opposition agrees about the Labour Party. It only wants a different Labour programme.

‘One of its guiding principles and conclusions is that the next General Election can be won by Labour on the



‘... And we reject any falsification of Marx, the revolution was by the side of Lenin at arms in Stalingrad; he for Resistance in Europe; he Vietnam. We see his revolutionaries in Cuba; he Black Africa; he is among bombs dropped on Beirut; he the fighters in El Salvador; a those being tortured and underground in South Am “sanctification” and dogmat oppose the insidious attempt beard and long hair of the r to turn him into some learned moderate aspirations. Marx champion of peace, democracy inseparable from the the international social

Rodney Ansmendi, First Secretary, Cer Uruguay, from *Karl Marx and Our Time Progress International Theoretical Con the Socialist Unity Party of Germ*



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The British Road to Socialism

Communist Party of Great Britain



...ectic and opportunist...
...olutionary. Marx is alive. He...
...the Smolny; he was up in...
...ged the weapons of the...
...gave strength to heroic...
...ce in Fidel's bearded...
...is teaching in the huts of...
...those under the hail of...
...sides with Nicaragua and...
...nd he lives in the hearts of...
...those who have gone...
...rica. We are against his...
...c petrification, but we also...
...pts by some to cut off the...
...volutionary Marx in order...
...mediocrity with allegedly...
...n all his breadth, Marx, the...
...acy and real humanism, is...
...rist and practitioner of...
...ist revolution ...'

...ral Committee, Communist Party of...
...The Struggle for Peace and Social...
...ference of the Central Committee of...
...ny; Berlin, 11 to 16 April 1983



basis of a manifesto of left-wing policies covering economic and social issues.'
(Class Politics... page 1)

This position follows from the fundamentally revisionist standpoint of *The British Road to Socialism* in all its versions since 1951. The 1977 programme expresses its essentially middle class socialist standpoint that socialism can be achieved by parliamentary and peaceful means in imperialist Britain, without overthrowing the capitalist state. *The British Road to Socialism* claims that the:

'socialist revolution can be carried through in Britain... without civil war, by a combination of a socialist parliamentary majority and mass struggle outside parliament, ensuring a government that is determined and able to implement a socialist programme... (page 3)

'an important stage will be the election of a new kind of Labour government which will carry out a left policy to tackle the crisis and bring about far-reaching democratic changes in society, opening up the road to socialism...'

'the path to socialism in Britain is through the fullest development of democracy, ending monopoly domination, giving the people control of the economy, and transforming parliament into the democratic instrument of the will of the vast majority of the people and the sovereign body in the land... (page 4)

This pious dream, both reactionary and utopian when it was first put forward in 1977 during the last Labour government, has long since ceased to bear any relation to the reality of the deepening crisis of British imperialism and the growing split in the working class movement.

Leaving aside the pipe dreams of a Labour socialist programme and peaceful progress to socialism, the essential political strategy of *The British Road to Socialism* remains the election of a Labour government. For the Eurocommunists this demands that the Labour Party regains the lost votes of skilled workers, white collar and professional employees, and those primarily middle class forces in the CND, the existing women's movement and other so-called 'people's movements'. As Jon Bloomfield has put it:

'This requires unity within the labour movement and increased campaigning among the people to arouse popular opposition to government policies'

Their 'people' are people like them - middle class, articulate, privileged sections of what Hobsbawm used correctly to call the 'new' labour aristocracy. The unemployed, the poor, black workers, working class women do not figure in their schemes except as objects for social control and investigation. Thus their 'open, creative Marxism' ('revisionism' always describes itself as creative) demands a form of incomes policy, anti-Sovietism, opposition to more nationalisation, the need for 'constructive' law and order policies such as community policing (spying), a concern for home owners, a flexible attitude to NATO and the EEC and so on. From this standpoint Tony Benn is regarded as ultra-left for 'campaigning on an explicitly anti-capitalist basis' (Bloomfield). Bob Rowthorn concludes:

'The labour movement must become the focus of a broad anti-Thatcherite

movement involving many who are not at present Labour voters, and some who are never likely to become so... (Marxism Today September 1983)

Given the openly reactionary politics of Eurocommunism why has the CPGB leadership decided to give free rein to the Eurocommunists? The Communist Party of Great Britain has been in constant decline. Its membership in 1973 was 29,943. By 1983 this had fallen to 15,691. *Morning Star* domestic sales had fallen from 30,000 to less than 15,000 in the same period. The average Communist vote in the 1983 election reached an all time low. Hobsbawm has argued:

'... it is a historical fact that, since 1917 the Left (including notably the Marxist Left) and support for the Labour Party have tended to grow and fall together and not at each other's expense.'
(Marxism Today March 1984)

The CPGB has long ago abandoned any attempt to build a revolutionary movement in Britain and has based itself on the more privileged sections of the working class - the 'old' and 'new' labour aristocracy: the same people the Labour Party represents. When this layer moves to the right then both the Labour Party and CPGB are forced to do likewise. The task of the Eurocommunists is to destroy any obstacle to this process. For, according to this view, shared by the CPGB leadership, the revival of the Labour Party and the CPGB go hand in hand.

The opposition now centred around the *Morning Star* is an obstacle to this development. It has to be removed. Hence the expulsions, suspensions and overturning of District Congresses etc. For the opposition retains the traditional commitment to the 'old' labour aristocracy - particularly the 'left' trade union leadership. It also retains a formal adherence to class politics, class struggle, defence of the socialist countries, and the need for a party based on the working class. Unfortunately the opposition also remains wedded to the revisionist, anti-Marxist, *British Road to Socialism*. They demand that the Labour Party do what it cannot and never could do: defend the interests of the working class against British imperialism. So they bury their heads in the sand and call for the impossible - a Labour government with a socialist programme 'opening up the road to socialism'. A position they share with most Trotskyist organisations in Britain.

As the opposition begins from fundamentally the same starting point as the Eurocommunists, *The British Road to Socialism*, its major distinguishing feature, in most people's minds, is its defence of particular socialist countries - those allied to the Soviet Union. This it calls 'proletarian internationalism'. Whilst defence of the socialist countries is a vital part of internationalism today it is not in itself enough. To be really internationalist in Britain demands first and foremost vigorous opposition to British imperialism and those opportunist defenders of British imperialism in the British labour movement. It is significant that the long struggle of the Irish people for national liberation hardly figures in the concerns of either wing of the CPGB. The opposition *Morning Star* has consistently carried virulent attacks on the IRA and is quite happy to leave its reporting on Ireland in the hands of Chris Myant, the CPGB leadership's candidate for editor of the *Mor-*

ning Star. Defence of the Soviet Union remains an empty formula unless it includes opposition to the enemies of the Soviet Union and the forging of anti-imperialist unity with those forces fighting British imperialism anywhere in the world. We would remind the opposition that the British labour aristocracy and its political party, the Labour Party, have always been hostile not only to the socialist countries but also to any liberation struggle which threatens the interests of British imperialism.

We have concentrated here on the issue of Ireland. But the same general points could be made on the question of racist oppression in Britain. The Labour Party's record on this is as reactionary as on Ireland and for the same reason. It is of little surprise, therefore, that this issue too figures hardly at all in this debate.

Both wings of the CPGB base their political programme on the interests of the more privileged section of the working class. What divides them is that the Eurocommunist wing directs itself to the 'new' privileged layers of the working class with all its middle class prejudices and hatred of communism, whilst the opposition directs itself to the 'old' traditional industrial labour aristocracy. Eurocommunism is thoroughly reactionary and hardly deserves the name socialist let alone communist. However the opposition can offer no way forward so long as it remains tied to the interest of the 'old' labour aristocracy and the cosy fantasies of *The British Road to Socialism*.

Building a communist party in Britain

To understand the political crisis of the Labour and trade union movement it is necessary to relate recent developments to the fundamental character of the British trade union movement. This movement represents the interests of the more privileged strata of the British working class. During the period of the last Thatcher government (1979-1983) this stratum held its own with a small increase in living standards. This should be compared with a substantial fall in income over the same period for those becoming unemployed and for lower paid semi-skilled manual and council manual workers (see FRFI 28). The 'political reality' of the privileged strata of the working class who hold onto their jobs begins to look quite different from that of the more oppressed strata of the working class. And this gap will widen as the Tories intensify their attack on the poor and unemployed. Little wonder, then, that those for whom the TUC speaks want to hold onto what they have and not risk it by 'unnecessary' confrontation with the Tory government. The TUC's refusal to support the striking miners and the failure of key trade unions to organise real solidarity has to be seen in this context.

The Labour Party gives organised political expression to the interests of the labour aristocracy. It attempts to further the status and position of the more privileged strata of the working class. It has never defended the poor and unemployed. In fact it has never reduced unemployment on coming into office. Its problems have arisen because those sections of well paid workers which the Labour Party represents have shifted to the right as the crisis has deepened. Terrified and threatened by any class polarisation they have voted SDP/Liberal Alliance or even Tory. They will not tolerate any shift to the Left in the Labour Party however minimal. They want things to remain as they are and will vote for the party which appears to protect their security and well-paid jobs. The Labour Party has been squeezed from the 'right'.

But more significantly it has also been squeezed from the 'left'. Many of the poor, the unemployed and the most oppressed workers not only did not vote Labour but did not bother to vote at all (see FRFI 30). These facts underline the polarisation of class forces in Britain today. There is a growing split in the working class movement between the privileged strata of the working class on the one side and the growing ranks of oppressed workers on the other. In this situation the Labour Party can only go into deep crisis. Unable to appeal to the

most oppressed it is inevitably forced to shift rightwards to try and get back to power. The Eurocommunists have seized on this last point and made it the centre of their political argument.

It is no surprise that the Labour Party under Kinnock has scabbed on the miners' strike from day one. The miners' strike far from 'confirming one of the basic principles in... "The British Road to Socialism" - namely the recognition of the leading role of the organised working class, and in particular its industrial core' (see Tony Chater above) has, in fact, confirmed the depth of the split in the working class movement. This political reality should determine the strategy of communists in the present period.

Real communists do not concentrate their work among the privileged strata of the working class but following Lenin's standpoint go 'lower and deeper, to the real masses'. In steadfastly supporting the striking miners, communists look for allies not amongst the treacherous TUC and Labour Party leadership but amongst the most oppressed sections of the working class. We turn to the unemployed, black people, Irish people, low paid workers, working class women, all fighting workers and those who have in the course of defending their democratic rights faced state repression, for example the Greenham women. These are the forces which, if organised together, will give a lead to the rest of the working class.

The truth is that the only revolutionary strategy today is to work among the most oppressed sections of the working class to build an anti-imperialist, anti-racist movement which can destroy the influence of the labour aristocracy over the working class as a whole and lead the working class forward. The conditions now exist for doing this. The crisis in the Labour Party and organised trade union movement shows this to be the case.

In 1977 in our critique of *The British Road to Socialism* we stated that the 'CPGB... has no further independent role to play in the working class movement'. (See *Revolutionary Communist* No 7). Seven and a half years of further decline and division in the CPGB have confirmed this. A real communist party remains to be built. Neither wing of this sterile split will build it. All those in and around the CPGB who are disgusted by the revisionist politics of *The British Road to Socialism* should join with us in the struggle to build an anti-imperialist, anti-racist movement in the working class as the precondition for building a real communist party.

Terry Marlowe/David Reed
January 1985

Revolutionary Communist 7

Theoretical journal of the Revolutionary Communist Group
The main article in this issue, first published in 1977, is 'Which way forward for Communists? Critique of the British Road to Socialism.' It is of relevance to anyone following the dispute and polemic in the CPGB. A comprehensive and detailed analysis of the CP's programme on imperialism, economic policy, Ireland, democracy and the state, this critique exposes the revisionist and opportunist foundations of both factions in the CP.
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The Washington Post recently devoted a full page article to the Seychelles. Under the headline 'Another Grenada' this US establishment newspaper gave its opinion, 'On the great chessboard of global strategy the Seychelles now loom as a threat to the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf to the Western industrial nations'. Our readers will recall that similarly fantastic logic preceded the US invasion and occupation of Grenada.

The Seychelles islands stand just to the south of the equator in the Indian Ocean, approximately 2,000 kilometres from the Kenyan coast and 2,500 kilometres from the southern tip of India. They were colonised in 1770 by French settlers bringing African slaves with them. These groups were later joined by Asian merchants. Along with Mauritius, Cape Colony, Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone, Trinidad, Tobago and St Lucia, the Seychelles formally passed into British hands with the 1815 Treaty of Vienna, negotiated by Lord Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington. Formal independence was granted by British imperialism in June 1976. The servile and corrupt Mancham government was overthrown a year later by Seychellois militants led by France Albert Rene. Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! prints here an article by a Seychellois comrade, and urges all democratic and revolutionary people to defend the right to self-determination of the Seychelles, particularly against US, British and South African imperialism.

SEYCHELLES

IMPERIALIST DESIGNS IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Since 5 June 1977, the Seychelles people, under the leadership of its vanguard party – the Seychelles Peoples Progressive Front – have embarked upon the construction of a socialist society. The front, under the leadership of Comrade Albert Rene, has laid the foundations of a society which aims to ensure that economic and social development provides to the fullest extent the needs of the people on the basis of equality and justice.

Today the achievements are remarkable for a country with a relatively small population, 60,000 people. The people are now enjoying a much improved way of living. The government has gone for radical social democracy. It has attacked inequality at work, in the social services and even in recreation. It has more than doubled the minimum wage and cut income inequality between the high and low paid from 1:21 to 1:8. The government has introduced guaranteed work for all and social security for the elderly, the sick, disabled and new mothers.

As part of the policy of providing every family with their own home the socialist government has prohibited anyone from owning two houses and has quadrupled new house building compared to the Mancham period. In each district a polyclinic has been built which provides high quality health care free for the first time in the country's history.

The two elite secondary schools have been closed. The new education system now offers a child nine years of compulsory education with an opportunity for further education at the National Youth Service and later 2-3 years vocational or academic training at the Seychelles polytechnic. Free education is now open to everyone.

All these accomplishments and many others are the result of the fundamental changes that came about with the revolution, above all the breaking away from the imperialist domination, the process of eliminating the rule of capitalism and creating a planned economy

based on meeting the needs of the people.

Destabilisation

In the struggle for socialism the Seychelles people have experienced problems no different from those of other countries which have opted for the socialist path of development. Since the successful overthrow of the despotic and corrupt Mancham regime, the Seychelles has been subjected to a series of threats and attempts at destabilisation and overthrow of its socialist government. At the same time this period has seen a growing escalation of military build-up by the United States of its bases in the Indian Ocean region under the pretext of a protective mission and the defence of the so-called free world. Besides, oil has been struck off the Seychelles shores and the archipelago itself is seen by the Pentagon as strategically important.

In 1979, a Belgian mercenary by the name of Alfred Lefevre was arrested in the Seychelles in connection with a plot to overthrow the government. Later in the year, Seychelles intelligence discovered that a group of 200 mercenaries had gathered in Durban, South Africa, ready for the word 'go' to launch an invasion of the Seychelles. This attempt was foiled. 50 armed mercenaries landed on Mahe Island on 25 November 1981, posing as a beer drinking club, to attempt a coup. The armed forces of the Republic crushed the mercenaries, but 44 of them hijacked an Indian airliner and flew to South Africa. Significantly,

South Africa never extradited them as the government of the Republic of the Seychelles had demanded.

Passengers of the hijacked airliner subsequently related that among the mercenaries there were citizens of South Africa, officers of the former Rhodesian army, West Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, British, United States and New Zealand. South African Defence Minister Malan admitted the involvement of their servicemen in the abortive coup attempts.

The leader of the band got only 10 years. Justice Neville James, when sentencing Mike Hoare said he had accepted the argument that Hoare was 'a dedicated anti-marxist'. So the racist judiciary regarded this as an extenuating circumstance.

The release of Mike Hoare last December as a New Year goodwill gesture by the South African authorities shows that the leader of the 'Wild Geese' gets only two and a half years for attempting to overthrow a foreign government, hijacking a plane, causing damage to an airport, illegally possessing firearms, murdering of a Seychellois soldier and the wounding of others; this is when African patriots are executed without trial only because they want equality in their own country.



Banner reads 'Long live the Seychellois Revolution', at the Independence day celebrations 5 June 1982.

Strategic designs

US imperialism has declared areas thousands of miles away from America to be spheres of their vital interests. They have dubbed the area that reaches from Morocco through the Gulf and Pakistan to be the 'Arc of Crisis'. At its extremities it extends into Turkey and out into the Indian Ocean. The controversial island of Diego Garcia, claimed by Mauritius, is the lynchpin of the US military network in the Gulf-Indian Ocean area. With an indefinite lease from Britain the US is spending close to US\$1bn beefing up Diego Garcia. It houses sophisticated satellite communications facilities and about 2,000 navy personnel. Its extended runways can handle B52 bombers and its deep water pools can service carrier fleets and nuclear submarines. More than 15 fully equipped warships are stationed at Diego Garcia.

There are growing concerns among progressive states in the region that the US, not being satisfied with the strategic development in the area, plans to install

Pershing II missiles on its bases there.

The US pretence that the military forces aim to protect oil routes is not at all true. They have, on the contrary, a fundamental objective: these bases constitute a logistic platform to carry out a policy of destabilisation of the progressive states in Africa and the Middle East, and the liquidation of the liberation movements in these areas. In this context, therefore, many progressive countries in the region like the Seychelles and countries of southern Africa are objects of permanent threats of aggression and of subversion.

In the face of these threats the young Seychelles Republic continues to struggle to safeguard its independence because it wants to be the sole master of its decisions, its form of development, its social relations and socialist philosophy in general. At the same time it believes in ties of profound and active solidarity with other peoples fighting for the same cause.

Shelton Jolicoeur

NEW CALEDONIA

VICTORY TO THE KANAKS

The insurrection against French imperialism from 18 November (see FRFI 45) onwards left the French government with the task of trying to hang on to its colony of New Caledonia against a determined drive for independence by the Kanak people.

In December President Mitterrand sent out M. Pasani as a special envoy to sort out French imperialism's problems in the colony. On 7 January Pasani published his proposals for the colony. His plans were presented as an effort to reach a compromise between two 'warring' communities. On the contrary, his proposals are an elaborate scheme for keeping New Caledonia under French domination. They include a referendum to be held in July where everyone who has been resident for at least 3 years has a right to vote. The demand of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) that only Kanaks vote in a referendum on the question of independence was rejected. Kanaks comprise 43% of the population, French settlers, Polynesians and Asians who make up the total are likely to out vote the Kanaks in a referendum. Noumea, the capital city, where the majority of the 50,000 French settlers live is to have a special self-governing status. Effectively it means partition to preserve the privileges of the loyalist French. Other proposals include French imperialist control over security, policing, foreign affairs, and further aid for up to ten years. The French also want to protect the status of French farmers on the wide western plains, by leasing back land from an eventual Kanak government thereby leaving the Kanaks to farm at subsistence level on the narrow eastern side of the island. If these

proposals are accepted by the majority the colony will become 'independent' in January 1986. But these manoeuvres are designed to protect the interests of French imperialism, the privileges of its loyal servants and keep down the oppressed Kanaks.

Reaction and repression against the independence movement

In spite of all the guarantees for their privileges, French settlers rioted in Noumea on 15 January after a 17 year old had been shot dead. Kanak homes and shops were attacked and burnt. Pasani then imposed a state of emergency with a dawn to dusk curfew. 1,000 riot police and 2 squadrons of elite paratroopers (well known for their brutality in Algeria in the 1950s) were dispatched to the colony from France.

Eloi Machoro who had organised the successful Kanak roadblocks in November and December was murdered by police marksmen on 14 January. Also murdered was Marcel Nonnaro, Machoro's comrade. Police surrounded a farm where FLNKS members were holding a meeting. Machoro was shot full in the chest whilst carrying a gun over his shoulder. The police took 39 hours to issue a statement. 37 FLNKS members arrested at the scene have since been charged with rebellion, but no

policeman has been charged with murder!

The three deaths polarised the crisis, with the loyalists considering Pasani plans as giving in to the Kanaks and undermining their privileged position. Mitterrand, fearing that the proposals would not be accepted by either side, rushed to the colony on 19 January. 20,000 settlers demonstrated on his arrival. In Australia Jean-Marie Tjibaou, FLNKS leader, answered Mitterrand by saying that Kanaks would struggle for independence to the end.

Imperialism: the same old tricks

In an editorial on the crisis in New Caledonia *The Times* wrote:

'When central government faces a violent separatist minority and a passionately unionist majority in the same territory, British minds inevitably turn to Ulster.'

The similarities are indeed worth noting: the creation of a pro-imperialist veto; a loyal privileged majority who are prepared to murder and terrorise the oppressed; troops are sent to keep 'law and order'; the use of terror against the determined resistance of the oppressed, 14 FLNKS militants have been killed; partition to defend the loyalists and the interests of imperialism; 'democracy' for the imperialists, but not for the oppressed.

For all the ballyhoo and complaints from the French settlers, the intentions of Mitterrand and his envoy are clear: to stay in the Pacific and New Caledonia. On French TV Mitterrand explained that he would take measures 'to maintain the role and strategic presence of France in this region of the world.'

Dale Evans

Sri Lanka: genocide against Tamils

The Sri Lankan regime is exposing its genocidal intent in its latest operations. The 'security zone' that has been declared by the regime which covers the Tamil populated northern province has cut off the sea from the Tamil people – many of whom depend on fish for existence – over 200,000 have been deprived of a living, over 100,000 people are facing acute starvation.

A 'West Bank' style colonisation programme was initiated some time ago. Now Sinhala people specially chosen by the regime, trained to use guns, are settled in areas from where Tamil people have been ejected. Even the houses that the Tamil people lived in were given to Sinhala racists, all with army protection. This is an attempt by the regime to destroy the very notion of an independent state, Tamil Eelam, that the Tamil people are fighting for.

Between January and October of 1984 over 32,000 Tamil plantation workers have been deported to India. Many Tamils in the North are forced to flee to India. This can only mean that the regime is intent on reducing the population of Tamil people.

President J R Jayewardene openly admits to using Israeli Mossad and British SAS experts to train the Sri Lankan

army. He has now made himself the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. Over 1,000 Tamils have been slaughtered in recent months. The Minister for National Security, Lalith Athulthudali – stated that the Tamil people in the Jaffna Peninsula should evacuate the area and take a 'holiday'. Over 80,000 people live in the Jaffna Peninsula!

The Tamil people are fighting back. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam – the major fighting force of the Tamil people – have conducted daring attacks against the occupying Sri Lankan army. On 20 January Tamil freedom fighters destroyed a train carrying army personnel, killing some 30 soldiers. Lying propaganda by the regime repeatedly announces that the Tamil fighters have suffered severe setbacks, but repeatedly the revolutionaries prove otherwise.

In Britain there have been 2 demonstrations during the last 2 months in support of the Tamil people. FRFI comrades supported both demonstrations. We urge all progressive people to support the struggle of the Tamil people and oppose British collaboration with the racist Sri Lankan regime!
Viraj Mendis

Bhopal: the suffering continues

As the death toll of the Union Carbide gas leak at Bhopal mounts so its causes and aftermath show the hypocrisy and barbarity of imperialism's 'development' of the oppressed nations. Already several thousand are dead and 200,000 people, one quarter of Bhopal's population, are affected - many will suffer long-term effects or die in the coming years.

The technical cause of the leak - a seepage of water into phosgene (the mustard gas of imperialism's first world war) - is of little consequence to the thousands of dead, maimed, bereaved or orphaned Bhopal residents.

Union Carbide, the United States' sixth largest multi-national and a major supplier of the Pentagon, has called in heavyweight legal advice and mounted a massive public relations exercise in an attempt to minimise the damage to the huge profits it draws from no less than 90 subsidiaries and affiliates outside the US - including thirteen plants in India itself. Claiming at first that the Bhopal and its West Virginia plants (both of which utilise the deadly MIC gas) were 'basically identical' Union Carbide later began to stress that 'the Bhopal plant was designed and engineered in India' - a gross exaggeration designed to weaken the basis of legal claims against itself.



Blinded by Union Carbide

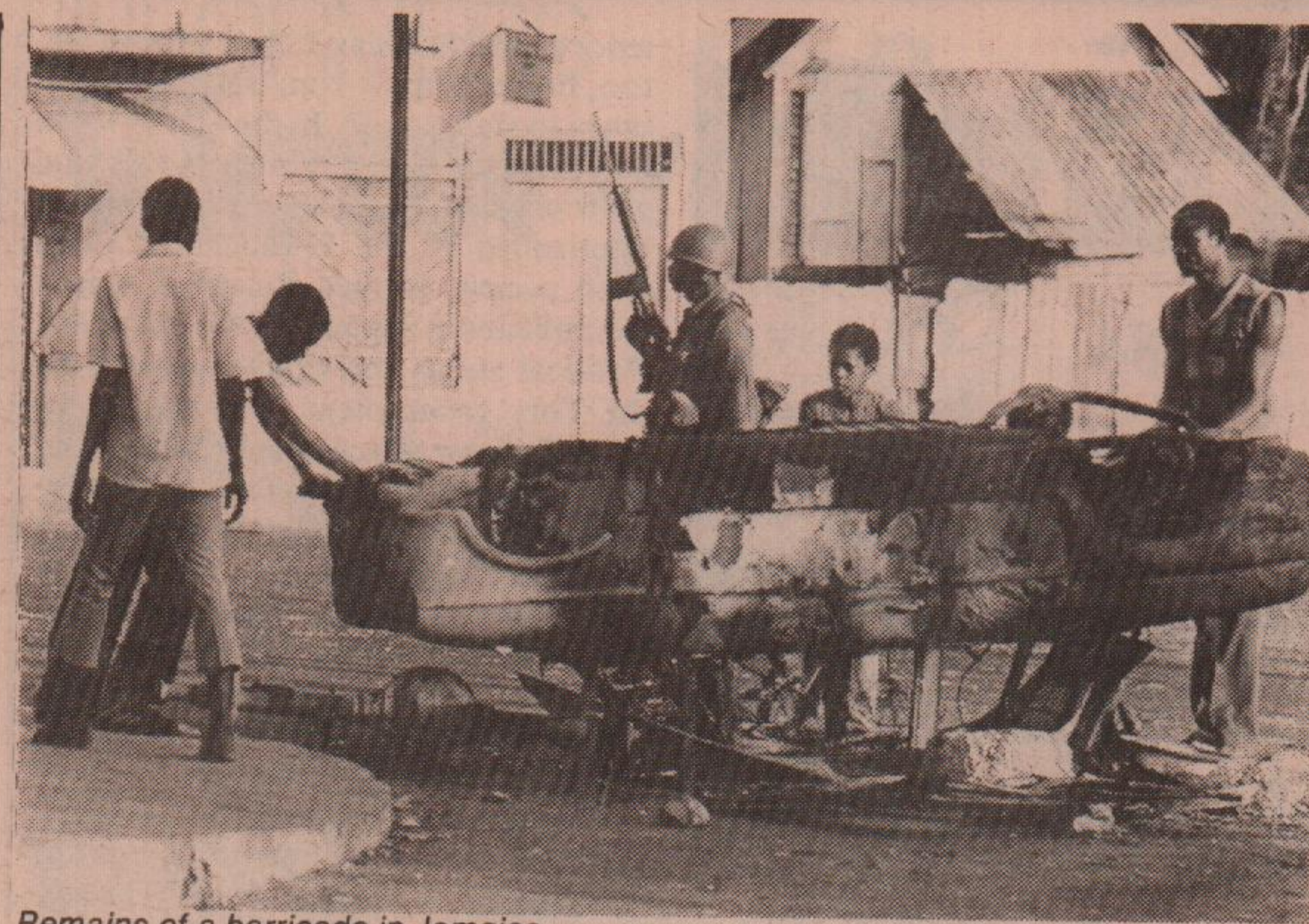
In the US plant substantial safety measures include a computerised early warning system and emergency ducts for escaping gas. Neither of these were present at the Bhopal plant where the plant's control panel did not even include a gas leakage indicator. Despite seven serious accidents at Bhopal since 1980 and a 1982 safety report indicating major violations of regulations nothing was done to prevent an inevitable accident on a major scale. Warnings in the local press were ignored as were thousands of posters printed and distributed by a local union.

None of this would have been possible without the complicity and corruption of the Indian ruling class dependant on the gleanings of imperialism's profits from such plants. Regulations barring plants within fifteen miles of population centres were ignored and the Minister of Labour for Madhya Pradesh speaking before the accident stated 'It is not a piece of stone I can pick up and place at some other location. And it is not that it is posing any danger to Bhopal or that there is any such possibility'.

So with Union Carbide's 'responsibility' stopping at the factory gate (notwithstanding the generous donation of \$2,500 to a Bhopal city park!) and without the provision of housing and transport for Bhopal workers the existing population around the plant grew unchecked.

But imperialism's 'development' of the oppressed nations does not stop with the exploitation and destruction of its workers and their families. For those who survive, a grotesque second act is just beginning. Survivors seeking compensation can choose between the 'support' offered by the same ruling class who opened the way to Union Carbide's operation and ignored the persistent warnings of danger, or the likes of Melvin Belli, a fat vulture following the trail of destruction left by US multi-nationals and who has discovered another way of exploiting misery - a huge cut of any compensation he obtains in the courts.

Brian Fox



Remains of a barricade in Jamaica

JAMAICA RISING

Seaga's government came to power in 1980 promising 'deliverance now'. Seaga had a vision of a 'new Singapore' in the Caribbean: state spending would be cut, there would be an end to protectionism and subsidies, and a thriving export-orientated private sector would spring up, trading out of tax 'freezones' and 'transshipment ports'. Capital would be drawn from around the world to bestow riches upon Jamaica. The Cuban doctors and technicians would be thrown out. Such sweet dreams have their admirers: President Reagan invited Seaga to the White House and declared a Caribbean Basin Initiative in which Jamaica was to be given millions of dollars to make the dreams come true. Mrs Thatcher, flattered by the mimicry of Seaga's monetarism, approved the new designs, and the British merchant bank Morgan Grenfell was hired to entice British firms onto the island.

Four years later the dream has soured economic chaos and social misery. and the vision dispersed to reveal true Jamaican manufacture is running at half

BRAZIL - quickening tempo of change

The world's biggest debtor, over \$100 billion, will get its first civilian president on 15 March, after twenty one years of military rule. Following demonstrations last year by millions of Brazilians demanding democratic elections and an end to debt repayments the *Financial Times* expressed imperialism's anxiety, 'It is vital that whatever sacrifices need to be taken by Brazil in order to meet its foreign obligations, be imposed by the president who enjoys the support of the broadest possible sector of the population.' Tancredo Neves, former Prime Minister and president of the state-owned Banco do Brasil, is the chosen man.

Appropriately vague on policies, Neves described his credentials thus, 'I have never made a friend from whom I could not separate, and I have never made an enemy that I could not approach.' However much he may wish to be all things to all people Neves is trapped, and will be forced to choose between the demands of the poor and oppressed masses and those of the IMF, the transnational banks and corporations.

Imperialism cannot contemplate the loss of \$100bn plus interest. The Brazilian government is in almost perpetual negotiations over credit extensions with the IMF. IMF officers sit in on ministerial meetings and on the central bank, directing the economy to yield up profits. The result has been catastrophic: forty million people plunged into dire poverty, half of all wage earners paid too little to afford adequate food and shelter, the disgusting sight of people competing with rats for nourishment on city garbage heaps. Now 224 per cent inflation threatens to spread the hunger. No wonder most of Brazil's 130 million people celebrated Neves' selection for the presidency; for although they had no direct vote, he presents himself as a step forward in the struggle against squalor and degradation.

The feet that dance the Samba

However, Neves has promised not to investigate corruption and human rights abuses by the military. This effectively guarantees the military a continuing and strong position in the state administra-

tion. To reassure their imperialist masters Neves has also pledged to maintain negotiations with the IMF and to try and form a 'social pact' between labour and employers, restricting wage increases.

But the mass of Brazilians cannot alleviate their conditions without maintaining and stepping up the struggle against the transnational banks and corporations. Eighty per cent of Brazil's debt is linked to floating interest rates; interest payments alone this year are scheduled at \$12bn; debt service payments have taken ninety per cent of export earnings. Unilever, Fords, Shell, Volkswagen, Philips are just a few of the corporations drawn to Brazilian labour. Military figures head security outfits employed by these firms to oversee the workers. Result: labour costs just seven per cent of the selling price of a passenger car! Dow Chemicals, suppliers to the US Air Force in Vietnam, practise using toxic weapons on the Amazonian forests. Result: seven thousand people dead, two unique Indian tribes wiped out! Imperialism has a lot at stake in Brazil.

The *Financial Times*, the IMF and Tancredo Neves know full well where the people will turn when today's celebrations are over: in Brazil it is written on the walls,

'O mesmo pe que danca Samba, se preciso vai a luta' (When needed, the same feet that dance the Samba will join the struggle)

Trevor Rayne

its capacity. A third of the workforce is unemployed. The Jamaican dollar has fallen from J\$1.78 to the US dollar in 1980 to J\$4.95 to the dollar today, rocketing the import bill and pricing goods out of reach. Exports have shrunk, illegal marijuana is the biggest earner leaving a huge balance of trade deficit. The foreign debt has grown from US\$1.2bn to US\$3bn and its repayments now absorb 40 per cent of government revenues. And the 'freezones' biggest customer is organised crime, shipping cocaine through from South America to the USA.

Since the major opposition parties boycotted the 1983 elections, Seaga now has what the people call a 'bogus government'. For last May's budget speech Seaga banned all public demonstrations. This January 15, Seaga announced a 21 per cent increase in fuel prices; it had been arranged with the IMF in exchange for another line of credit. Like their Caribbean neighbours in the Dominican Republic last year, the Jamaican masses took to the streets against the IMF orders. Within hours of Seaga's announcement barricades and roadblocks had been built across Kingston. Schools and offices closed, and roadblocks shut the airport down. Protest and demonstrations spread to Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, Negril, May Pen and across the island. The barricades were still manned on 16 January. Seven people were reported shot dead by the police and army. By 17 January heavy armoured vehicles patrolled the streets. However, the resistance appeared to have organised with reports of widespread sabotage operations, including the blowing up of road bridges.

The US has quadrupled its military aid to Jamaica under Seaga. Jamaican troops train alongside El Salvador's fascist army on US bases. The police are British trained. Seaga will need them and all their experience gained from occupying Grenada if he tries to cling to power.

Trevor Rayne

ISRAEL RETREATS

The mass popular resistance and armed struggle in South Lebanon, led by the Lebanese National Resistance Front (LNRF), has forced the Israeli government to announce plans for withdrawal. After 2 months of fruitless negotiations with the Lebanese government, the Israeli cabinet voted for a unilateral withdrawal. The Zionists had hoped to secure a deal formalising the rule of their lackey South Lebanon Army (SLA) in the southern border area while Unifil forces extended their control to the rest of the territory currently occupied by Israel. Under popular pressure, the Lebanese government and its Syrian patron found it impossible to sign such a surrender agreement. Israel remained with no choice. The resistance was costing it too much in lives, dollars and morale.

In the first stage of a 3 phase pullout, Israeli troops have begun retreating southwards from the Awali to the Zaharani river. While declaring its intention to complete its retreat within 9 months the army will no doubt use the intervening period to prevent the need for total withdrawal. Israel has always coveted the southern strip of Lebanon which includes the Litani river. It plans to use the coming months in a last ditch effort to transform the SLA into a competent counter-revolutionary force from the assortment of gangsters it now is. The LNRF, however, is not slackening. The SLA is being decimated. In its most sustained offensive since the 1982 invasion, the LNRF carried out over 60 operations against the Israeli army and the SLA in January.

In the areas vacated by Israeli troops, particularly Sidon, the popular resistance, united with that in West Beirut, is preparing to establish its control. It will have to face the Phalangists attempting to fill the vacuum of reaction left by the Israeli army. It will also have to deal with a Syrian regime and Lebanese government determined that the revolutionary forces do not gain victory. As in the Shouf War of September 1983 and the Beirut insurrection of February 1984, the Syrian regime will do its utmost to control and halt the progress of the revolutionary forces.

Eddie Abrahams

Operation Moses:

ISRAELI RACISM

A 'dramatic human rescue mission', an Israeli 'humanitarian triumph'. Such was the British media's perverted judgement of the airlift to Israel of nearly 10,000 famine-stricken black Ethiopian Jews - the Falashas. With £300m raised in imperialist capitals, the Israeli government, the Jewish Agency and the United Nations Children's Fund descended on Falasha communities in Tigre and Gondar provinces and in refugee camps across the border in Sudan. Many Falashas did not know where they were being taken as they were boarded onto Belgian Trans European Airline planes in what was dubbed 'Operation Moses'.

The cynical Zionist exploitation of a starving and helpless community was exposed on their arrival in Israel. The Minister for Immigrant Absorption declared that most of them would eventually be sent to the West Bank to populate Israeli military settlements built on land confiscated from Palestinians. Others will be inducted into the army. Already 40 families have been settled in Kiryat Arba overlooking the Palestinian city of Hebron. The Falashas are being used as instruments in the continued occupation and colonisation of the West Bank. Zionist ambitions face a population problem: 20,000 people a year are leaving Israel, that is, more than are settling there.

Talk of Israeli 'humanitarianism' is disgusting hypocrisy. In 1948 the Chief Rabbi of the newly founded Israeli state refused to recognise the Falashas as Jews. In 1948 there were enough whites immigrating into Palestine to occupy land from which Palestinian peasants were expelled mercilessly and ruthlessly. Only in 1972, when the pace of white immigration declined, were the Falashas deemed to be Jewish and granted the 'right of return'. 'Returning' to a land they have never been to and never had any association with, the Falashas of Ethiopia are faced with the rampant racism of Israeli society. Many whites are protesting against settling Falashas

in their towns. The Mayor of Eilat, treating them as no more than circus animals, said:

'I asked that they only send us those who know how to sing and dance, so we can set up a folklore group for the tourists.'

A 14 year old Falasha recognised the truth:

'We, the black Jews are happy that there are white Jews. I am not sure that all white Jews are happy that there are black Jews.'

Labour MP Greville Janner joined the chorus of hypocrites, describing the operation as an 'act of mercy'. Zionism is incapable of any such act. From the 1948 massacre of unarmed men, women and children at Der Yassin to the slaughter of 25,000 people in Lebanon in 1982, the history of Zionism has been one of remorseless and brutal oppression. To consolidate its reactionary settlements on the West Bank it grants the Falashas the 'right to return', while thousands of Palestinians who have lived there for generations are treated as aliens and expelled. The Falashas are being used by Zionism. When they realise this and begin to fight against the racism they confront, they too will be treated like the Palestinians.

Eddie Abrahams

'Women against pit closures' by *Barnsley Women*. Published by *Barnsley Women Against Pit Closures*. 44 pages, £1.50

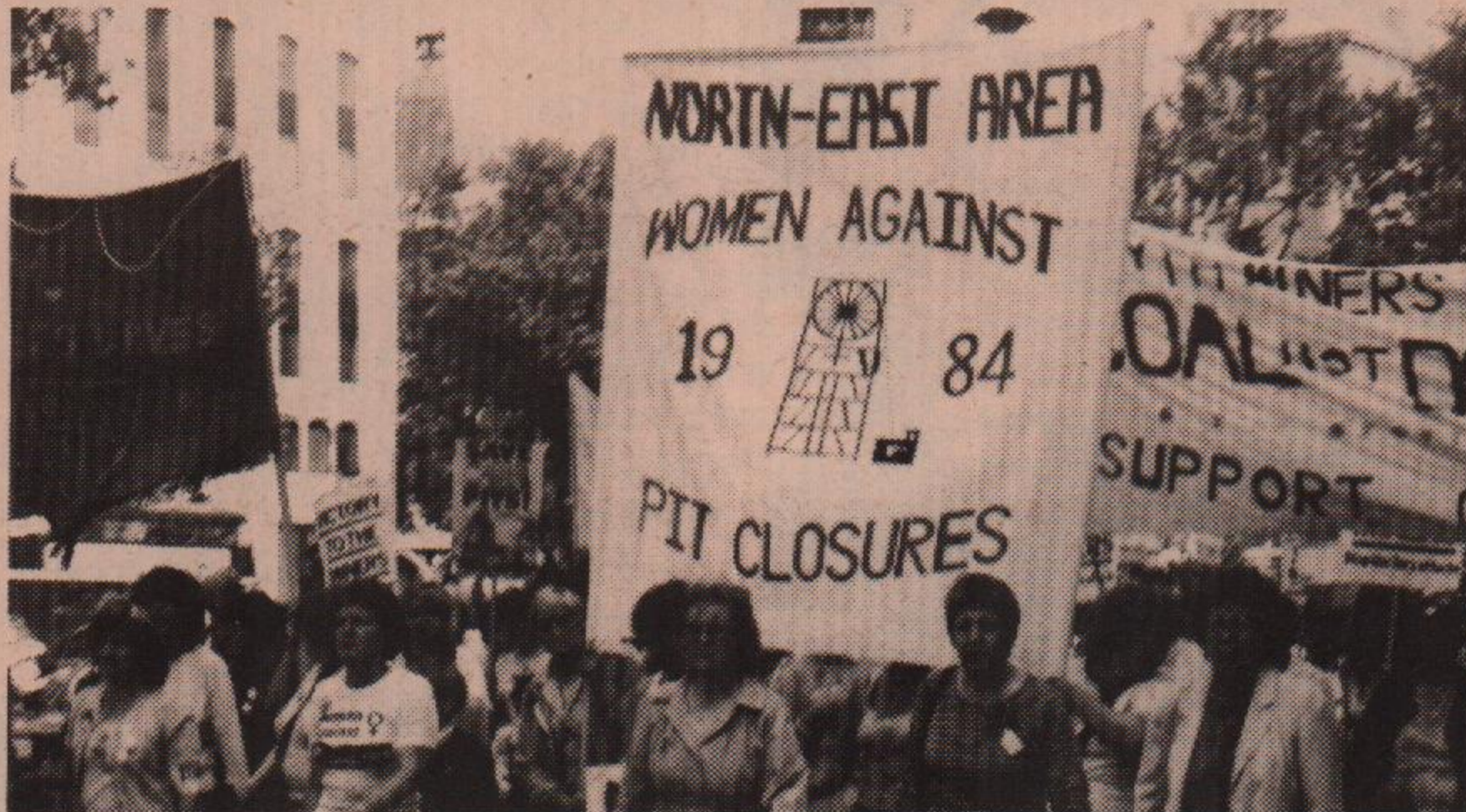
'The coaches arrived: one, two, three they kept coming—thirty and then forty, thousands and thousands of women from all over the country. And they were as determined as us—and ready to march. It was a magnificent sight and feeling.' (Page 20, *Women's rally in Barnsley, 12 May 1984*).

This first mass demonstration of women signalled the arrival of a powerful new force in British politics—a fighting organisation of working class women who had taken to the streets under the banner of 'Women Against Pit Closures'. Sickened by the bias in the media, groups of miners' wives, girlfriends, relatives and friends began to organise right from the start of the strike in March. They were determined to show that *they* were not the hostile and reactionary wives so beloved of the media. The pamphlet tells how on the contrary, they were ready to stand and fight alongside the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). Inspired initially by the example of women at Greenham, the women involved in the now eleven month long miners' strike have gone from strength to strength in defence of their communities. As in countless revolutionary struggles throughout the world, it has been the courage and resilience of the women which has sustained the strike.

Food kitchens

Largely independent of the millions of pounds owned by the NUM, and without the back-up of its organisational apparatus, the women have shown endless invention and determination in providing daily food for hundreds of thousands of people for nearly a year. They have often taken direct action—such as the occupation of Labour halls and welfare clubs—to get premises to set up kitchens. They have raised funds, organised food collection and distribution, given advice on DHSS benefits, held demonstrations at electricity board offices and DHSS offices. Women cook as many as 500 meals a day on a single cooker. The women's organisation of communal eating and child care has enabled thousands of women to come out of their individual homes to play a full part in political life for the first time. The effect on the strike, as acknowledged by Arthur Scargill and all the miners, has been dramatic. In fact, so far, it has meant the difference between victory and defeat.

In addition to the NUM, women themselves have travelled up and down Britain and all over Europe to raise money. Most women have had no experience at all of public speaking, yet



The fight belongs to all

time and again they have forced themselves to do it for the sake of the struggle. As a result they have won thousands to support the miners' cause.

Picketing

On the picket lines, women have proved very effective in turning back scabs—who have been too ashamed, on many occasions, to crawl past them. Police though, have not held back from being violent towards women. Many have been arrested, with one woman, Brenda Greenwood, being held on remand in Risley Remand Centre, for breaking bail conditions. Ann Scargill, wife of NUM leader Arthur Scargill, who has played a major role in WAPC, was herself arrested for picketing and held for ten hours in police cells. In the pamphlet, Linda of Hood Green recounts the shock when a group of women who had been arrested, heard police referring to 'women prisoners'. 'Prisoners? Us? Yes, we suddenly realised that's what we were... Our next ten hours together were going to be some of the longest ever. We were reprimanded for singing and making a noise...'

National organisation

A first national conference of women's groups was called in July, which called a

national demonstration in London on 11 August 1984. 20,000 turned up—there was singing all the way and police were jeered. A women's national office now exists at the NUM HQ Sheffield. A conference in November 1984 committed Women Against Pit Closures not only to winning the strike but to carrying on to campaign on jobs, peace, health and education—particularly that of working class women.

Prisoners

Perhaps the most urgent work that now faces women's groups, alongside that of maintaining food supplies, is work in support of miners who have been sent to gaol.

The British state has had decades of experience in criminalising those who oppose its rule. The techniques now being brought to bear on the mining communities, as many miners have now realised, are those perfected in the Six Counties of Ireland over the last fifteen years. If the British state uses its exper-

ience gained in Ireland, then so must we, too, find examples from Ireland in resistance to state terror. In the late 1970s in the Six Counties, mothers, wives and girlfriends of young Irish Republicans imprisoned in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh prison, formed Relatives Action Committees in support of the prisoners. Political status, previously granted by the Tory government, was withdrawn by a Labour government. In protest, many prisoners went 'on the blanket'—refused to wear prison clothes. A reign of unparalleled brutality and torture was launched against these prisoners. To the shame of the NUM, the Northern Ireland Secretary was Roy Mason—Labour MP for Barnsley, sponsored by the NUM.

Lily Fitzsimons, mother of a young prisoner, said at the time to *Hands Off Ireland!* (an RCG magazine), 'The reason they're (the prisoners) refusing criminal status is because they're not criminals. They're prisoners of war... As you know there's a struggle going on outside and the prisoners carry on the struggle inside.' The Relatives Action Committees spread—there were twelve in Belfast alone. They picketed embassies and government buildings, and built a mass movement on the streets. It is *only* the development of such a movement that can provide a challenge to the British state's treatment of the miners today. It is no surprise then that it is women in a South Yorkshire village, Fitzwilliam, that have taken the step of forming a Prisoners Aid Committee. Women—wives, girlfriends, daughters, mothers, friends of miners—will refuse to have them criminalised by the British state's courts and prisons. Everyone should read this pamphlet.

**Victory to Women Against Pit Closures!
Victory to the Miners!**

Olivia Adamson and Maggie Mellon

Unfortunately, today there are those, as this strike has shown, who are now prominent Yorkshire union officials who do not possess, either through choice or lack of ability, the strength of character of the man who is national President. Many of them are typical Labour Party members who have never questioned anything that has happened, have no international viewpoint and are only concerned with parochial views. The fact is that this strike has shown that if someone has a one track mind and holds on to the old Labour Party or Communist Party values, then they will be defeated. It is not until such people actually experience what has been happening on the picket lines will they change. Like Jim Colgan, Executive member for the normally right-wing Midlands area who was attacked by the police on the picket lines. Before this incident he had supported the call for a national ballot. Unfortunately, many of the National Executive Committee members did and still do, leaving Scargill relatively isolated. If these leaders of other areas possessed one tenth of Arthur's honesty and conviction, then this present dispute would have ended months ago. Alas this isn't so.

Crick's opinion is that the NUM should have called a ballot. As a bourgeois journalist this can only be expected. He questions union democracy, but not that of Thatcher's so-called democracy. He believes that picket line violence obscured the real issues of pit closures. Such a viewpoint shows how little Crick understands about the dispute and miners in general. It appears insignificant to Crick what the violence was all about. It does not appear important to Crick that the state uses its police not merely for keeping the peace. Or that the only people who tried to 'obscure' the pit closure programme were the Tory press and the government, along with opportunist leaders in the labour and trade union movement, and, to their eternal shame, some members of the NUM Executive. The fact is that Thatcher has declared a class war against the miners and their allies.

Crick misunderstands, because of his background, the way people react when faced with the type of repression the miners have been subjected to. He probably believes that the miners should remain passive, whilst the state and the police mete out violence on a scale that is commonplace within the Six Counties of Ireland.

One chapter of the book is devoted to a stool pigeon and scab, called Chris Butcher. Crick seems to think of this man as a hero and symbol of democracy. The fact of the matter is that Butcher (Silver Birch) is nothing short of a manipulated cretin. Crick gives some credit to Butcher for initiative, although it is clear that Butcher has had as many advisers as Thatcher herself—plus the fact that there would probably be a few bob in the deal for Butcher himself. Butcher or Birch was nothing more than a purposefully invented stool pigeon for the use of all and sundry on the Tory front.

Scargill, as a trade union leader, cannot be vilified as the press like to do once the facts are laid out. Michael Crick's book shows the struggle and determination that Scargill went through to change the NUM from an organisation which was dominated by the likes of Lord Gormley, into an effective and progressive fighting trade union. Politically Scargill is years ahead of his colleagues and has taken up wider political issues. He was joined at Saltley Gate by Irish civil rights activists after an appeal for support had been made to a demonstration against Bloody Sunday in 1972, and he never shied away from such support. He led miners to the picket lines at Grunwicks and outside the hospitals. Also more recently he has argued the common interest of the miners and the unemployed. This strike has politicised many people which Scargill stated in 1981 is one step on the road to socialism. Much of this is due to the fact that Scargill throughout his work with the NUM, has kept the interests of the miners, and the working class as a whole, at the forefront of his mind. For a more accurate account of this we may well have to wait for Scargill himself to write it: **Denis, a Yorkshire miner, and Chas, an RCG member**

Scargill and the miners

'*Scargill and the miners*', by Michael Crick, Penguin Books, 160 pages. £2.50.

'It is only by politicising our membership that we will ever bring about the irreversible shift towards socialism in society.'

(Arthur Scargill, 1981)

Michael Crick's latest book, 'Scargill and the Miners', is both interesting and informative. It deals with a brief history of the NUM since the 1950s and also the present dispute up until September 1984.

Between World War Two and the 1960s the Yorkshire Area of the NUM was a right-wing dominated union. Union officials were corrupt and in-

involved in sell-outs and wheelings and dealings with the NCB. They abused their positions, living off expenses and rigging ballots in favour of their protégés. Crick deals graphically with Scargill's power struggle during his early days as a rank and file member of the NUM, showing how he sought to overthrow the right wing. Much of the information can be found in a more concise history of the union in Vic Allen's book 'The Militancy of the the British Miners'. Scargill had to fight against the right in the NUM from the start—at 18 he was refused entry to his own branch meeting by union officials. He was young, vocal and a threat to the union officials' own privileges and interests. He battled on though and at one meeting all the union officials stood up and walked out of the meeting as he spoke.

A lot has been made of Scargill's membership of the Young Communist League and debates continue as to whether he was in the CP. Much of this is irrelevant, but it is clear that the YCL did provide a political education and training which has helped him to be where he is today. Eventually Scargill helped initiate the 'Barnsley Forum' which was a left-wing NUM splinter group which sought to influence and change the NUM policies and leadership.

Scargill's determination, workrate and dedication helped to some extent to achieve this end. Despite Crick's quotes from union officials such as Don Baines and Peter Tait, who were involved in the union at the time of the Battle of Saltley Gate, and who claim that Scargill's role has been overestimated, the facts clearly show that it was Scargill who led the pickets on the ground. Crick cannot alter the fact that Scargill was and is a brilliant strategist and trade unionist. He fought consistently for the interests of NUM members in the strikes of the 1970s, when the left wing officials campaigned to get their members out. As compensation agent, Scargill earned the respect of Yorkshire's miners.

CWMBACH MINERS AND WOMEN SPEAK OUT

Miners and women of the Cwmbach mining village in South Wales have produced this pamphlet which contains transcriptions of live interviews on the miners' strike with the people of the village. Everyone interested in the present class war that Thatcher is waging should buy and read this pamphlet.

Available from Rod Jones, 8 Cogan Terrace, Cathays, Cardiff, CF2 4AX at 50p a copy (including p&p—less for bulk orders).

All proceeds above the 5p a copy expenses go to the Cwmbach Miners' Relief Fund.

'We accept that freedom not to take part in a strike is as much a fundamental right as the right to strike.'

This nonsense ignores the reality, obvious to all oppressed people, that what is at stake in the class struggle is not the rights of individuals but the rights of one class against another; the rights of the exploited and oppressed majority of humanity against the 'rights' of the privileged robber minority ruling class. The working class cannot recognise any so-called 'right' to break strikes by crossing picket lines. To do so is to accept the 'right' of the ruling class to destroy jobs and communities, impose unemployment, poverty, racism and national oppression on the people in order to sustain its own endless lust for profit.

The job of the NCCL is to defend the rights of the exploited majority, not to defend the rule of the rich under the spurious guise of 'individual rights'. The scabs in the miners' ranks are not defending democracy, they are defending the ruling class. As such they are traitors to their class and deserve no protection from the consequence of their treachery.

The logical consequence of the NCCL's reactionary stance is to justify

police violence or as the report more politely terms it 'firm action' (see page 13) to defend the right of scabs to scab and to prevent strikers from seeking to stop such scabbing. The report calls this 'enforcement of the law of the land' which it regards as a 'compelling argument' (page 11). It is, indeed, 'compelling' if your own privilege and luxury depend on the 'law' that the ruling class shall continue to rule.

The police barbarity being meted out to striking miners is as vicious and unrestrained as it is, precisely because miners and their communities have challenged the holy right of the God profit to destroy their jobs and communities. The only compulsion striking miners come across is the 'compelling argument' of the police truncheon, the snatch squad, the crooked court and the prison wall. The striking miners are entitled to the unqualified support of all who are genuinely concerned with the rights and interests of the people. In this shabby report the NCCL has joined the ranks of the government against the miners on strike.

Terry O'Halloran

NCCL scabs on miners' strike

On 10 December the National Council for Civil Liberties published a report 'Civil Liberties and the Miners' Dispute'—the first report of an independent inquiry called for by last year's NCCL AGM. The terms of reference of this inquiry were very clearly laid out:

'To inquire into and thereby establish the fullest possible account and the civil liberties implications of the role of the police, the police authorities and the criminal courts in the events, arising from and relating to the NUM dispute, which began in March 1984.' (emphasis added. Report page 1)

The report, however, has taken it upon itself, in defiance of its own terms of reference: to condemn 'picket violence'; to justify police action in support of scabs; to defend the 'right' to break strikes by crossing picket lines. These reactionary positions were gleefully reported by the media as another stick to beat the NUM with.

The heart of this reactionary stance appears in the section 'Individual Civil Liberties':

No more Bloody Sundays

The anniversary of Bloody Sunday 1972 was marked in Derry by a 5,000-strong march on Sunday 27 January. Twenty-five FRFI and ISM supporters from Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow and London joined the march, 200 FRFI were sold along the route and messages of solidarity from FRFI, Manchester ISC and Edinburgh ISC were noted at the rally. A dozen supporters of the American Indian Movement laid wreaths at the statue of the 14 murdered on Bloody Sunday and then joined the march. Their speaker emphasised the parallels between their prisoners and Irish POWs ending with the slogan 'Tíocfaich ár lá!' - 'Our day will come!'

Whilst the Derry march passed off peacefully with a low RUC presence, in Belfast the RUC were out to intimidate and harass. Homes had been raided throughout the weekend and one FRFI supporter, staying overnight in Belfast, was picked up by the RUC and held for four hours in an RUC landrover before being released.

NO MORE BLOODY SUNDAYS SUNDAY 3 FEBRUARY 1985 LEICESTER

For details of transport contact ISM, BM Box 1320, London WC1N 3XX. Organised by London-based Mobilising Committee which includes representatives of Republicans, TOM, IFM, ISM, IWSG, RCL and Proletarian.

INFORMERS

Victory to the people!



Some of the released outside the court

The collapse of the Raymond Gilmour show trial on 18 December 1984 cracked the paid perjurer system wide open for the world to see. Even Lord Chief Justice Lowry, figurehead of the Orange judiciary in the Six Counties, could not be seen to continue with this mockery of justice. He acquitted the 35 men and women charged on the uncorroborated evidence of Gilmour. Lowry dismissed Gilmour as a man 'totally unworthy of belief'; Gilmour was unable to remember his own birthplace and the ages of his two children.

A cheer went up from the public gallery where relatives sat watching. All of the men and women had been held since August 1982, as one of those released described - effective internment by

remand. Only 26 of the defendants walked free from the court, the other 9 are still being held on the word of another informer Robert Quigley. That evening, after the acquittals, the

family of one of the defendants went out to celebrate the victory. A British soldier fired a plastic bullet at them and hit Anthony Doherty, the brother of one of the acquitted 35, in the face. He suffered extensive facial injury and lost his right eye as a result. The shooting was totally unprovoked although, in an attempt to clear themselves, British Army/RUC claimed that there had been rioting in the area. Doherty said afterwards that the shooting occurred because of 'the frustration felt by the RUC and British Army' after the Gilmour acquittals.

Six days later, 24 December, Lowry together with appeal judges O'Donnell and Hutton, quashed the convictions of 14 Loyalists gaol on the word of paid perjurer Joe Bennett.

Despite the victory of the Gilmour acquittals and the fact that of 25 informers 14 have now retracted their evidence, the use of informers looks set to continue. Three trials are pending and one is under way. 143 people have been charged on such 'evidence' and 163 face charges. Sanctioned by the British government the use of informers is a weapon to legally harass, intern, torture and imprison republicans.

Helen Anderson

● Bigot still around

Readers of FRFI 41 will remember we reported on George Seawright, a member of Ulster's Democratic Unionist Party. This bigotted thug made himself famous for his 'remarks' that Roman Catholics and their priests should be incinerated. Seawright has now been expelled from the DUP because he refused to make a public retraction and apology. He had become a public embarrassment to the DUP for stating his 'views' so frankly, even this sectarian party could not afford to be publicly allied to these sentiments.

FRFI readers should not, however, rejoice that Seawright is no longer able to air his racist views within the DUP, he has other public outlets. Seawright is still closeted within the ranks of the Northern Ireland Assembly and he is a member of the Education and Library Board of Belfast City Council. British imperialism remains, as ever, the most loyal ally of sectarianism and bigotry!
Liz

● Repatriation for army murderer

Ian Thain, the British soldier convicted of the murder of Thomas 'Kidso' Reilly has been repatriated to a prison near his home in Doncaster. On the rare occasions when members of the British Army are jailed in Ireland they are immediately repatriated to English jails. This is in marked contrast to the treatment of Irish POWs, only three of whom have ever been repatriated and then only after bitter hunger strike. While the POWs are held on long sentences as political hostages in Britain, criminals such as Thain who unprovokedly shot an unarmed man in the back, can expect immediate repatriation and early release. Costas Georgiou, a serving British soldier, was sentenced to 9 years for armed robbery in the Six Counties. He was immediately repatriated to Britain. Without any explanation from the Home Office, 3 years later he turned up in Angola as the notorious racist mercenary 'Colonel Callan'. Private Thain can no doubt expect to be released quietly once the British Press's fleeting interest in the case subsides.

● McGlinchey show trial

On Christmas Eve 1984 Dominic McGlinchey, the first Republican to be extradited from the Twenty Six County 'Free State' to the Six Counties, was sentenced to life imprisonment in Belfast. McGlinchey was alleged to have admitted on his arrest that he had been an IRA member in 1977 and that therefore any alleged offence was a political one not a criminal one. The 'Free State', willing accomplices in handing him over to British 'justice', are as much responsible for his conviction as the British state.

Dubious fingerprint evidence was enough to find him guilty of the killing of Mrs McMullan, mother of an RUC reservist, in March 1977. McGlinchey had been tried by the media long before his show-trial took place.

Referred to as 'The green-eyed Killer' and 'Mad Dog', the press revealed an astonishing catalogue of his alleged offences - 20 killings, 30 bombings, 11 armed robberies - none of which he has been charged with. McGlinchey will appeal against his sentence but his chances at the hands of British 'justice' are slim.
Cathal

tions facing repression for example black people, with the continuing refusal of the Labour Party to oppose British rule in Ireland. Therefore whilst we welcome work in the Labour Party to raise the Irish question, no reliance can be placed on a party which for decades has supported British imperialism in Ireland and which is too weak-kneed today to even give effective support and backing to the miners let alone the Irish people.

We hope you now have a clearer picture of the work and political standpoint of the ISM and that in future, if you choose to criticise our work, you do so on a factually correct basis.

Yours fraternally
James O'Rourke
Maxine Williams
on behalf of the Irish Solidarity Movement

That evening, after the acquittals, the

Shoot to kill continues

On 17 December 1984 Sean McIlvenna was shot dead by the RUC after an IRA operation in County Armagh which injured seven UDR soldiers. An RUC patrol car happened to be in the area, they killed Volunteer McIlvenna and captured his companion. This was the third in a series of shoot-to-kill operations during December resulting in the deaths of four IRA Volunteers.

On 21 December the body of Kieran Fleming was recovered from the River Bannagh. Fleming drowned when escaping from a British Army undercover squad on 2 December which murdered unarmed Volunteer Antoine Mac Giolla Bhrighde (see FRFI 45).

RUC attack IRA funerals

The RUC, not content with murdering McIlvenna, were out in force at his funeral on 20 December. RUC saturated the graveside and nearby republican areas. Their attempts to provoke and intimidate the mourners and disrupt the funeral were resisted and the

funeral passed off peacefully.

Three days later however the RUC replied with batons and plastic bullets at the funeral of Kieran Fleming in Derry City. Thousands of nationalist mourners defied the massive RUC/British Army presence to ensure that Fleming was buried with dignity. As mourners gathered round the family home the RUC baton-charged. Undeterred, the mourners, some with head wounds, formed a human barrier to defend the coffin. In spite of repeated baton charges, one live bullet round and at least four plastic baton rounds, the funeral cortege marched into the Bogside where IRA Volunteers fired a volley of shots

over Fleming's coffin. Scores of injuries had been sustained by the mourners. One, Paul Curran, father of three was rushed to hospital with a fractured skull after being hit by a plastic bullet.

UDR murder joy-rider

On 14 January 1985, 17 year old Paul Kelly was shot dead by the UDR at a checkpoint in West Belfast. Kelly and his four friends were out joy-riding when they approached the checkpoint. The UDR apparently knew it was a stolen car containing joy-riding teenagers. Yet when the frightened youth attempted to get away, the UDR opened fire on the car which crashed. The firing continued and John Devlin (an eye-witness) later said that one youth got out of the car and although clearly unarmed the UDR fired at least four shots at him.

Helen Anderson

Reply to Joe Austin from ISM

In the 11 January issue of 'Socialist Action' an interview with Joe Austin, chairperson of Belfast Sinn Fein, was published. The majority of the half-page article dealt with Joe Austin's comments on what he saw as the tasks of the British labour movement in relation to Ireland, with particular reference to the Labour Party. One paragraph in particular contained an attack on the Irish Solidarity Movement and its work which the ISM replied to in order to defend its political position and the nature of its work in Britain. FRFI publishes that reply below.

Dear Joe Austin
The 11 January issue of *Socialist Action* quotes you as saying:

'Unfortunately people like the Irish Solidarity Movement make demands on the British working class that we wouldn't even make on them. For example that as a precondition for concern on Ireland you have to support the IRA. The IRA didn't even make that demand in Ireland! Sinn Fein don't make it a precondition for support anywhere.'

We hope that *Socialist Action* has misquoted you, if however the quote is accurate we wish to make the following reply.

The ISM does not demand support for the IRA as a precondition for either joining the ISM or working with us. The ISM has three demands: 'Victory to the Irish People! Troops Out Now! The Right of Repatriation for all Irish

POWs!' People-join the ISM on the basis of support for these three demands. As for working with broader forces, we have a clear record of work with all manner of organisations who have expressed concern about any aspect of British rule in Ireland. We have worked to gain support for various campaigns on for example, Irish prisoners, strip-searches and plastic bullets from organisations and individuals such as Young Liberals, MPs, local councillors, community groups, striking miners - the list is very long. We place no preconditions on such organisations and believe that for such forces to speak out against any aspect of British rule in Ireland is a positive step forward.

We have also sought to unite with other organisations active on the Irish question and for example are presently participating in the Coordinating Committee for British Withdrawal from Ireland, which involves such

organisations as the Troops Out Movement, the Young Liberals and the Labour Committee on Ireland - none of whom to our knowledge call for support for the IRA.

Having said that, it is important to stress that the Irish Solidarity Movement does believe that a principled anti-imperialist movement in opposition to British rule in Ireland can and must be built in Britain. As sections of workers in Britain come, through their own struggles, to see the reality of the British ruling class and its state they can be won to the side of the Irish people. The ten month old miners' strike has shown this to be true. The miners' experience of state repression has already driven many of them to draw comparisons with the situation in Ireland, and a section of miners has begun to speak out openly in favour of the Irish people's struggle. Malcolm Pitt, leader of the Kent miners, spoke alongside recently-released Irish POW John McCluskey at an Irish Solidarity Movement conference in October 1984. Miners went to Belfast with both the ISM and TOM delegations there last August. Yorkshire miners attended the Manchester Martyrs' march in November 1984 and addressed the rally of that march.

We would contrast these positive developments among miners and other sec-

IRISH SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

JOIN THE ISM NOW

In the past year the ISM has held three national weeks of action; prison pickets, public meetings, day schools, demonstrations and street rallies throughout the country.

The ISM campaigns on the basis of the three demands - 'Victory to the Irish People! Troops Out Now! Repatriation for all Irish POWs!' Although we have achieved a lot - this is only a fraction of what can and must be done in Britain. We need YOU to join the ISM, to take part in organising work so that it is possible to achieve more - to take part in building a strong and significant solidarity movement that can contribute to the struggle of the Irish people for freedom from British rule.

JOIN THE ISM NOW!

Fill in the form and send it off NOW with your affiliation fee (£5/£2 unwaged individuals/£20 national political organisations).

Name _____ Telephone _____
Address _____
Organisation _____
Return to: ISM BM Box 1320, London WC1N 3XX

GREETINGS TO IRISH POWS

The following Irish Republican Prisoners have forthcoming birthdays. FRFI sends our greetings and asks our readers to send birthday cards, preferably recorded delivery, to ensure their arrival.

Anthony Clarke, 726381, HM Prison, Love Lane, Wakefield, Yorkshire, WF2 9AG. 11 February.

John McComb, B51715, HM Prison, Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX. 25 February.

Irish Solidarity Movement Poster VICTORY TO IRISH POWS!

Full size, glossy poster giving details of birthdays of Irish POWs in English jails and prison addresses. Cost £1 + 20p p&p from EISC, Box 110, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.



Maidstone prisoners attacked

Early in the morning of 6 December four prisoners in Maidstone were dragged from their cells and 'ghosted' into solitary confinement in other prisons: Danny Grimes and Charlie Dignan to Wormwood Scrubs, Charlie O'Connor to Lewes prison and Jimmy McQueen to Norwich. Two of the four are FRFI subscribers. Both Danny Grimes and Charlie Dignan were among those prisoners viciously assaulted in Wandsworth prison last year (see FRFI 37, 42 and 44)

At 6.30am all four were attacked in their cells at the same time by up to eight prison officers each. They were handcuffed, abused, kicked and punched. Danny Grimes was dragged naked to one of the four vans waiting to spirit them away from Maidstone. Charlie Dignan was seen lying naked on the floor of his cell being beaten by prison officers. No reason was given for this sudden assault. No reason has been given for condemning the four to solitary confinement.

Danny Grimes and Charlie Dignan took part in a hostage-taking protest the next day in Wormwood Scrubs prison. This protest against the Maidstone assault ended peacefully and without harm to the hostage. It was deceitfully reported in the press as a protest against conditions in Wormwood Scrubs. Thanks to the courage of prisoners risking further punishment by smuggling out information, this lie is now exposed. All four are still in solitary confinement. FRFI sends them its best wishes and solidarity and urges readers to protest to their MPs and the Home Office to demand that all four comrades be released from solitary confinement.

Terry O'Halloran

Peterhead prisoners resist control units

'There is now four segregation joints in this jail. This with seven prisoners. The Ten Cell Unit with two. The old punishment block with four, and there's a guy that has been locked up in a "unit" in the hospital wing for years. Add to this the two guys who are in the cages then it is obvious that all is not well...'
(Peter Wardlaw, letter to FRFI)

Following the mass protest in January last year, and the farcical show trial which followed, Peterhead prison has been through a major facelift with two new control units.

The press is back to its normal hack journalism making the purpose-built ten cell unit sound very homely - a long bungalow-style building, flush toilets and washbasins in every cell, conditions for the needs of particularly 'difficult' prisoners, a halfway house for them back to normal location and the first phase of a modern prison to replace the grim old Victorian buildings where prisoners sleep in their clothes in the winter to keep out the freezing cold and the damp North Sea air... The reality of the new units is, as always, very different.

Scottish political prisoner Peter Wardlaw describes the regime:

'The regime in here is that the prisoners are kept in groups (maximum of three) for "work, exercise and recreation". What it comes down to is that once every four days, two, maybe three prisoners can watch an old black-and-white TV for 1½ hours. Work comes one afternoon every fourth day. I participate in neither delight. Exercise is in yet another pen about ten yards square - three walls and a cage front. This pen and the specially built fenced-off pathway to it, are topped by many coils of razor-edge wire, though why all this is needed I do not know as we have a heavy escort of warders to and from the yard.

It's the same inside the hall as regards the warders. More than one prisoner for food or to slop out and there is nine warders standing about.

The public were told that they were going to ensure that the poor warders weren't going to be outnumbered again. Nothing was said that indicated that the prisoners were going to be outnumbered three to one. The upshot is an unworkable regime has been created (one afternoon work etc, and not being able to go to the toilet if other prisoners are out in a group)...

Peter goes on to show how work is used to degrade:

'...there is no work in here, just a ritual humiliation which is mandatory. For an hour and a half, once a week, two prisoners are allowed out and given mops and buckets etc. The work is the floor, the ablution arches and the hot plate area... It is just one more way of making the prisoners submissive to the regime, and it also

saves the warders a lot of work... To return to this "mandatory" work. This would normally be a passman's job. A job they wouldn't let me near in A Hall. Instead I had to be marched to work in a "security" party to sit at a sewing-machine. Now while I am in the punishment control regime it's alright for me to do such a job, when there are nine warders hanging about delighted at my submissiveness. No fucking danger. I'd rather disrupt this hall until as long as they want to suffer it before they eventually have to move me.'

B Hall is a stop-gap for other units in the new prison in 1990. The Scottish Office is planning a whole programme of 'alternative regimes' but prisoners in Peterhead are refusing to be guinea-pigs. Five out of eight prisoners in B Hall are on protest refusing phoney work and phoney recreation. Letters of protest should be sent to George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland, New St Andrews House, St James Centre, Edinburgh. Copies of letters and replies should be sent to FRFI, Box 40, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.

**Close the units now!
Victory to the prisoners!**

Paul McKinlay

MESSAGE TO ALL PRISONERS

FRFI's mail to prisoners is constantly interfered with: letters are stopped or delayed. Subscription copies of FRFI are often sent back with false explanations or simply refused by the governor. We are determined to defeat this censorship and defend the right of prisoners to receive all political literature of their choice without arbitrary interference. We need your help to do this. Please let us know whenever you have a letter stopped or delayed, if possible with the 'reasons' given. Please let us know likewise if your copies of FRFI are delayed or stopped. Also be sure to tell us whenever you are transferred so that we know where to send material. We hope to build up a dossier on this interference so that we can mount a campaign against it.

**No to censorship of prisoners' mail!
For the right of prisoners to receive political literature!**

JOHN McCLUSKEY PART TWO: GARTREE 1978

In the second section of our interview with Irish POW John McCluskey, John details the events in Gartree in 1978. On 5 October that year, prisoners rebelled against the continual use of drugs against prisoners - the immediate cause was the heavy drugging of black prisoner Michael Blake.



Gartree prison protest, July 1978

One evening when we got opened up a prisoner came to me and he said 'One of my friends has been taken to the hospital and he's been drugged and I'd like to see a few people come down, see the governor and ask that he be taken out of solitary confinement.' A number of prisoners assembled on the ground floor outside the office on A wing and we demanded to see the governor and told him that we wanted the prisoner removed from the hospital back to the wing. The Principal Officer picked up the phone and told us that he was speaking to the governor and the governor would be here in fifteen minutes. The fifteen minutes passed and no governor arrived. He phoned again. He said 'He'll be here in ten minutes'. It was about 7pm. These phonecalls were taking place every ten minutes. After waiting for a long time one of the black prisoners said 'Right you've said ten minutes, ten minutes, ten minutes.'

We'll give you another ten minutes and then if something doesn't happen we've got to take some action.' The ten minutes passed by and the riot just started and the prisoners started smashing up.

Of course there was nothing else they could do. Everything was smashed up. The screws in the office ran out and left all their mates behind. So the screws on the landing were barricaded in. They were very frightened. Some time later we decided that as the protest wasn't against the screws we'd have to take part of the barricade down and get the screws out which we did. None of them were harmed in any way.

The funny thing was that while the riot was going on they released Blake out of the hospital. If only the screws had done this at 6pm or even at 7pm there wouldn't have been a riot. We held the wing and kept the screws out. At 8pm or 9pm the riot squads started moving in. These weren't just the Gartree screws. These were specially se-

lected riot squads from other prisons. We didn't recognise them because of the uniforms they were wearing. They had all the protective gear on worn by any riot squad, and over that they had brown overalls, and they carried long sticks which looked more than anything like a pickaxe handle. We could see them coming in, in bunches of ten or fifteen. They kept coming in. They would run from the gate to the back of the wing. This kept going for about an hour. So in the end there must have been a large number of riot squad screws there. From my experience at Albany [see FRFI 45] I knew how serious this was. Other prisoners were probably like myself, prior to Albany, they wouldn't understand what a riot was. I told them that we had to defend the barricade because if these people came in on top of us they'd probably kill some of us. They tried twice to come through the barricade of tables, chairs, any furniture we could find. They couldn't pass the barricade.

We had achieved our objective so we told the screws through the window 'We're going to take the barricade down at 10am.' There were armed police in Gartree that night. We could see the police carrying weapons in the corridors between wings. We could see them in the gardens outside. We held the wing until 10 the next morning and took the barricade down. We took the barricade down and first of all contacted the other wings, and that was the end of the riot.

All the Gartree screws came in. The place was smashed to pieces. The Board of Visitors came onto the wing and had a look around. We told them that we wanted all our personal possessions checked. Now that we were going to be moved out to different prisons, a lot of this stuff would be smashed up or gone missing. Which happens as a contin-



John McCluskey

uous harassment that the prisoners always receive - but especially the Irish political prisoners. The Board of Visitors assured us that every article that we had would now be checked over. All the articles would be listed on a sheet of paper. The visiting magistrate would sign it, each prisoner would sign it and the officer who checked the property would sign it. So you'd have three signatures. Away you'd go. You'd have this list of your articles and everything would be 100%.

We were all moved out and dispersed to different prisons. And when we checked our property three months afterwards, we found that a lot of it was missing. I sent in a petition to the Home Office along with a photocopy of the original list of our property. The answer that came back was negative.

To be continued

PRISON NEWS

John Bowden

Prisoners in Hull have smuggled out a petition demanding that John Bowden be released from solitary confinement. Apart from three weeks in July 1984, John has been in solitary confinement since January 1983.

From being held naked in a strong box cell at Lincoln prison for 24 hours after being severely beaten (see FRFI 44) he was transferred to Hull prison, via Durham. In Hull on 2 January he was again brutally assaulted and thrown into a strong box for several hours. He is still in solitary confinement - a continuous period of six months solitary.

The continued solitary confinement of John Bowden, and the assaults on him, are a deliberately vindictive policy of revenge because of his part in the Parkhurst prison siege in January 1983. John is being held under the notorious Prison Rule 43b which gives governors unlimited power to throw prisoners into solitary. The Hull prisoners have also demanded the abolition of this rule. FRFI urges readers to write letters of protest to their MPs and to send messages of solidarity to John Bowden, B41173, HM Prison, Hedon Road, Hull, North Humberside, HU9 5LS.

Ronnie Menzies

Last July, Ronnie was ghosted out of Gartree with John Bowden. He too has been kept in solitary ever since. Messages of support and solidarity should be sent to Ronnie Menzies, C42511, HM Prison, St Loyes Street, Bedford, MK40 1HG.

Hunger strike in Barlinnie

On 21 January Scottish prisoner Mick McCallum began a hunger strike in Barlinnie in protest against the barbaric conditions in Scottish prisons. Mick is demanding: an independent public inquiry into deaths and injuries in Scottish prisons; protection for himself against physical assault by prison officers; an end to censorship of mail; an end to closed visits and harassment of visitors. FRFI gives its full support to Mick McCallum and urges readers to write letters of protest to the Secretary of State for Scotland (see address on this page) and letters of solidarity to Mick McCallum, 517, HM Prison, Barlinnie, Glasgow, Scotland. For further information write to Scottish Prisoners Support Committee, Footprint SPSC, PO Box 219, Glasgow, G31 4DZ.

Jimmy Anderson

Category A prisoner Jimmy Anderson has come under attack in Winson Green prison. Jimmy suffers from psoriasis - a painful skin disease. He requires a bath every day with special oils. On arrival at Winson Green the prison 'doctor' ruled that Jimmy did not need a bath every day. Jimmy went on the blanket in protest. The prison responded by saying that as he was not wearing his clothes, he could not leave his cell. As he could not leave his cell, he could not collect his meals. So for three days - 14-16 January - he was deliberately starved. Jimmy has ended his blanket protest but has continued to fight for his medical rights. He has issued a writ for medical negligence against Winson Green. Messages of support should be sent to Jimmy Anderson, B40396, HM Prison, Winson Green Road, Birmingham 18.

Vince Donnelly, Irish POW, in solitary confinement, HM Prison Wakefield

'... John McCluskey hit the nail on the head when he pointed out that not only the imprisoned miners, but the NUM itself, should be emphasising the political nature of their incarceration. Otherwise they accept criminal status and label their fight for jobs as a criminal and illegal action. The main thrust must come by conviction from the miners themselves, for much as we can help all within our power, if the miners themselves don't sustain the action then it will die the death. It's very noticeable to us 'foreigners' that the average British trade unionist is very reluctant to be accused of 'being political', decades of indoctrination working automatically in his programmed existence. But this strike is something out of the normal run of industrial action, its very length changing all the normal patterns of action and thought, so it's possible that the youth involved may break the mould and demand their right to behave politically or any other way in defence of their families' future and wellbeing. Be assured that any who cross our path will be well looked after.'

'On that subject, I am well pleased at the wholehearted response of the Irish community, both here and in Ireland, in their financial and material support for the miners' cause, surely an eye opener for the sizeable number of ex-army personnel from mining communities. Can you imagine the turmoil in the mind of a young squaddie from a mining family, who sees a fundraising function for his kin in a Belfast club, and then is ordered in on the usual bust-the-Paddies-beerhouse routine.'

There are a lot of side-issues leading from this prolonged miners' action, and little of it favourable to the establishment, Tory or Labour, in the long term...'

Prisoners Speak Out on the Miners' Strike

John Bowden, in solitary confinement, HM Prison Hull

'... Miners imprisoned in the course of the struggle ARE political prisoners, and a campaign on their behalf must reflect the fundamentally political issues inherent in their struggle against state repression. Communists were predicting in the early seventies the imminent use of imprisonment, on a widescale, as a tactical weapon of state repression against trade union rank and file activists. Well it's now happening, and it's being utilised against a group of workers that have always been the very backbone of the organised labour movement in this country... the miners now stand on the forefront of a political struggle that encompasses lessons and implications for the workers' movement in Western Europe as a whole...'

Ronnie Menzies, in solitary confinement, HM Prison Bedford

'... It is most important that the NUM formulate a cogent policy in regard to the prisoners now. They should be making much more noise about it. For many of the miners who do end up in prison it will be the first time; to allow them to go through this bewildering experience with no support would be nothing short of a betrayal. The isolation tactics will be so much easier if they have no idea of what to expect or how they should behave. The struggle will never be over as long as there are miners in prison.'

'The Women's Support Groups that have grown up during the strike are symbols of solidarity and the equal participation of women. It would be a tragedy if they were

allowed to wither away when the strike ends—however it "ends". This would be true even if there were no prisoners. The WSGs have the potential to become the focal points of the continuing struggle and have the experience from the past 11 months to function in part as the Prisoners' Support Groups. I am sure that the Sinn Fein POW department would be more than pleased to share the benefits of their experience. One way or another the strike will end and the NUM will have to go back to a large extent, to the everyday business of wage-claims and negotiations, or split. The WSGs can and should form the nuclei for those political activists who are looking beyond the strike, and even beyond the NUM as such, to continue the struggle...'

Harold S Jones: A miner who went to HM Prison Arley

'... Got your card, nice to know people are concerned about us in here. Since I've been in here I've found out what freedom means and it's made me determined to fight this to the end. Hook or by crook the NUM will win the freedom for everybody throughout the mining communities and people like you who are helping the fight over fascism against the Tory government...'

David Oren, HM Prison Frankland

'... Thank you for your letter dated 7 December. I agree that support should be given to imprisoned miners, and I shall inform any miners I come in contact with of your support for them and also your desire to send them copies of FRFI and to have some contact with them. I should imagine that the vast majority of them are in local prisons, but you can

rest assured, if any come to this prison, they will not be without support...'

Mick McCallum, on hunger strike, in solitary confinement, HM Prison Barlinnie Scotland

'... Here is my message of solidarity to all striking miners everywhere. Your strike has been a lesson and an inspiration to very very many poor and oppressed not just in Britain but throughout the world. When we speak of poor and oppressed peoples these days we need go no further than our own shores. Because of this government Britain has been brought to the brink of anarchy and an awareness of the class war being waged on the working class people of this land. Police armies rampage through pit towns and villages creating hatred and fear and oppression. The same as the British army does to the people in the Six Counties. In the name of democracy, whose bloody democracy? Certainly not that of the working classes... The penal system has long been a tool of the ruling classes for keeping the peasants in line. But it's practically an honour these days to be in jail in such exalted company of peace protestors, miners and many other political and class war prisoners, of which there are many, and there will be many more before the day is won...'

Mr M A Russell, HM Prison Wakefield

'... Why are these men getting sent to jail? They do what all of us should be doing, fighting this government. It is people like the striking miners who let us know what we have to do and do it now... A lot of the prison warders here tell me that I am a loud mouth, but what it is, is they do not like people who can think and talk for themselves, and in my case they hate me even more as I am a black man. All my life I have been up against the authority. When like me, you are black, but born in England,

then you know and understand the Irish, because they and we are up against, and fighting the same thing and now too the striking miners know who the real enemy is, and what we all must do, and do today...'

Alan Reeve, political prisoner, A Vleugel, Pomstationsweg 14, Holland

'That the miners' strike is a wave of action in the class war is obvious. For any communist, solidarity with the fighters is equally obvious. Now, with this new experience of class 'justice', perhaps a better understanding of the role of prisons in corrupting and containing the working class will arise.'

'Learn from this experience—destroy the chains. All of them!'

Mahmoud Dohal, HM Prison Wandsworth

'... I can assure you and all comrades at FRFI that if the police send political prisoners to this prison they will be looked after by all those who follow the struggle between the oppressors and the oppressed... I am following with great interest and admiration the heroic and courageous stand shown by the NUM... Power to the People!'

Graham Little, 'Enemy of the racist British state', HM Prison Albany

'... The brutal savagery of the reactionary ruling class thugs in blue towards the miners has educated many sections of the working class that were previously unaware of the enemy's tactics...'

Alan Lee Byrne, on remand 'A' wing, HM Prison Brixton

'... My own opinion is that it is tragic the way the miners have been betrayed by so-called "fellow unionists" and how a victory would have been achieved earlier had the TUC put its priorities in order. I expect certain members of the TUC would not commit themselves or their unions for fearing the path to the House of Lords would be blocked...'

Please note our address is, FRFI BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX. SEND US YOUR LETTERS. We welcome letters from readers but please keep them as short as you can.



become a Supporter

If you are willing to help the work which FRFI is doing, become an FRFI SUPPORTER.

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SPECIAL FUND HELP US BUY OUR OWN TYPESETTING EQUIPMENT

COST £6,000 – £1,928 STILL TO GO!

As a result of the great response by readers and supporters—we have been able to take the first practical steps in setting up our own production unit. £4,072 has been raised.

Such a unit is urgently required to produce communist newspapers, books, pamphlets and leaflets. By March we hope to publish a major pamphlet on the courageous struggle of the striking miners.

However, we still have £1,928 to go before reaching our target! Last month we reported an excellent start. Let us have a brilliant conclusion! Join those who have already contributed, amongst them Ronnie Menzies, a prisoner held in solitary confinement, 2 supporters from Gateside and Liverpool who donated £200 each, a comrade who has pledged £10 a week for 6 weeks and many others. FRFI readers, activists and supporters have already worked hard towards achieving their targets:

Manchester £1,796; London £1,114; Bradford £63.00; Leeds £84.67; Liverpool £230; Edinburgh £239; Glasgow £55; Dundee £235; Bristol £38.66

Help us reach our target! We can succeed if you make your contribution.

Make your donation payable to 'Larkin Publications' and return to: Special Fund, FRFI BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.

I/we want to donate £ _____ to the Special Fund

Name/Organisation _____

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I do/do not want you to mention my name/organisation

FUND DRIVE: WE NEED £500 A MONTH JANUARY: £417.59

Dear FRFI Reader, Last month's issue of FRFI went up to 30 pence for those of you who are waged. For our unwaged readers we decided to continue subsidising the price and we are counting on your continued contributions to the FRFI Fund to keep this up.

The sum we need for this every month is £500 and last month we received £417.59.

Make your donation payable to 'Larkin Publications' and return to: FRFI BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

I/we want to donate £ _____ to the FRFI Fund.

Name/Organisation _____

Address _____

I do/do not want you to mention my name/organisation

Edinburgh

Dear FRFI,

Having just served a short sentence in HM Prison Edinburgh, I feel compelled to write about the conditions inside the prison. Firstly, there is the overcrowding. A cell measures approximately 12 feet by 8 feet by 10 feet high. Originally built for one man they now have three men squashed in together with next to no ventilation. There is a small pot for each man to use as a toilet. If one man has to use this during the night the smell can almost make you vomit. If a man has to shit during the night he must rip a part of his sheet or towel into a small square then wrap up the shit and throw it from his window outside. If caught he will be placed on report and lose remission.

While I was in Saughton, five men lay in the prison hospital with salmonella food poisoning. After speaking to another prisoner who worked in the kitchen, I discovered that fridges and pantries were never cleaned and had a foul stench in each. Also that there is literally thousands of cockroaches thriving in the kitchens. He also told me that when we have chicken they are left out overnight to defrost, which must make quite a sight—cockroaches having a midnight feast on defrosting chickens—the chickens are washed in cold water then cooked and given to the inmates, you can bet that none of the screws eat chicken in the jail.

Another disturbing thing was the number of people who caught crabs, 45 men. If you get crabs, the prison is of the opinion that the man brought them in with him. You are put in isolation for three days and your genitals are sprayed with disinfectant. You are put back in circulation and after a quick wash, so is your mattress, sheets and blankets all ready to infect the next guy who uses them.

There is also the petty vindictiveness of the screws to put up with each day, such as delayed letters and papers or sometimes they are completely mislaid.

One experience I had with the screws was when I asked to have a visit with my brother. I was in A-Hall and he was in D-Hall. It is a simple matter of taking me into D-Hall and locking me in a cell with my brother for twenty minutes. I asked for the visit and was told to see the Prison Officer. I asked him and was told to

go on request. I asked to go on request and was told to see the Prison Officer on the next shift. I saw him and was told to go on request. I saw another screw about going on request; he nodded and told me to leave it with him. This same sequence I repeated for three days asking the same screws and Prison Officers and getting nowhere until I gave up. Needless to say I did not see my brother, but I know that it is a fairly common event for relatives to visit each other while serving a sentence together. Finally, on being released from prison a full packet of cigarettes and box of matches which I had purchased outside were not returned to me. When I asked for them the screw said: 'They have been dumped', 'smoked, you mean' I said. 'Perks of working in the reception', he chuckled.

Steve A
Edinburgh

Greenham Brutality

Dear FRFI, We (South London Hospital for Women—Occupation) received this on 22 January. Blue is 21 and is a member of Cruise Watch. This just shows what ordinary police have to do to maintain nuclear Britain. If you have broken down on that road, they could have done the same to you. How long will it be before someone ends up dead? All that was reported on the news was that 5 women were arrested. The press are just working for the state.

Dear Everyone, The most awful things have happened—I can't really explain here. We got to the convoy coming off the plane (Salisbury) and they smashed up the van, the windscreen smashed in on us as the police used crowbars—they did it to my window too and I was only in the passenger seat. Oh it was too awful!

I have got multiple lacerations, a suspected broken wrist, severe bruising of the neck from being choked by a police officer and bruising on my leg as the police jammed the door on me as I tried to get out of the van. Because they were choking me, when the windows smashed, I was breathing in, so I was swallowing and inhaling glass. I was rushed to hospital in an ambulance.

Everyone was screaming and hysterical and in a state of shock. These were ordinary Wiltshire police doing this to us as the convoy thundered past (convoy came out of Greenham last week). I just held up my bloody hand half out of the windscreen and screamed at the drivers of the cruise convoy. Newbury TV got it on film.

PS Please get some porridge oats as I have to drink it to stop the glass ripping the lining of my stomach.

Blue

EVENTS

EDINBURGH FRFI PUBLIC MEETING

South Africa in Revolt Build Solidarity Now!
Thursday 28 March 7pm
Trades Council, Picardy Place

Namibia Support Committee

Picket South African Embassy
Trafalgar Square 1-2pm
Tuesday 5 February

NAMIBIAN FREEDOM FIGHTERS ON TRIAL

On 5 February 1985 two SWAPO freedom fighters, Sam Mundjindji (24) and Veiko Nghitewa (28) will be tried in South African occupied Namibia. The 2 young men, who bravely joined the armed struggle SWAPO has led against South Africa's illegal and brutal rule, face charges of armed robbery, kidnapping and murder. If found guilty, they face many years in prison.

Live up your benefit disco: It's 'The Miners Strike Rap' by Michael Rosen

A record for the miners 'Aint no such thing as a pit that loses money While the bees do the work and the boss gets the honey.'

Buy this record now All profits to the miners' families

Cost £1.50 each plus p&p 25p per record. Cheques payable to M.I.S. address: 22 Madeira Grove, Woodford, Essex

HANDS OFF IRELAND

PAUL MATTISON

On New Years Eve the ISM called a picket of the Home Office which was supported by IBRG, TOM, FRFI, London Armagh Group, Irish Interest Group, London Irish Women's Centre, Proletarian, RCL, IWSG, ELISC. The ISM proposed a joint public meeting on the PTA which went ahead on 18 January addressed by a South Wales miner; Tony Jennings, barrister; ISM; RCG; Proletarian and IWSG. TOM refused to support it; the IBRG withdrew initial support as they had to 'concentrate on the Irish community'; three sponsors - Wolfe Tone Society, RCL and Red Action - then withdrew support. Despite this it was a successful protest meeting. Edinburgh ISC picketed the Lothian Region Council HQ on 8 January supported by FRFI and Women for Peace. The RCP refused to support it saying 'it was not impressive enough'. MISC and Liverpool FRFI supporters attended pickets of the Bridewell and court in Liverpool called by an ad hoc committee and also ones called by the IFM/RCP.



31 December 1984 - ISM picket of the Home Office in London, protesting against PTA arrests on Christmas Eve

UNITE TO FIGHT THE PTA!

The wave of arrests under the Prevention of Terrorism Act over the Christmas and New Year period represents a serious attack on the right of the Irish community to organise in Britain. Several of those arrested were supporters of the Irish in Britain Representation Group. Of the 13 detained six face the serious charge of 'conspiracy to cause explosions' and will undoubtedly be the victims of an anti-Irish show-trial.

These arrests show the true nature and purpose of the PTA. On Christmas Eve 6 men were detained and held for the full 7 days. Two were charged under the PTA for 'failing to give information' (that is their correct names), fined £150 and released. Another, Pascal Coyle, told Irish journalists after his release (without charge) that he had been threatened with a 15-20 year gaol sentence.

PTA - BREAK THE SILENCE!

The recent PTA arrests emphasise the urgency of a concerted fight against this vicious, reactionary legislation. The British state uses the PTA to attack and silence the Irish community and anyone who politically opposes British rule in Ireland. Despite the wide-reaching effects of this act of terror, organised political campaigning can break the silence and defeat the attacks.

In March 1980, Jim Reilly and Gerry MacLochlainn (Sinn Fein Britain) were arrested under the PTA, charged with conspiracy to cause explosions and remained in custody. A militant political campaign, picketing police stations, courts and prisons, was instrumental in securing bail enabling the two to prepare their defence and break the conspiracy of silence which usually surrounds such cases. This was the first time that prisoners were released on bail facing such charges.

In August 1980 two FRFI sellers from Glasgow were held and charged under the PTA with 'soliciting and inviting financial and other support for a proscribed organisation - namely the IRA', and held in prison for a week. Immediate action of court and prison pickets, support from MPs, trade unions, civil liberties bodies and left groups forced the police to drop the PTA charges for a 'breach of the peace' charge.

There have been many other cases when swift, vigorous action has forced the authorities to release people held under the PTA including one in Liverpool in 1983 when the Home Secretary took the unusual step of refusing an application for an extension after a barrage of phone calls to the Home Office.

The only answer to the British state's strategy of 'divide and rule' is to 'unite and fight'. As repressive legislation is strengthened by the state, all those who oppose the PTA and its use must strengthen their response to such attacks. Alongside lobbying MPs and press conferences must go a vigorous public campaign of pickets, meetings, rallies and marches. FRFI calls on all those opposed to this racist, anti-Irish Act to put their words into action, break the conspiracy of silence and show the Irish community that they do not stand alone. Unite to Fight the PTA!

Pauline Sellars

One of the five charged, Billy Grimes, told Irish TD Tony Gregory, that during seven days interrogation he had not known if it was night or day. Grimes is now in the hospital wing of the prison receiving psychiatric treatment as a result of disorientation from interrogation. One of those arrested on New Year's Eve, held for seven days then released without charge, was subject to what can only be described as sensory deprivation: kept awake all night, continuous bright light; no idea of time; and repeatedly fed the same meal (beans on toast) to further disorient him.

Dr Maire O'Shea, 65 year old Irish woman living in Britain and well-known for her interest in Irish political and community affairs, had her home turned over when she was arrested. Her medical files were torn up and thrown over the floor. Suffering from bronchitis and arthritis, she too was charged.

Since its introduction in 1975 by a Labour government the PTA has been used to cast a shadow of fear over the Irish community in Britain. Few of those arrested under the PTA are charged with any offence yet they are subjected to a terrifying ordeal often lasting seven days: they are frequently held incommunicado, interrogated for

hours on end, forcibly fingerprinted and photographed, made to feel humiliated and degraded. In many cases they are not questioned about 'terrorist' activities but about friends, contacts, social life, political and trade union activities. Homes are raided, threats of deportation and long sentences are used to coerce those held to answer police questions.

The PTA is used as an information gathering weapon directed against the Irish community and those in Britain who oppose British rule in Ireland. The very existence of such an Act with its wide-reaching powers serves to discourage people from any involvement in open political activity on Ireland.

The absence of effective opposition to the PTA has had other serious consequences. The Act has been extended to threaten other international struggles and organisations in Britain. Also, the PTA's erosion of democratic rights has made it easier for further repressive legislation to be passed for use against the British working class, for example, the new Police and Criminal Evidence Act.

The PTA will succeed in its designs to silence all opposition to British rule in Ireland if its recent use and the subsequent conspiracy charges are not fought. Every single organisation and individual who speaks out on Ireland, whether they be from the Irish community, the British left or indeed from the striking miners and others in struggle against British state repression, is threatened by this Act. To limit any campaign to the Irish community and to limit protest

to legalistic and Parliamentary means will only serve to undermine and weaken the building of any movement in solidarity with the Irish people and so strengthen the British state's attack. Six people face conspiracy charges and arrests are still taking place yet where has the massive outcry and public protest been? To refuse to work with all those affected by the Act, not to stand up and openly fight the PTA and campaign for those about to be framed is criminal. Whilst Irish activists are being hunted down, to put any trust whatever in Labour Party promises to repeal this Act (if they ever get into power again) is dangerous and suicidal. Meanwhile how many Irish activists will go to gaol framed under the PTA? The only way to defeat this vicious, reactionary piece of legislation is to mount the most vigorous public campaign against its use and to unite with all those who oppose it. Victory - the release of those arrested, detained and charged - will be a victory for all those in Britain who speak out on Ireland. To be silent is to accept defeat.

It is the duty of all progressive organisations, particularly those engaged in Irish solidarity work, to stand with the Irish community and against state repression. We must campaign for the abolition of the racist, anti-Irish PTA and we must defend all those arrested, detained and charged. Only by doing this can we stop the harassment and intimidation and defend the right to speak out against and politically organise opposition to British rule in Ireland.

Pauline Sellars/Maxine Williams

The PTA- Act of terror

The Prevention of Terrorism Act (Temporary Provisions) was rushed through Parliament by a Labour government in 1974 in the anti-Irish hysteria following the Birmingham pub bombings. These 'temporary provisions' were renewed every six months until 1976 when they became renewable annually. In 1984 'temporary provisions' was removed from the title and the Act became renewable every five years. Under the PTA:

- A person can be held for 48 hours which can be extended by up to five days (by the Home Secretary's approval). Therefore, a person can be held for up to seven days without charge.
- A person has no right of access to a solicitor, family or friends. He/she can be forcibly fingerprinted and photographed.
- At ports of entry people can be stopped, questioned and detained with no other evidence than 'reasonable suspicion'.
- An exclusion order may be made removing a person from Britain to the Six Counties unless they have lived in Britain for more than three years. The excluded persons have no right to know the evidence against them or to have a trial.
- It is an offence to withhold information from the police. The threat of prosecution can be used to persuade people to give up their right to silence.
- An organisation which 'appears' to be concerned with terrorism can be banned. No-one may belong to a banned organisation, raise money for it, invite a member of it to speak at a meeting, or wear anything which arouses 'reasonable apprehension' that you are a supporter of a banned organisation.
- The powers of the PTA have been widened to include 'international terrorism' and many movements with offices and supporters in Britain are now under threat. In October 1984 a delegation containing Namibia Support Committee members was detained and questioned at Holyhead port.

The PTA is a device for the surveillance and intimidation of the Irish community in Britain. Since 1974, 5,850 people have been detained under it. By the end of 1983 only 1.8% had been charged with any 'terrorist' offences. During 1983, 44,906 people were subject to police checks under the PTA of whom 187 (0.4%) were detained. The widened powers to include 'international terrorism' extend this surveillance and intimidation to other movements. Between March and September 1984 of 94 detentions under the PTA, 36 were in connection with 'international' matters. Maxine Williams

LECOO

Thanks to Steve Bell for giving permission to publish this cartoon



FORTHCOMING PTA ACTIVITIES

MANCHESTER
'Smash the PTA!' protest meeting and report-back from Bloody Sunday march in Derry - organised by Manchester Irish Solidarity Committee. Speakers: MISC and IBRG
Thursday 31 January 7.30pm
Longsight Library, Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester.

EDINBURGH
'Smash the PTA!' protest meeting and report-back from Edinburgh ISC delegation to Derry Bloody Sunday

march. Organised by Edinburgh University Irish Solidarity Society.
Thursday 31 January 1-2pm David Hume Tower, George Square, University Campus, Edinburgh.

Picket and lobby of Lothian Regional Council Police Board calling on them to condemn the PTA.

Thursday 14 February. For further details contact Edinburgh Irish Solidarity Committee at Box 110, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.

LONDON
North London ISC street event -
Unite to Fight the PTA!
Saturday 9 February. For further details contact NLISC, BM Box 1320,

London WC1N 3XX.

South London ISC meeting with video, and discussion on the PTA. All interested in organising work in opposition to the PTA welcome.

Thursday 14 February 7.30pm
Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, London SW2.

Public meeting on the PTA organised by Ad Hoc Committee which include ISM, IBRG, TOM, LCI, IRSP, Young Liberals.

Tuesday 12 February 7.30pm Irish Centre, Camden.
Speakers: Tony Jennings (barrister), Dave Douglass (NUM)