

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Anti-imperialist paper of the Revolutionary Communist Group

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May Day in South Africa 1.5 million strike against apartheid

1 May – International Labour Day – saw the biggest national stay-away in the history of the South African black working class. In a massive display of strength and solidarity, millions of black South Africans stayed away from the factories, mines, farms and schools in order to commemorate May Day. 70-100% of the black workforce in the main cities did not turn up to work. Tens of thousands of workers, students, youth – whole communities – gathered at rallies and meetings held all over the country by the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and other organisations to demand that May Day be a paid public holiday and for basic democratic, political and human rights.

In a fiery speech to 20,000 in Soweto, Winnie Mandela said that the wealth of the country belonged to the people and she called upon them 'to close up ranks and prepare for the final onslaught' against apartheid.

The May Day protests throughout

South Africa were testimony to the growing power of the black working class – and to the organisation of the people in the street committees, trade unions, youth congresses and student organisations. It is this unity which so terrifies the apartheid regime and it is

these structures it constantly seeks to undermine and destroy. On May Day, Chief Buthezi, stooge ruler of the Kwazulu 'homeland' and his Inkatha movement launched the United Workers Union of South Africa (UWUSA). UWUSA stands on a reactionary platform against sanctions under the slogan 'vote for jobs not hunger'. A 'reactionary and tragic step' according to COSATU, designed to 'deliberately undermine the unity we have built'.

Vigilante stooges

Ever more desperate to suppress the development of People's Power, the recent period has seen a dramatic growth in the attacks on activists by vigilante groups. In terrorising continued on page 4



Chernobyl Nuclear nightmare becomes a reality

The nuclear accident at Chernobyl, the most serious ever, and one they said could occur only once in 10,000 years, is a disaster of major proportions for the Soviet people. As we go to press, the danger of a further, much more devastating explosion in the reactor is being counteracted by surrounding the reactor with concrete.

According to *New Scientist* magazine, tests show that between 1-10% of the iodine 131 and caesium from the reactor core have been released. So far there have been no signs of the more deadly alpha-emitting elements consistent with a meltdown of the core. Even so the level of radiation in Britain is now slightly above that which occurred in the heyday of atmospheric bomb testing in the early 1960s. In the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe of course, radiation levels are much higher. It is estimated

that up to 8,000 extra cancers may result from the accident in Western Europe, with many more in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Whilst not underestimating the problems of dealing with a disaster of this size or the courage of those engaged in dealing with it at the Chernobyl site, it must be said that the response of the Soviet government was inadequate. There were quite incomprehensible delays in warning both their own people and Europe. The Soviet government

themselves have criticised their underestimation of the scale of the disaster.

The unwillingness of both local Ukraine and senior government officials to admit the full potential of the disaster probably lay in the fact that the nuclear development at Chernobyl was on course to be the biggest in the world, a showpiece. However, this cannot in any way excuse the delays in evacuating populations in areas of high risk, particularly since the socialist organisation of society of the Soviet Union should have made this a much easier task than in the capitalist countries. Warnings to the local population about consuming water, milk and fresh vegetables came only after a week.

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Above: Picture of the damaged nuclear reactor building shown on Soviet television to disprove American claims of massive destruction and fire.

Non Stop Picket Free Nelson Mandela

On 19 April more than 1,000 people launched the Non Stop Picket outside the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square. Full report page 5.

BRITISH PRISONS EXPLODE

Report on the prison
dispute page 12

LIBYA

Reagan and Thatcher
the terrorists
centre pages

Police riot at Wapping

Saturday 3 May saw the worst outbreak of police violence since the News International dispute began, three months ago. Three days later SOGAT agreed to purge its 'contempt of court' by withdrawing its instruction to members in wholesale distribution not to handle News International titles.

On 3 May a printworkers march from Kinning Park, Glasgow, arrived at Wapping and joined a national demonstration of 10-15,000. The march arrived outside Murdoch's fortified and razor-wire wrapped plant at about 10pm. Within a few minutes the police, mounted and riot squad, had launched their first attack on the crowd.

The excuse was the throwing of a couple of smoke bombs. As we cheered the orange plumes of smoke drifting across the front of Murdoch's plant, mounted police galloped into us. Everyone scattered. Those unfortunate enough to be trapped against fences and walls, were mercilessly beaten. I saw one man who was trapped between two horses. One cop held him whilst the other leaned out of his saddle, carefully and repeatedly punching the man in the face. Within ten minutes or so the double decker bus, where emergency first aid was dispensed, was filled with demonstrators mostly suffering head wounds. Repeated charges into the crowds left a trail of injured and bleeding behind.

However, for once, the police did not have matters all their own way. After the initial scattering people regrouped and began to defend them-

selves against the uniformed thugs. Crash barriers, poles, rocks were used. Crash barriers were dragged into the road to block the path of the horses. One of the mounted thugs came off his horse and fell into the crowd. He deeply regretted this development.

More than 300 were injured - 170 or so police. The toll of injuries included a Glasgow marcher, Tony Blackmore, who had a heart attack after being hit by the police. Only a hard struggle forced the police to allow an ambulance through to him. Tony Benn used the rally platform publicly to demand that the police allow the ambulance through. He also gave us a running commentary on the police attacks.

Away from the picket lines, the NUJ leadership has finally been forced to initiate disciplinary proceedings against the 550 scab journalists working at Wapping. On Thursday 17 April the NUJ ADM voted by 158 to 146 votes for disciplinary action against the scabs. The NUJ NEC promptly decided not to do anything. The next day, delegates, outraged by such a blatant defiance of an ADM decision, voted to suspend the ADM so that the NEC could 'reconsider'. The NEC was



ANDREW WIARD REPORT

forced to agree to initiate proceedings.

SOGAT's cowardly decision on Tuesday 6 May, just three days after the police riot at Wapping, to purge its 'contempt of court' in order to regain control of its £17 million assets, is typical of the conduct of the dispute. All four unions - NGA, SOGAT, NUJ, AUEW - are now giving serious consideration to accepting Murdoch's offer of the Grays Inn Road site to be used for a 'labour movement' daily paper. It would be fitting indeed for a Willis/Kinnock daily newspaper to be born out of the betrayal of the News International dispute.

Terry O'Halloran
(London Freelance Branch
NUJ)

Press photographer Andrew Moore carried away after being truncheoned by police.

May Elections Thatcher's days numbered

Throughout Britain, on 8 May, a wave of popular revulsion against Thatcher's government swept one Tory MP out of Parliament and more than 700 local Tories out of office. In Ryedale a Tory majority of 16,142 was turned into an Alliance majority of 4,940. In West Derbyshire the Tory majority plunged from 15,325 to just 100.

The Tories now control no regional councils in Scotland and only one, Solihull, of the 36 metropolitan councils. In London, the Tories lost Sutton to the Alliance, saw their 24 seat majority in Westminster cut to just 4 seats and the Alliance majority in Richmond rise from 4 seats to 46. From the poor, hardest hit by the government's assault on the welfare state, to the well-off, increasingly scared by the possible social consequences of government policies, people have turned against the Tory government.

Every action by the national Labour Party is now entirely determined by winning the votes of the privileged. Their new-look grey party with its party political broadcasts based on designer sets populated by the white, the wealthy and the self-satisfied, ruthlessly excludes the poor, black people and anyone else who might upset the applecart. The results of 8 May show that Kinnock is continuing his crawl to Downing Street: a slow journey through the gutter.

The fact that Liverpool's much-



The end of the road for Denis and Maggie?

The elections also confirmed that Neil Kinnock's Labour Party still faces a serious threat from the Alliance in the struggle to win the votes of the middle class and the better-off sections of the working class. The results gave Labour 37% of the vote, against 34% for the Tories and 27% for the Alliance. On these figures Labour would win 316 seats in a general election: ten seats short of an overall majority. Although Labour won a number of unexpected victories, the Alliance was strong enough to win Tower Hamlets in London and greatly reduce the Labour majority in South-

wark. Malignant Militant-influenced Labour Council held onto its seats and Lambeth's left councillors increased their majority shows that Kinnock's crawl still faces obstructions. These results were obtained in the face of an intense media attack on left councillors for their attempts to protect local jobs and services. Felicity Dowling, one of 11 Liverpool Labour councillors facing expulsion from the Labour Party, got 71% of the vote in her ward. It remains to be seen how much notice the normally ballot-mad Neil Kinnock takes of this particular ballot.

Terry O'Halloran

Fascists out of our schools

On 3 May the fascist British National Party (BNP) called a 'public election meeting' at the John Scurr primary school in Stepney, East London. Stepney is a multi-racial area, and a high proportion of John Scurr pupils are black. The BNP meeting was an act of deliberate provocation, and an insult to all black and anti-racist people.

The Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) opposed the meeting and in the High Court ILEA lawyers presented firm evidence of BNP's instigation of, and involvement in,

violent racial attacks and extensive damage BNP supporters had caused to halls previously let to them.

Despite this, the High Court ruled that ILEA schools can be used for public meetings by fascist groups, that ILEA officials refusing to open schools for such meetings could be imprisoned and that bailiffs can be sent to break into schools to allow fascists to hold meetings.

Well before 2pm on 3 May - the scheduled time for the meeting - a peaceful crowd of over 300, including parents of John Scurr pupils gathered to protest at the fascist pro-

cess. They pointed out to the police that they had a right to enter the meeting as it was an 'election meeting'. The police not only denied them entry but violently cleared a path for the fascists, shoving protesters around and arresting some of them.

Two hours later, police went round the back of the school and smashed through a side gate into the school. They then escorted BNP supporters - all male, all armed with flags and poles - into the school.

Inside the hall, the BNP thugs proceeded to wreck a display on Anne Frank, rip down posters showing multi-racial scenes painted by the pupils and destroy an exhibition about racist attacks in Newham. Eventually the police deigned to allow a few demonstrators into the hall. Although the school hall has a capacity for over 150, the police allowed less than thirty in, one by one. Most were Asian parents of pupils.

Once inside the hall they were isolated and surrounded by the racist BNP supporters who attacked them, lashing out with chair legs and hurling school furniture at them. The police stood by, watching the protesters being beaten. Many of the protesters later needed hospital treatment. Finally, the police moved in. Not, of course, to get rid of the fascist thugs, but to violently kick out the demonstrators.

This sickening incident is but one of an increasing number recently made public. In the light of increasing racist attacks in schools throughout the country, and especially in the wake of the Daneford School campaign, the courts and the police are increasingly siding with racists openly, whilst persecuting and harassing anti-racists. They must be fought! As a member of All London Teachers against Racism and Fascism told FRFI, 'We need mass campaigning now to stop this type of incident.'

FRFI urges all anti-racists to join in the struggle to rid our schools of racists.

Charine James

Pensioner killed by police

In April at Manchester Court the details emerged of a horrific beating a 67 year old man received in Southport station, at the hands (and feet) of sergeant Alwyn Sawyer. Mr Foley had been kicked in the back so hard, his bowel had ruptured, and his left knee completely detached.

He had been attacked by Sawyer while he was lying on the cell floor with his hands handcuffed behind his back. A pathologist told the jury that the injuries were characteristic of a man run over by a car! Mr Foley had a few hours after being admitted to hospital.

Southport, a seaside resort in the North-West, is the middle of a 'genteel' rival to 'vulgar' Blackpool and is the resting place of a large number of retired people. The place in fact, for sergeant Sawyer practice his thuggery on a 67 year old pensioner.

For forgetting he was in Southport, and thinking he was still on a miners' picket line or visiting Blythwater Farm, Sawyer paid the price. He was acquitted of murder but found guilty of manslaughter and given 7 years. With parole Sawyer will only have a couple of years to think over his rashness.

Bob Shephard

High Court judge takes revenge

On 7 May a High Court judge dismissed Arthur Scargill's case against the South Yorkshire police in which he claimed unlawful imprisonment outside his home in 1982.

The police, recognising Scargill's car on the M1, chased him where he was detained on the ground for 50 minutes by 7 officers in cars. He was charged with speeding. Scargill was later acquitted. Rotherham magistrates court decided to bring the High Court action 'because human rights in this country are under threat'.

To punish Scargill for daring to challenge the police and no doubt exact revenge for his leadership of the miner's strike, the High Court judge ordered him to pay a sum of £100,000 in legal costs.

The police barrister had viciously attacked Scargill. 'You may think that to entrust Mr Scargill with the task of upholding your civil liberties might be regarded as entrusting Satan with the task of abolishing hell', he told the jury.

On the contrary, Scargill is only a trade union leader to have a serious fight on behalf of the working class against the Thatcher government. This is why Scargill being forced to pay £100,000 in legal costs is a daring to challenge the police. Scargill is confident that the cost will be paid by individuals and organisations that support him.

Olivia Adams

JOIN THE RCG

Take the side of all those struggling against imperialism—Join the RCG!

A movement must be built in Britain in solidarity with the struggling peoples of Ireland, South Africa, Palestine, Central America. Help us do this—Join the RCG!

A movement must be built here in Britain which stands with the oppressed fighting racism, repression and poverty. Help us build this movement—Join the RCG!!

A movement must be built which challenges and defeats the treachery of the opportunist leaders of Britain's Labour and trade union movement—Join the RCG!!

Help us build a revolutionary anti-imperialist alternative. Work with us in our anti-racist, Irish solidarity, anti-apartheid and other struggles—Join the RCG!

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Guilty in advance

Irish people on trial

On Tuesday 6 May the trial of five Irish men and women began at the Old Bailey. The five—Patrick Magee, Gerry McDonnell, Peter Sherry, Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer—face various charges of conspiracy to cause explosions between January and June 1985. Patrick Magee is also charged with murder in connection with the October 1984 Grand Hotel bombing in Brighton.

All five were condemned as guilty in the media last summer when they were first arrested. *The Mirror* declared: 'Police busted the biggest IRA cell ever known in Britain and found a diary of death.' This was typical of media coverage. In case there were any Labour supporters among the potential jurors, Neil Kinnock made

it clear that he had personally found all those arrested guilty, congratulating the police for 'the success they have achieved against the Provisional IRA'. All this was before anyone had been charged much less tried for anything at all.

In the run up to the trial, the state did its bit to ensure a guilty verdict by

attacking the prisoners, particularly Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer. The two women were subjected to continual strip-searching, cell changes, cell searches and sleep deprivation in a bid to destroy their ability to defend themselves. In March this year, Dr Derek Davies, of Bristol University, concluded that the two women had suffered serious distress and a significant impairment of concentration.

On 1 May, High Court judge Justice Hodgson dismissed all this. The women's lawyers had brought an

action against the Home Office to test the legality of the women's treatment. Mr Hodgson ruled that the courts could not interfere with the governor's exercise of power. What's a little torture to a British judge?

So the stage was set for the trial. In case any jurors had forgotten last year's media verdict against the defendants, they were treated to the usual spectacle of security. Armed police were everywhere. Everyone, including jurors, was searched and had to go through an airport-style metal detector. Media access to the trial was controlled by the issuing of press passes supplied by the court itself. Whilst the hacks had no trouble getting in, Terry O'Halloran was refused access for not having one of these 'passes'.

Outside, the same process of political control went on. At 10.30am, Inspector Meadows ordered the 50-strong Irish Prisoners' Appeal picket to disperse. He said the City of London police Assistant Commissioner had ordered that no demon-

stration was to be allowed anywhere near the court. The RCG office was made available to immediately produce a press statement for the IPA condemning this police censorship. The police forbade the distribution of the press statement as well.

The purpose of the security and the censorship was to ensure that the jury got the message; 'These Irish are dangerous people. Get them behind bars as soon as possible.' The prosecution is treating the jury to lurid and irrelevant accounts from survivors of the Grand Hotel bombing, and colourful stories of 'bomb calendars' 'seaside carnage' and so on.

On 12 May 25 people were arrested on an IPA picket outside the Court. They were later released without charge. Their 'offence' was to draw public attention to the way this trial is being conducted. The five have been found guilty by the government, the Labour opposition, the police and the media. Any voice of opposition is being silenced.

Sian Bond
Terry O'Halloran

Nazi stands for office

Kurt Waldheim, who gained 49.64 percent of the vote in the Austrian presidential election, looks set to become the new president in the second count in June. Waldheim's career and his success in this election proves that post war Western Europe is still the Europe of the fascists and their collaborators.

Just before the election, Waldheim was exposed as a former Nazi officer who played a not insignificant role in the Nazi occupation and repression in the Balkans. Although Waldheim still holds to his story that he was an anti-Nazi by conviction documents uncovered recently prove that he joined the Nazi Youth league and the Stormtroopers as soon as Austria was annexed by Hitler in 1938.

He was an officer in the Nazi war machine and was based in Salonika in Greece during the time of the forced removal of the Jewish population of Greece to the gas chambers of eastern Europe. The Unit of which Waldheim was the officer in charge was responsible for the interrogation of prisoners and for other 'special tasks'. Documents prove that he was not only fully briefed on such orders as those authorising the seizure of 'whole male populations' 'insofar as they do not need to be shot or hanged', and for the retaliation by 'shooting or hanging of hostages and the destruction of surrounding localities' for surprise attacks, but that he was responsible for briefing others in these orders. For his part in an anti-partisan drive in Yugoslavia, Waldheim was decorated by the fascist Croat puppet state.

He was also fully aware of the deportation of Jews from mainland Greece and from the islands. His office in Salonika was the communication centre for this operation. In any case, Salonika itself was the object of a massive deportation operation—the entire Jewish population of 50,000 was rounded up from 1943 onwards and sent to the gas chambers of eastern Europe.

Waldheim, in his post war years, falsified his war record. He claimed in his recently published memoirs that in the crucial years he was pursuing his law studies in Austria, having been discharged as unfit from the army. This false history was given the seal of approval by repeated security clearances by the USA from 1945 onwards. He went on to become a major Western statesman—firstly as Minister of Defence in Austria, then as Secretary General of the United Nations.

Waldheim's exposure has revealed more than his own murderous steps on the road to power in the West after the war. It has also reaffirmed that British and US 'deNazification' of Europe was a farce from beginning to end. In Greece these two victorious powers went on to finish the job which the Germans couldn't: that of defeating the communist and partisan army and of keeping Greece by force in the imperialist world.

His expected success in the presidential election has demonstrated that there is no great divide between the fascist Austria of 1938-45 and that of post-war capitalist Austria. The ex-fascists responsible for the slaughter of the Jews, communists and gypsies and others are still part of the ruling class and enjoy considerable support.

The current Minister of Defence recently unveiled a memorial tablet to General Loehr, a Nazi murderer executed by Tito's partisans after victory in Yugoslavia. A local mayor called recently for the 'killing of a few rich Jews' to balance the town's books.

If Europe's books are balanced the fascists and their followers will have to pay their debts—Waldheim owes and still has to pay.

Maggie Mellon

Tory cuts mean women die

Recent figures show the serious rise in cervical cancer amongst thousands of women in Britain that is at epidemic levels. In the next 15 years more than 8,000 women will die of the disease; this year alone, 580 women born after 1940 who contract the cancer will die and this will double to 1,200 by the beginning of the next century.

These horrifying figures are the result of the Tory government's callous attitude to women's health since they came to office. In March 1984 in the *Medical News*, Dr R Yule of Christie Hospital, Manchester, said, 'If there was any doubt that there is now an epidemic of cervical cancer amongst young women, that doubt is now gone'. 49% of women with stage 1 cancer of the cervix would be dead within 3 years and he urged the DHSS to reduce the recommended 5 years for cervical screening to 3 years.

The necessary funding for a computerised cell scanner which gives very fast and accurate readings (compared to a 20% error rate in

conventional laboratories) was not forthcoming and in the *General Practitioner* (2 August 1985), Kenneth Clarke, the Tory Minister for Health) again denied the need for central funding 'to put the UK's chaotic screening programme to rights'.

Medical evidence has shown that it is poor, working class women who run the greatest risk of contracting cervical cancer whose partners work in stressful, unhealthy jobs—particularly lorry drivers, fishermen, and miners who work underground (Doctor 11 July 1985). Not, as is frequently claimed in the media, women termed 'promiscuous'.

Meanwhile, two women consult-

ants in obstetrics and gynaecology, Wendy Savage and Pauline Bousquet, are fighting for their right to continue vital work caring for women in the most oppressed sections of the working class, particularly amongst black women.

Pauline Bousquet, who runs a clinic for women in the East End of London and who gives sympathetic and thorough care to her patients has been deprived of this work by the health authority on the grounds of 'rationalisation of its services'. She is determined not to accept redundancy and to fight what she sees as prejudice against her 'women-centred approach' to her work.

Wendy Savage's trial is now over (see *FRFI* 57 for details) and due to pressure from doctors, the Medical Defence Union has agreed to pay her legal costs. The trial result is awaited.

The courage of Pauline Bousquet and Wendy Savage in the face of the most reactionary prejudices of the medical profession, and the hundreds of women who have supported their struggles are a challenge to Tory policies and the capitalist system which cares nothing for poor women's health and is content to let thousands of women die unnecessarily.

Alexa Byrne

Unemployment hits new peak

Unemployment figures for March show a dramatic worsening of the situation. The seasonally adjusted total rose by 37,000 to 3.19 million. This was the fourth successive rise, the highest monthly increase since September 1981 and the worst March on record.

Of course, this official figure conceals the full extent of unemployment: the true level is above 4 million. The March figures are distorted by yet another change in the way figures are calculated, involving a two week delay in publication and the 'disappearance' of some 50,000 jobs. Since 1979 the government has made six major changes in the compilation of statistics, reducing the apparent total by about half a million. In addition, the figures

exclude the 600,000 on various training schemes.

The Tories have now decided to extend the period before which you can claim unemployment benefit if you have left a job 'without good cause' or are sacked for 'misconduct'. From October, the period will be extended from 6 to 13 weeks. People who are disqualified from claiming unemployment benefit for these reasons at present have a reduction of 40% in the supplementary benefit. They too will receive this reduced rate for 13 weeks instead of 6. If you fail to apply for a suitable job or place on a training scheme, your benefit will also be stopped for the same period. The Tories say this will cut £10m from the benefits bill by these savage measures.

Dave Burton

Chernobyl nuclear power tragedy

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Chernobyl has shown beyond doubt the devastating and uncontrollable nature of nuclear power. Civil nuclear power is after all merely a by-product of the process which started with the mass murder of hundreds of thousands by atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The civil nuclear programmes in the imperialist countries have always been and still are, despite government denials, inextricably linked to the production of plutonium for nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union has been forced to accelerate the pace of its nuclear power station building directly as a result of the imperialist-led arms race.

Sickening lies and hypocrisy

The nuclear accident at Chernobyl became for the politicians and media of the imperialist nations an occasion for anti-Soviet outpourings and sickening lies and hypocrisy. The initial reaction was to make wildly exaggerated claims about the extent of the disaster. US sources, repeated in Britain, said that 2,000 (or even 20,000 according to one estimate) were dead. US satellite pictures were flashed on to our television screens showing not one, but two reactors on fire. This example of high-technology spying turned out to be a double image!

However such exaggerations began to backfire as opinion polls in Britain showed 75% of the population now opposed to the further expansion of the nuclear programme. It became vital to convince

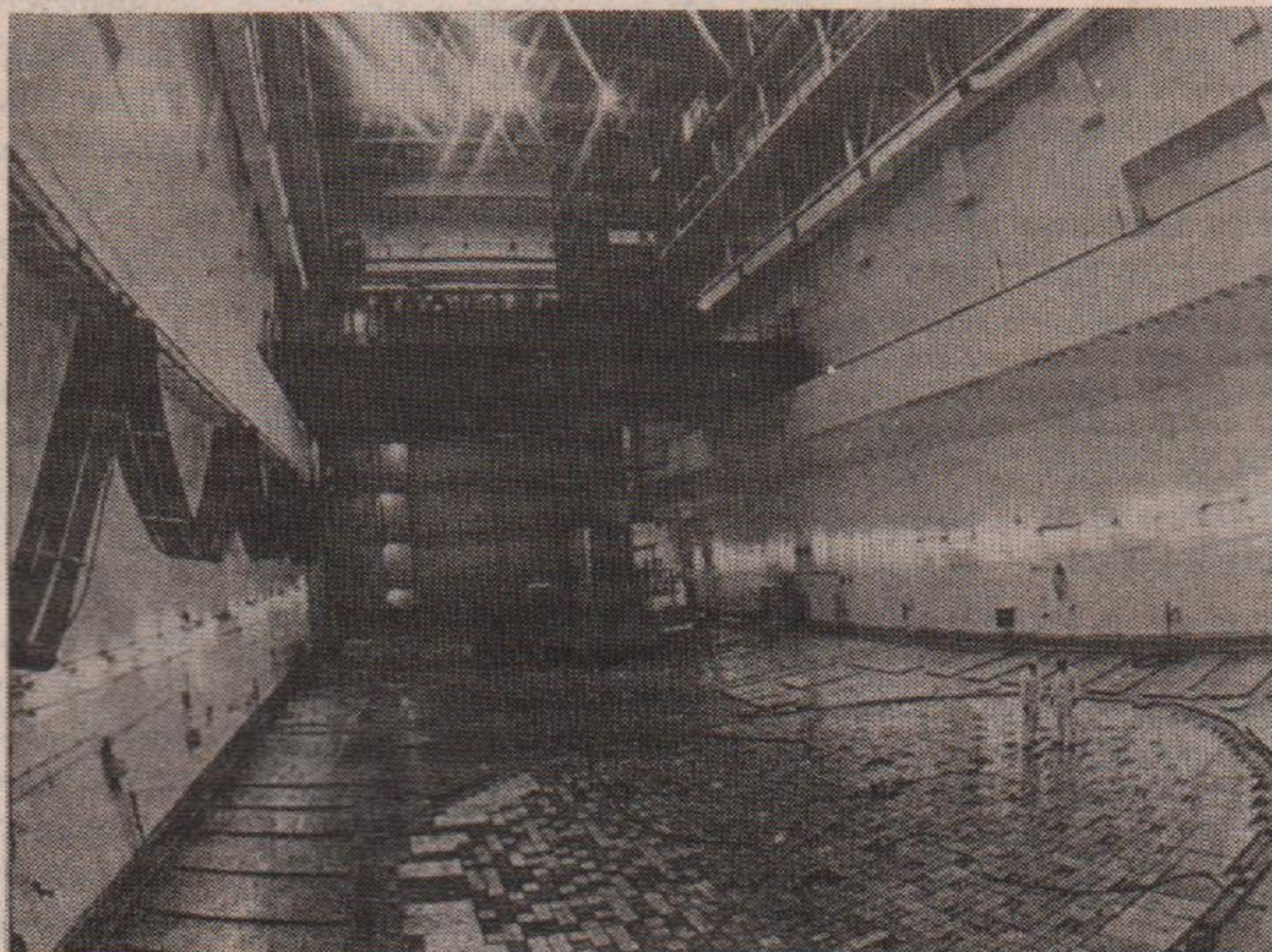
the British population that it couldn't happen here. The only way to do this was by lying.

Peter Walker, Minister for Energy castigated the Soviet Union for not following 'the procedures of democracies', saying that 'perhaps they will now copy some of the methods of nuclear inspection that operates in Western democracies.' This is rich when the British government have never allowed international inspections at the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant. They refused again this year after a demand from the EEC parliament following the latest in the line of 300-odd accidents at Sellafield.

The lies have continued over the 'safety' of British nuclear power stations. Both Peter Walker and Lord Marshall of the CEBG have said that the building of nuclear reactors without secondary containment, like the one at Chernobyl, would not be allowed in Britain. Yet Britain already has 26 ageing Magnox reactors which do not have such containment. The newest reactor proposed for Sizewell B—a pressurised water reactor—while contained, is the same type as that at Three Mile Island. A massive US study concluded that between 1969-79 169 accidents could have led to meltdowns.

The Soviet Union was also denounced for building the reactors near to population centres. And yet in Britain, where the population is incomparably more dense, the effect of a similar accident would kill

30,000 people, according to British scientists. Those living near nuclear power stations in Britain are not advised of safety procedures in case of accident. Peter Walker stated that there have never been 'emergencies involving significant radiological hazards to the public at any civil nuclear installation'. Yet the fire at Windscale (now Sellafield) in 1957



Chernobyl—inside the damaged reactor.

led to at least 30 deaths and probably very many more. He is able to lie because at the time Windscale was a military installation, as were all the early nuclear reactors set up in total secrecy by the Labour government after the war. Only 28 years later has the truth been allowed to emerge that the radiation which escaped contain-

ed polonium, a much more deadly type of radioactive isotope than the iodine 131 which was admitted to.

Chernobyl has posed particular problems for the Thatcher government. They were committed to building ten new nuclear power stations between 1982-92. But, as yet, not even the first, Sizewell B, has got off the ground due to public opposition and the long inquiry. After 1978, the US civil nuclear programme halted after the Three Mile Island accident which came within one hour of a meltdown. Since then it has become clear that there is a close connection between the Thatcher government's commitment to nuclear power and the continuing US need for supplies of plutonium.

what to do about the radiation effects of Chernobyl, worked at Windscale at the time of the fire. He reported to a conference in 1958 that 'In 1956 the rate of discharge of radioactivity was deliberately increased, partly to dispose of unwanted waste, but principally to yield better experimental data.' Four of the children who died of leukaemia in Seascale, a village near Windscale, were born in 1957.

Politicians, Tory and Labour alike, who attacked the Soviet government over Chernobyl, have collaborated in the systematic and deliberate pollution of the Irish Sea by the Sellafield plant until it is the most radioactive sea in the world.

Politicians, Tory and Labour alike, have remained silent on the continuing tragedy of the Australian aborigines of Maralinga who were murdered and maimed by exposure to massive doses of radiation as a result of British bomb tests between 1952-57. Many British and Australian servicemen who took part in the tests and have suffered ill-health as a consequence, have been denied compensation.

A hint of what would be in store for British people in case of a major accident came in the very week of the Chernobyl fire. It was revealed that a leak of 110lbs of radioactive gas had escaped from a nuclear power station at Dungeness in Kent—barely 75 miles from London—one of the biggest population centres in the world. It had occurred a month before. It had been covered up, of course.

FRFI sends its condolences to the Soviet people during this enormous tragedy. The lesson of Windscale, Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, must be to oppose nuclear power for as long as the search for a means to understand and control it remains secondary to the needs of the imperialist-led arms race.

Olivia Adamson

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communities, in attacking and murdering leading members of those communities and in petrol-bombing their homes, the vigilantes enjoy the full support and often participation of the apartheid police. Alexandra township in Johannesburg suffered three days of fighting leaving 18 dead when vigilantes and police masked in balaclavas and scarves rampaged through the streets, burning down the homes of leading members of the Alexandra Action Committee and raiding and burning its office. As we go to press Alexandra has been surrounded and sealed off by the police and army.

These attacks on Alexandra township are aimed at destroying the strong community organisation that has developed over the past year. In addition to the street committees, yard, shack, flat, bustown and hostel committees have been set up. Furthermore, with the launch of another consumer boycott on white-owned shops and businesses, all Alexandra's black stooge councillors have resigned.

Resistance in the 'homelands'

In the so-called 'independent homelands' black people are also organising to resist the reign of terror being unleashed on them by SADF soldiers, as well as 'homeland' police and vigilantes. In some areas the youth have left the villages because of police terror. They are now organising in mountain camps named after places such as 'Moscow' and 'Beirut'. Village, street and block committees are springing up everywhere in Lebowa - as are the youth congresses. As an activist described: 'The call in every village is to organise every person. Because those who are not with us can be used against the people'. The committees in the Northern Transvaal townships of Lebowa have set up a campaign to 'isolate police' with for example police in Mahwelereng being banned from hotels and shebeens. The organisation of these committees is crucial to counter the brutal onslaught on their communities. On 6 April, Lucky Makompo Kutumela an AZAPO and Media Workers of South Africa Union member died within a few hours of being held in the custody of Lebowa Police. On 11 April, UDF Northern Transvaal President Peter Nchabeleng died in police custody. The police claim he suffered a heart attack, but his family say he was in perfect health. A fellow detainee saw Peter being tortured. The attacks of vigilantes, often masquerading as 'comrades' to dupe their victims, have intensified. The latest 2 serious injuries caused by hand-grenade attacks on their

Deaths in detention

In the first three weeks of April, 5 young people died in police detention in South Africa. A total of 13 people died in detention in 1985, a figure only matched in 1976 and 1977 after the Soweto uprising. Never before have so many people died in police custody in such a short period. These deaths are murder committed by apartheid's death squad police.

- 26-year-old Johannes Mashego died in Parys, Orange Free State, a few hours after his arrest by the South African police.
- Eric Ngomane, a 22-year-old high school pupil, died at the Hazyview police station, in the Nelspruit area, about three weeks after his arrest.
- Peter Nchabeleng, 59, the UDF Northern Transvaal President, died within hours of being in Lebowa police custody.
- Lucky Makompo Kutumela, 25 a member of the Azanian Peoples' Organisation and the Media Workers Association of South Africa, died also within hours of being held by Lebowa police.
- Trade unionist Joel Phosholi, 28, died at the HF Verwoerd Hospital within a few hours of presenting himself at Pretoria Central police station.

In the first 4 months of this year 377 people have been detained - more than double last year's figures. 1559 people have died at the hands of apartheid police in the last 19 months, and 50% of those shot by these terrorists were shot in the back. Their blood is on the hands of Botha, Thatcher and Reagan.

homes, are 2 UDF members, Joyce Mabudafasi and Ernest Mokaba. 4 SADF soldiers now face murder charges after 6 youths died following a hand-grenade attack on a house in Lebowa.

Students organise for people's education

Students are trying hard to implement the decisions of the 1,300 delegate National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) Conference which voted for a return to classes at the end of March. The return is seen as a tactical question and the conference voted to strengthen and consolidate organisation in the schools, and to start implementing alternative People's Education Programmes in schools. However thousands of pupils continue to boycott classes in the face of severe police repression as well as the refusal of the education authorities to meet any of their demands.



POPPER/OTO

'We will liberate our country'

Hundreds of students have been arrested, and detained. Many schools have been forcibly closed down because of student organisation, and the SADF continue to occupy many schools. After a police raid of a primary school in Lamontville, 11 year old Prudence Mngadi died from gun-shot wounds. Many other children aged between 7-12 were injured in the legs and behind their necks. Teachers were not allowed to go near the injured - at gunpoint.

Despite this students voted to boycott classes on May Day and plan another massive 3 day stay-away from 16 June to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the Soweto risings.

The oppressed black people of South Africa are preparing for power. In the face of naked terror, they grow more

organised and more determined to be free of this racist oppression. Botha's attempts to con the people with yet further 'reforms' can only be treated with derision. He has announced that pass laws are to go yet at the same time the apartheid police have been granted even greater powers of repression. In any case, black people will only have the right to live in an urban area if they possess a job and approved accommodation. Tougher anti-squatting legislation is in the pipeline. The Group Areas Act will not be repealed either - the act provides for compulsory residential segregation.

It was Winnie Mandela who had the best answer to Botha's latest con-trick when she addressed the people of Munsieville on 13 April. 'We are going to

dismantle apartheid ourselves. That programme will be brought to you by the ANC. Together, hand in hand with our sticks of matches, with our necklaces, we shall liberate our country'. This statement was met with hysterical outrage by the regime and the press who interpreted it as a call for unbridled violence. But what Winnie Mandela said is true. The people of South Africa will meet the unbridled terror of the regime with every defence at their disposal in a disciplined fightback. Apartheid cannot be reformed, it must be smashed. Winnie Mandela was right to ask Botha and his lackey press the question they cannot answer: 'Why were they not hysterical when children were killed in the townships?'

Ruby Khan

Apartheid's debt

On 1 September 1985 South Africa was forced to announce a unilateral suspension of repayments on its \$24 bn debt. Certain banks, especially US banks, had refused to renew short-term credit facilities previously available to South African banks. The Botha regime's failure to quell the heroic and sustained resistance of black people had finally called into question its ability to guarantee the flow of profits made from investing in apartheid. The fact that South Africa was immediately forced to suspend payments on its debt shows how dependent the racist regime is on loans from the imperialist banks.

Stewart Bell's recent pamphlet *Apartheid's Debt to the West. The banks and the South African lending crisis* gives details of how that dependence built up. 80 per cent of South Africa's debt is held by banks in only four countries, Britain, USA, Germany and Switzerland. At the end of 1984 British banks had claims on South Africa of \$5.6 bn, US banks \$3.9 bn and Swiss banks \$2 bn. Thirty key banks hold over 70 per cent of South Africa's debt and have been involved in negotiations with the South African authorities.

While individual bankers have called for 'reform' in South Africa, implying that an agreement might depend on this, at no time were the banks prepared to force such change by demanding immediate repayment. As Stewart Bell says 'the bottom line was that the banks sought agreement with the apartheid state, not a role in its downfall. They merely awaited the correct opportunity for a deal.' The deal soon came. Three British banks, Barclays, National Westminster and Standard Chartered are part of a 12 member committee formed by the banks to implement the tentative settlement agreed between South Africa

and the banks in February 1986.

That agreement means South Africa making a 'goodwill' down payment of \$500, 5 per cent of the \$10 bn due to be repaid by March 1987. An extra 1 per cent interest will be paid on outstanding debt. In return, the banks accepted that the suspension of repayments would run until March 1987 (later extended to June). Future repayments will be discussed in September 1986. Some short-term debt will be converted to three year maturities at a higher rate of interest. The immediate economic pressure is off the racist regime.

British banks are crucial to sustaining the apartheid regime. Barclays with \$1.2 bn (£800 m) and Standard Chartered with \$1.4 bn are the largest creditors. The Hill Samuel Group was involved in underwriting the largest amount of loans to South Africa, between mid-1982 and end 1984, of \$1,397 m. Other British banks lending to South Africa include Midland, National Westminster, Schroders Ltd, Cazenove & Co, Guinness Peat Group PLC, Hambros PLC, Kleinwort, Benson, Lonsdale PLC, NM Rothschild and Sons Ltd, and Strauss, Turnbull & Co (see

Bank Loans to South Africa mid-1982 to end 1984 by Eva Militz).

Stewart Bell shows how at crucial periods bank loans have been critical in sustaining the apartheid regime. They helped finance a military and police budget that grew by 1984 to 27.8 per cent of government expenditure. They offered loans used to build South Africa's indigenous arms industry. In July 1985 Barclays financed an order for British equipment to ARMSCOR, the South African state arms corporation (See *Barclays Shadow Report 1986*). These loans have helped to fund South Africa's capital investment programme in power, energy transport, communications and the military.

The banks were, until recently, keen to lend. Profits were good and reliable and the fees for arranging loans, especially short-term ones, were very lucrative. It has only been the changed political circumstances and the threat to their profits that have forced the banks to hold back. That the banks believe that they still could have a very profitable future in South Africa is not only illustrated by the 'friendly' stand they have taken in debt negotiations but also by the fact that Lloyds Bank has put in a £1.2 bn bid to buy off Standard Chartered Bank. The latter has a 39 per cent controlling interest in Stanbic, which with Barclays National controls 50 per cent of the banking sector of South Africa.

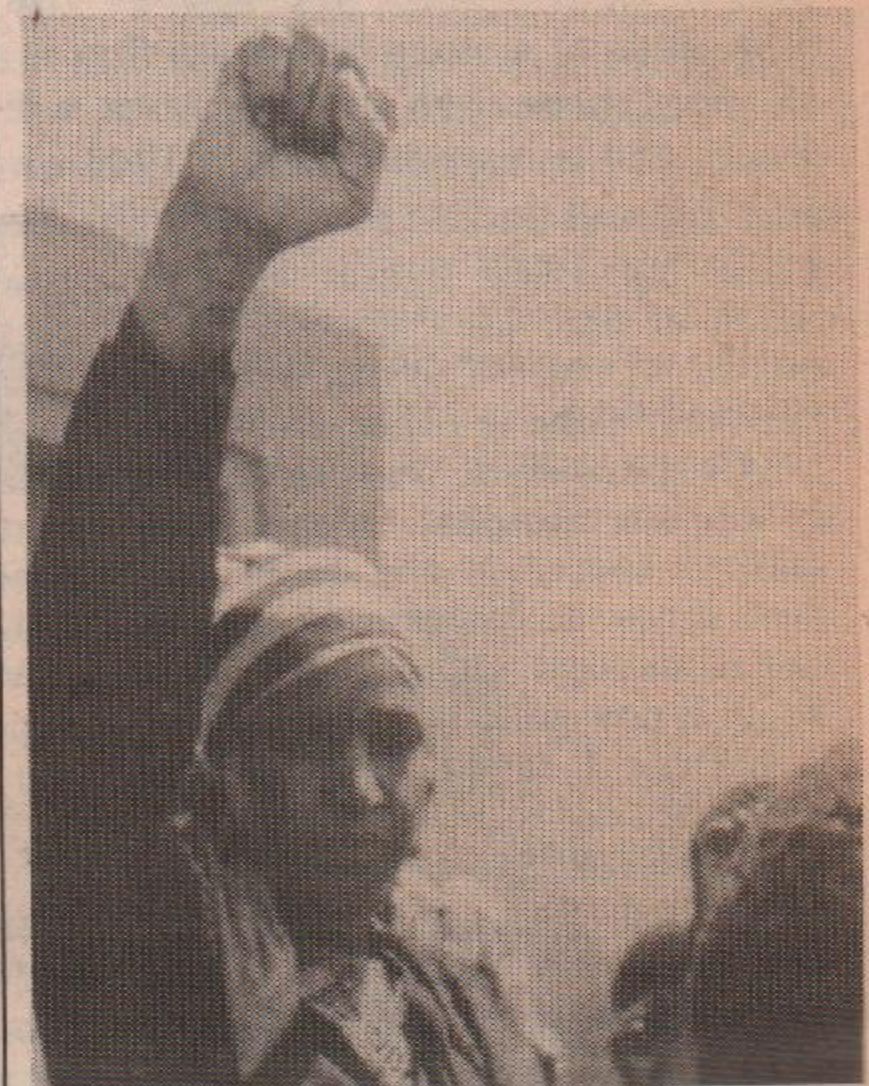
David Reed

Apartheid's Debt to the West, The Banks and the South African lending crisis by Stewart Bell. Published by End Loans to Southern Africa, PO Box 686, London NW5 2NW, 80p

Behind-the-scenes delicacy

In the last few weeks the press has buzzed with rumours of prospects for peaceful change in South Africa, including the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC. Much of this speculation is based on the recommendations of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group which is due to report in full next month. The Eminent Persons Group hopes to pull off the negotiating coup of the century in an attempt to put an end to the growing revolutionary crisis in South Africa and find some middle way between apartheid's racism and people's power.

The Eminent Persons Group was set up following the Commonwealth Heads of State Conference in Nassau in October 1985. FRFI readers will remember that this 'Group' was proposed in order to stave off growing calls for sanctions against South Africa. In the meantime the Group has visited South Africa, on a 'fact-finding mission' including talks with Nelson Mandela in Pollsmoor Prison. As a result of its 'investigations' the Group has recommended that Nelson Mandela be released and the ANC unbanned, in return for the ending of the ANC's guerilla war. These moves would, they hope, form the basis for negotiations with the ANC about South Africa's future.



On 6 May it was announced that President Botha had sent letters to Heads of State including Thatcher and Reagan at the Tokyo summit urging them to publicly acknowledge the 'reforms' the apartheid regime has introduced. The *Financial Times* (6/5/86) interpreted this as 'delicate behind-the-scenes moves... to prepare the ground for a possible legalising of the African National Congress and the release of its jailed leader Nelson Mandela'. However 'delicate' these moves may be 'behind-the-scenes', out in the daylight any moves made with the support of Thatcher and Reagan should be viewed as extremely suspect.

Botha himself has little room for manoeuvre. Even the petty and empty reforms introduced so far have led to a backlash amongst National Party supporters and increased activity by the far-right including the emergence of white paramilitary vigilante gangs. Botha's main task is to keep South Africa's huge profit-making capability intact and calm the jitters of international investors. The only possible response to black militancy and uprising is a very small carrot and a very large stick. Despite the ending of the State of Emergency, detentions, murders and outright terror have increased since the beginning of 1986.

The Eminent Persons Group are desperately trying to create a credible 'middle ground' which will isolate the revolutionaries - the 'Comrades' who are organising in the townships, the militant youth, the trade union activists - and prepare the way for negotiations with Botha for a 'democratic' capitalist state which will guarantee imperialist super-profits.

With such 'behind-the-scenes' delicacy in progress, Winnie Mandela's speech at Munsieville on 13 April was considered by some as inopportune. In fact she was quite right to take the side of the youth in struggle at a time when there are many bourgeois trends who will be all too ready to sell-out the fight for freedom, justice and real democracy for a few crumbs from apartheid's table. Our job in Britain is to build maximum solidarity for the struggle and expose every attempt by Thatcher and Reagan to sell the people short of their birthright.

Carol Brickley



Press silence

Not surprisingly, the British press which is owned and controlled by the same people who are anxiously watching their investments in South Africa, has been reluctant to give so much as a column inch to the fact that a unique and courageous event is going on outside the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square, in the heart of tourist London. The Non Stop Picket has proved itself no one-minute-wonder.

Since 19 April, over three weeks ago, it has established itself, shouting, singing and petitioning outside the gates of the embassy. It has fought off attempts by the police to harass it off the street. It is a source of dismay and outrage to the Embassy who dare not leave by their own front door. It is the cause of heated exchanges between the police, the Home Office, the Foreign Office and the Embassy. The picket will not be got rid of. It is here to stay.

But it's not news to the British press. Princess Parasite Diana faints in Montreal - headlines. Soviet dissident holds ten minute hungerstrike outside the Soviet Embassy - front page news. Hundreds of people show solidarity with struggle against apartheid by mounting a sustained and serious protest picket outside the apartheid embassy - silence. British press - Imperialist Press.

Policing the Picket

Once again, the police have taken their orders on policing the City AA picket straight from South Africa House itself.

This is no surprise—the Cannon Row Police have danced to Ambassador Worrall's tune for the last 4 years. Everytime, City AA has beaten both the police and their apartheid master.

The Non Stop Picket will be no exception to this. Police started from day one by refusing a parking space for a van to hold equipment. They then proceeded to 'arrest' equipment on the pavement for 'obstruction of the highway'. They have only managed to seize some stale sandwiches, broken biro's and out-of-date leaflets so far for 'processing' in Cannon Row police station. They have illegally arrested three petitioners for 'obstruction'—a non-arrestable offence! They have arrested Norma Kitson—for assault. They have arrested two picketers for sitting down in the middle of the night.

Chief Inspector Doggett, who the embassy hope will be their new broom to sweep the pavement clear with, has had quite a lot of egg on his face already. Far from harassing the picket off the pavement, the more outrageously he behaves towards the picket the more determined we are to stay there. His attempts on 1 May to squeeze the picket into a tiny space, well away from the embassy, led to more than fifty people gathering on the pavement within an hour so that May Day on the picket was a victory for us and one of the best days on the picket so far.

Policing the schools

The police, who clearly would rather that teenagers were engaged in more anti-social activities than fighting for human rights, have approached the headmaster of a local school to say that the pupils supporting the picket are 'an obstruction'. The headmaster has obliged by putting Trafalgar Square out of bounds. Not one of the pupils from that or any other school has ever even been warned by the police about the possible offence of obstruction, nor has any of the stewards on the picket been spoken to by the police about it.

...And political police

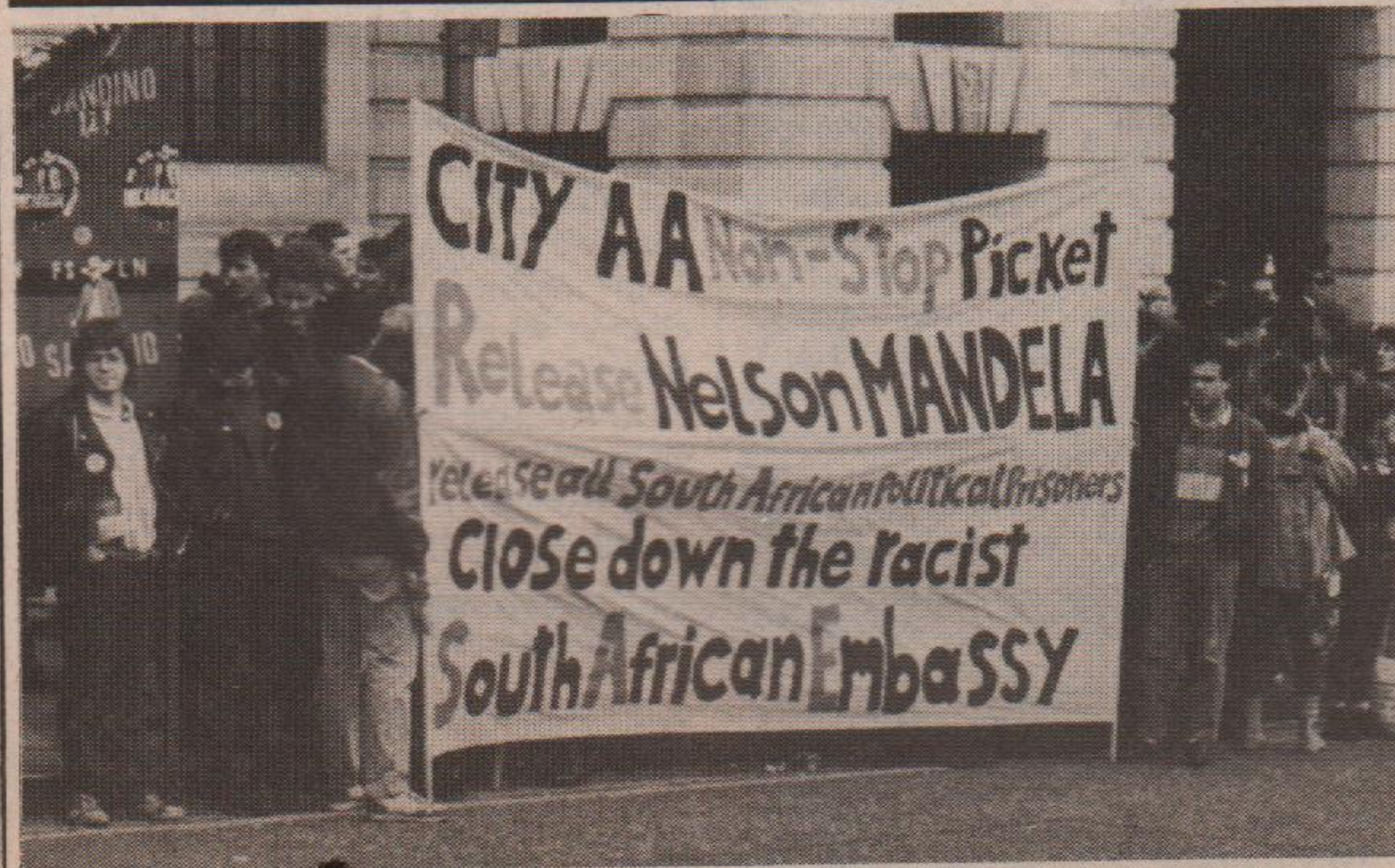
Three black students from a London school took the petition for Mandela's release into their school. One teacher refused to sign on the grounds that he wouldn't be able to go to South Africa if he signed. He didn't get a favourable response to this cowardice! He involved the headteacher in the dispute. She insisted on a written apology. She also declared herself a supporter of the AAM, from which City AA has been expelled. After phoning them (for guidance?) she ordered that the petitions and leaflets could not be brought into the school.

The generations at school now have an example before them of the hypocrisy of adults who try to 'protect' them from political realities and to prevent them from taking sides—but who can calmly accept that children as young as 8 years old are detained and murdered in South Africa. These political policemen in the schools end up on the side of the police here and the police in South Africa.



Non-Stop for Mandela

'I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you, the people, are not free. Your freedom and mine cannot be separated. I will return.'



At this crucial time for the struggle in South Africa, the Non Stop Picket outside the apartheid embassy here in Britain can and must play a significant role in mobilising solidarity for the uncompromising stand of Mandela and the heroic fighting masses in South Africa.

The apartheid regime, battered from within, is clutching desperately for the support of its allies in the imperialist countries. They, in their turn, are eager to find a way of stemming the tide of revolution in South Africa before the vanguard forces of the popular struggle achieve their goal of the total destruction of apartheid exploitation and repression.

Mandela, in rejecting Botha's conditions last year, placed himself firmly on the side of the vanguard forces in the struggle; the 'young comrades', the striking workers, the students, the schoolchildren who go out to face the armed might of the apartheid state armed only with stones. His declaration then that 'I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you, the people, are not free. Your freedom and mine cannot be separated. I will return!' caused jubilation and pride among the people fighting on the front line, to whom the years of Mandela's imprisonment are a symbol of the chains of apartheid slavery on all black people in South Africa.

International support and solidarity with that revolutionary struggle, which is the only means of achieving real justice, equality and freedom in South Africa, is the duty and task of all those who reject racism and imperialism. Such solidarity is what the Non Stop Picket is based on. It can be built on. Just as the racist regime in South Africa and its imperialist friends have a common cause against the peoples' struggles, so have the working classes of the imperialist countries a common cause with those struggling in South Africa. A defeat for the apartheid regime will be a defeat for Thatcher and Reagan and their class. The Non Stop Picket is an expression of that common cause. It must be built into a national focus of anti-apartheid activity and protest. The demand of the Non Stop Picket is a clear one: Unconditionally, we want Mandela Free! All of the thousands in London and in Britain who support this standpoint can be won to supporting and building the picket and making sure that its message of unconditional support for the struggle to destroy apartheid reaches the ruling class—the bankers in their boardrooms, Thatcher in her cabinet.

From a leader of the struggle in South Africa

'I have always known that you are with us, this action planned for 19 April is the most magnificent demonstration of your group to our call and it will never be forgotten. We hope you will be able to withstand the cold and the rain and all the other things you have come up against. Never forget that our children, our people are withstanding detention and torture, imprisonment and murder, starvation and bullets. May nothing deter you. We are watching you and standing with you. Forward! Forward! or, as we say Amandla! Ngawethu!'



On 19 April, the City AA Non Stop Picket for the release of Nelson Mandela was launched by over 1000 people. The demonstration from Kings Cross to Trafalgar Square, headed by a brilliantly coloured patchwork banner, had a carnival atmosphere as it sang and shouted along the way to start the picket. On arrival at South Africa House it was greeted by a crowd of 300 who had gathered there in the police barriers which surrounded the embassy.

Carol Brickley, Convenor of City AA and leading member of the RCG/FRFI, welcomed the demonstration in an opening speech.

'We are going to stay here until Nelson Mandela is released. Our central slogan is Release Nelson Mandela not just because he is a courageous fighter and leader of the oppressed masses of South Africa, but most importantly because he has refused to allow the regime to separate his freedom from the freedom of all South African political prisoners and from the freedom of the South African people as a whole'.

Guest speaker was David Kitson, the former political prisoner of apartheid whose conditions of imprisonment had inspired the 86 Day Picket in 1982 for his release and the release of all political prisoners in South Africa... Other speakers at the rally were Norma Kitson, founding member of City AA, Richard Balfe MEP, Spartacus R, Alex Mitchell of the WRP/Newsline, who have helped with stewarding of the picket every night and Hamilton Keke of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania. David Reed spoke for the RCG/FRFI, which had played a central role in the planning and mobilising for the picket. His speech expressed the anger of many in the crowd about the terror bombing of Libya by the USA with British help which had taken place earlier that week. He attacked the terrorism of imperialism, of Reagan and Thatcher and Botha, all willing to ruthlessly use state power to defend the rich and their property, while condemning the 'violence' of people fighting for freedom.

The picket was launched - 19 April was only the beginning of its job.

Richard Balfe MEP

'Congratulations to City of London Anti-Apartheid Group for organising what should have been organised by the national Anti-Apartheid Movement. Because to stand outside South Africa House at this time of oppression in South Africa is a thing which is needed in the Labour movement and in the left.'

MOBILISE

The pavement outside South Africa House must become the launching pad for real mass action against apartheid. Each and every person who supports the picket must take on this job.

● If you are a student—get your student union or college societies to sponsor the picket and to pledge regular times when they will be supporting it. Take leaflets, stickers and posters, and make sure that every student at your college knows about the picket.

● If you are unemployed—take leaflets and stickers to the dole with you when you sign on. Encourage those on the dole to come down to the picket. Use your time to help make placards, write leaflets, write to your local press, do radio phone ins, help in the office and publicity work.

● If you work—put a motion to your trade union branch, to support the picket and bring your banner down; take a collection round your workplace, get leaflets round your workmates, ask them to come down to the picket once a week with you after work.

● If you are in another group or campaign: women's groups, CND, AA groups, anti-racist campaigns—ask a speaker to come to your meetings from the picket, get your group to pledge a regular time to come. You can bring your own banners and leaflets and address the picket about why you are there, and what your campaign is about.

● Children—Saturday afternoons on the picket is run by children. Frank, Susan, Helen, Ciara, Tahir and others chair, lead songs, and slogans, read out their messages and poems. All children welcome to help and make their contribution. City Group also want to organise a regular time for a creche to look after younger children away from the picket so that their parents can be free to join in. Any offers of help for this?

Already Haringey, Bradford, Dundee and Southwark AA groups are supporting the picket, as are women's groups, gay and lesbian groups, and other campaigns and organisations. City Group wants Labour Party branches, SWP branches and student societies, and all other socialist and progressive groups and parties to come to the picket and play their part.

● Mobilise for the Picket—organise flyposting, leafletting, trade union and dole queue work, get speakers to your meetings, raise money, bring food and coffee. Make your contribution.

Tottenham - Human rights and the community relations hypocrites

The state's attack on the community of Broadwater Farm Estate continues apace. More than one in ten of the residents have been arrested and saturation policing and low-grade intelligence gathering has given the authorities a profile of all of Tottenham's residents. Against this background of continuing arrests, intimidation and criminalisation, we see the well paid servants and the self appointed leaders of the community, acting out their roles as the hypocrites they are.

The Haringey Community Relations Council (HCRC) recently put on a dramatic bid to entice black people into the racist British police force. Together with the Metropolitan Police, the HCRC, under the auspices of Jeff Crawford, self-appointed 'spokesperson' for the community, put on an 8 day show using 4 black police officers from nearby stations to recruit. This collaboration is a gross insult to the black community. Crawford has refused to support the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, condemned the youth and the risings, and now openly sides with the police who continue to terrorise

Home Office attacks children

● The racism of the British Home Office, which deports 50 black people a week from this country, is being highlighted again in the case of six year old Minar Ahmed adopted son of Gulam and Rowsan Choudhary. Rowsan and Gulam are both British citizens, and there is no question of them being deported. They have been married for 20 years but for medical reasons are unable to have children.

In 1983, whilst on holiday in Bangladesh they adopted Minar, then aged 3. Minar's mother had died and his father was unable to look after him, and he had no other relatives.

Gulam Choudhary returned to Britain after Minar was adopted and Rowsan stayed in Bangladesh with Minar whilst his entry clearance was being sorted out. In September 1985, after two years of waiting and being told that it could take a further two or three years before Minar could 'officially' enter Britain, Rowsan and Minar joined Gulam here. On arrival at the airport, immigration officials issued a temporary visa to Minar. However, the statement was taken by an interpreter who did not inform Rowsan that she would need to apply separately for full entry clearance for Minar - indeed, the 'interpreter' spoke a different language!

Now the temporary visa has expired and the Home Office are set to put Minar alone on a plane to a village in Bangladesh where he knows no-one. His own father has moved and cannot be traced. Minar's deportation has been delayed for a few weeks while his case is being reviewed by the Home Office.

Only mass campaigning can prevent these racist forced removals - campaigning such as the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign march from Manchester to London starting on 5 July.

Kayode Olafimihan

Smash immigration controls!

● Rahela and Khalid Siddiqui who have recently had their appeal against Khalid's deportation turned down, held a picket outside Labour's Shadow Home Secretary Gerald Kaufman's surgery in Gorton, Manchester on 26 April. This well organised event attracted 45 people including a large contingent from the Wives and Fiancées Campaign, FRFI and others. Petitions and letters of protest were handed in to Kaufman, who addressed the picket line with a half promise of 'supporting their right to remain in this country', but without making any reference to removing racist immigration controls if Labour win the next General Election. Only public campaigning can win Rahela & Khalid their rights, so please contact them with letters of support/protest at Home Office's decision at RKDC c/o 584/586 Stockport Rd, Longsight, Manchester 12, case ref no 5599727.

FRFI sends its congratulations to Manzura Bibi and Abdullah Shah who have fought for, and won the right to live together in this country.

Brian

black and working class people. Crawford is but one of a band of well paid lackeys who will stand with the institutions that pay them, rather than with those suffering from racism and oppression.

Community relations are close to the heart of Dominic Tweedie, Chair of Haringey Anti-Apartheid and member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Haringey Council had agreed to name a small development 'Nelson Mandela Close' in the summer of 1985. Upset by attacks from local Tory racists, Tweedie hurried to defend the naming, but, ever eager to extend the hand of friendship, stated that he 'would not dream of posing an alternative to the naming of something after the late Keith Blakelock.' He writes:

'Nelson Mandela is identified more than any other person in the world today with the struggle for a united, non racial and free society. As someone who has worked for these ends, we think Keith Blakelock would most likely have approved of the naming.'

Cover-up of Cynthia Jarrett's death

On 14 April the Director of Public Prosecutions gave official blessing to the police cover-up of the events surrounding the death of Mrs Cynthia Jarrett on 5 October 1985. This took eleven volumes of reports, 200 'relevant evidence' witness statements collected over six months plus the lies of the eight police present at the time. The 'independent' Police Complaints Authority chose to ignore previous findings against the police involved, namely:

1. Detective Constable Randall was judged by the Coroner's jury to be lying when he stated at the inquest that he did not touch Mrs Jarrett.
2. That police were found to have falsely brought charges of assault against Floyd Jarrett.
3. That the police did not have a proper search warrant for the Jarrett's home on 5 October.

This whole pantomime of the police investigating the police naturally found that the police were in no way responsible for Mrs Jarrett's death. The curtain closed on the scene when Scotland Yard stated that no disciplinary action would be taken against any of the police officers involved. However, the DPP has now issued instructions that in future all warrants should bear the time as well as the date of issue.

The local Tottenham Labour Party Young Socialists (Militant) may not share the same personal insight into the

late PC Blakelock as Tweedie, but they do succeed in undermining support for the right of the local community to defend itself against police attacks just as surely.

Their elitist view is that the youth of the inner cities experience only frustration and despair' and that we (one?) must not sow illusions about 'rioting'. Rather, 'the youth must organise to bring about the democratic accountability of the police.' This lecture to the youth took place at a LPYS public meeting ten minutes away from the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign (BWFDC) meeting called for defendants and their relatives to discuss and organise for the future. By calling a separate meeting, the LPYS sectarians chose to stand outside, opposed to the reality of the struggle.

Speakers at the BWFDC meeting included Gareth Peirce, a lawyer of great experience in the Bradford 12, Newham 8 and miners' defence cases, and Jeremy Corbyn MP. The meeting made clear to everyone the need for the Defence Campaign to gain new support, new resources and new confidence if it is to go forward and win real victories.

In addition to the seven murder charges which will come up at the Old Bailey at the end of summer, there are 70 to 80 cases of riot and affray coming up around September. These Public Order charges carry heavy sentences, including life imprisonment. One case

comes earlier than the others: Richard Gibson will be tried at the Old Bailey on 22-23 May. His 'confession' contains the names of 130 people. It was extracted under heavy duress, threats and police brutality. A picket of the court will be mounted.

The last 6 months of criminalisation and harassment of the community has been accompanied by a torrent of racism from local Tories, sell-outs by self-appointed black spokespersons, silence from the Labour Council and a steady exodus from the hard day-to-day campaigning work by 'left' groups, many with large branches in the locality. The human rights of the poor, the black and working class people of Tottenham have been ignored or smothered by hypocrisy. Human rights means to live free from poverty, racism and humiliation and they are rights which must be fought for. The whole community must organise: we must cut through the hypocrisy of 'community representatives' and state funded institutions.

Susan Davidson
Ken Hughes

Nottingham Black Community under attack

The black community in Nottingham is being subjected to a horrifying series of police attacks, where police, acting on search warrants, smash down doors and wreck homes under the guise of searching for 'drug dealers'.

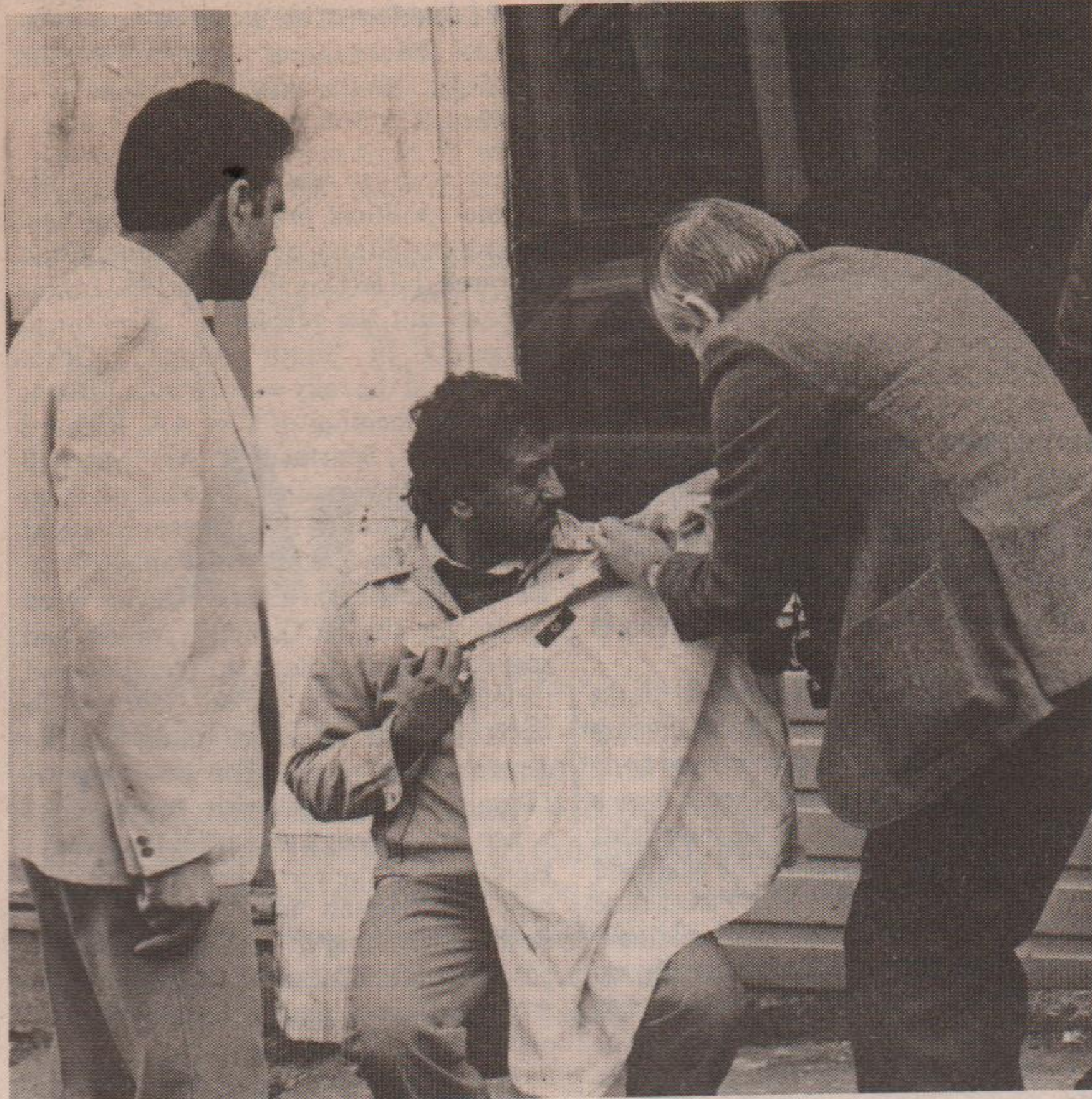
In one incident last month, four officers - including a woman - smashed down the front door of a young mother's home and ransacked it, pouring oil and sugar over the kitchen. Police then arrested the woman with her four year old daughter. They refused the woman's request for her little girl to be looked after by her grandmother. The two were held in a cell at Radford Road police station, and for two hours were refused food or water. When the police finally took the little girl out of the cell - saying that her grandmother had arrived to collect her - they interrogated her, asking her if 'Mummy smoked ganja'. The woman and her daughter were later released without charge. In common with other victims of this latest round of police terror (nine house raids were reported in the early part of last month alone), the woman asked not to be identified, for fear of police reprisals, and describes the effect on her daughter as 'traumatic'.

Pubs and community centres in Nottingham have also been subjected to police raids. Hand in hand with systematic raids on the community goes an intense programme of 'stop and search'. One 16 year old youth stated that he had been stopped over 20 times by the police this year alone. He has never been charged. His story is echoed by many others: a 19 year old added that he dares not venture out at night for fear of police terror.

This programme of police harassment is not new to the black community - in 1981 it resulted in the uprisings. In Nottingham, the unemployment rate amongst black youth is 45% and rising.

The events in Nottingham are a deliberate attempt to harass and intimidate our community. We must organise to defeat them. Black people in this country are here to stay and here to fight. If necessary, fight we will.

Charine James



Passers-by come to the aid of a Bradford taxi-driver

Racists escalate attacks

Since racist headmaster Honeyford received his golden handshake racist and fascist organisations have escalated their campaign of terror against Yorkshire's black community. They are acting in complete confidence that their acts of violence will go unchallenged by the press, the police and the local authority.

Asian taxi drivers have become victims of a sinister campaign of organised attacks, with 16 separate incidents in the last 2 months. On 12 April, six taxis

were called to a Bradford pub. 30 white men were waiting armed with bats, chairlegs and sticks. Two taxi drivers were knocked unconscious, a third was

beaten up and two cars were smashed. Only eight of the 30 attackers were arrested. Eight days later, a driver from Preston Taxis had his face slashed by two white men, neither of whom were arrested. On the same day, another taxi driver was beaten on the head with an iron bar and required stitches. No arrests were made. On 26 April another driver was beaten by 4 whites who told him 'It's because of you fucking Pakis that I'm unemployed.' His money and car were stolen. Again no arrests were made. When a march was called to protest at these attacks, the police forced its cancellation on the grounds that they needed more notice.

Yet the police waste no time in prosecuting the victims of these attacks when they try to defend themselves. In June 1985, Mohammed Iqbal picked up a fare from a nightclub in Sheffield. The fare refused to pay, shouted racial abuse at Iqbal and attacked him with a piece of wood, causing injuries that required stitches. Iqbal picked a hammer from his tool box to defend himself. Now Iqbal faces a charge of actual bodily harm while his attacker walks free. A picket of the court case organised by Sheffield Asian Youth Movement was supported by over 40 people. The case has been postponed to June.

Over the last six months, fascist thugs have singled out Asian school children and youth, particularly in the Manningham area. Pupils at Belle Vue School have been terrorised repeatedly. On 11 March, white youths armed with spanners and wearing NF badges entered the playground pushing children around and pouring beer over the heads of female Asian pupils. On 8 March a gang of 30 white youths smashed up an amusement arcade used by Asian youth. On 23 March a black youth had his wrist slashed and in April another was stabbed in a city centre pub.

While the black community in Yorkshire is under fascist siege, the Conservative Party field Honeyford as a speaker and candidate in the May local elections. Meanwhile the police do nothing to stop the fascists. Indeed they have tried to defend them and have sought to stop black victims of attacks from talking to the press.

Jenefer Thomas

PEOPLE AND POLITICS

Simone De Beauvoir Socialist, writer and fighter

Simone de Beauvoir, who died in April, was a socialist and a great writer who made one of the most important intellectual and political contributions this century to the struggle for women's liberation.

The Second Sex, Simone de Beauvoir's major work, is regarded rightly as the single most authoritative analysis of the condition of women in capitalist society. Her standpoint was materialist:

'...these dissimilarities (between men and women) are of a cultural and not of a natural order... I never cherished any idea of changing women's condition: it depends on the future of labour in the world; it will change significantly only at the price of a revolution in production.' (*Force of Circumstance*)

osophy at the Sorbonne, and also in her relationship with Jean Paul Sartre who she met there. This relationship was to continue until his death in the late 1970s.

The second world war, and the consequent occupation of France, brought both of them into active political life and away from their formerly abstract rejection of French bourgeois life and culture.

They were active in the resistance - hiding those hunted by the Nazis and helping carry out actions against the occupation and its collaborators. This

chauvinist position. Immediately after the war she embarked on *The Second Sex* which was published in 1949. It was reviled by the PCF which by that time was dominated by opportunism. It was actively striving to reconcile the working class with the wartime collaborators of the French state, but covered this position with a pseudo-proletarian stand on culture and theory.

The Algerian war of independence against France in the 1950s again brought her into direct political action. She said, of this war, that 'the horror my class inspires in me has been brought to a white heat by the Algerian war.' Opposition to the vicious French repression of the Algerian struggle put de Beauvoir and Sartre in physical danger. Their flat was attacked with petrol bombs. They were the object of a hate campaign in the pro-imperialist French press. Again, in the Vietnamese war for liberation against French imperialism, she put herself on the side of the oppressed and against the French bourgeoisie. She steadfastly refused to concede to the French chauvinism which infected the PCF.

The 1968 student-led insurrection in France found her still warmly open to debate and discussion on politics and struggle. Many of the obituaries to de Beauvoir have been concerned with her relationship with Sartre. The bourgeois press stress the relationship as though this is the major cause for her fame and for the respect which she has won - thus trying to ensure that her contribution will always be linked with and subservient to Sartre's. The left and feminist press, on the other hand, almost criticise her for a lifelong commitment which was clearly a major source of inspiration to her.

Her achievements and her clear independence of thought speak for themselves. Much of her creative ability to articulate and analyse women's oppression came from the inevitable conflict between the urge to self-determination and the ties and demands of commitment, not just in relation to Sartre but to the many others who she worked and lived with. This conflict enriched her work, and ensures its relevance and value.

Her books have a lasting relevance. *The Second Sex* demonstrates that the bonds on women's abilities are cultural and not biological or 'natural'. Her autobiography and her novels trace the major influences on her life, both personal and political, and will be read and appreciated by new generations of women because they honestly reflect the conflicts and problems of women fighting to understand themselves and the society they live in.

Maggie Mellon



De Beauvoir was born into a bourgeois French family in 1908. Her autobiography describes her struggle to find a personal and intellectual freedom from the narrow prejudices of this society. She found this freedom in her study of phil-

period provided the material for one of her best novels, *The Mandarins*, which reflected on the war years and the post-war arguments with the PCF (the French Communist Party) which she never felt able to join because of its narrow and

Life in Longriggind

Sean Connolly is a young Irishman who was recently released after spending three months on remand in Longriggind. In April he spoke at the successful FRFI meeting in Glasgow on the Scottish prison system. Sean talked to Graham Johnson about his experiences in Longriggind.

Sean Connolly and his friend, Steven Lewis, were accused of killing a Scottish loyalist in 1985. The two were defending themselves against a loyalist attack after a Republican march in Glasgow. In court, they argued that they had acted in self-defence. Sean was acquitted but Steven Lewis got 8 years. Prior to the trial, which Sean describes as being 'like a show trial', Sean was held for 13 weeks in Longriggind.

Longriggind is a remand centre for young offenders aged from 15 to 21. It is situated miles from anywhere and, says Sean, 'from the outside gives the impression that it is a caring establishment. But razor-wire, 35 foot fences, and hanging flower pots don't exactly go too well together.'

The centre is divided into four Halls, A, B, C and D. D Hall is a special observation hall for the 'extremely violent' prisoners. 'In this section prisoners are constantly observed no matter what they are doing,' Sean was held in D Hall.

All the prisoners are 'examined' by 'independent psychiatrists'. 'They go into great detail about your personal relationships. They start asking if you missed your girlfriend. If you say "Yes" they say "Do you honestly believe that she's missing you?" These little things are just to try and break your spirit. This has led to several suicide attempts and, as far as I know, a death by hanging a few years ago.'

The lights are kept burning all night. The prisoners are 'checked' - woken up - every 15 minutes. They spend 23 hours of the day locked up in their cells. Anyone who resists these conditions is subjected to systematic harassment. 'The screws push the young inmates about. If you stick up for yourself you end up in the "digger" or punishment block where you get no privileges, no letters, closed visits and no cigs. Those like myself who resist this oppression get extremely brutal beatings. Two of them would hold you down while the others would kick you all over the body, taking care not to mark your face knowing that

visitors might notice that.'

Apart from the beatings, physical conditions in the punishment block are oppressive. The cells are very small. There is no bed. Prisoners sleep in a canvas bag on the floor. There is very little natural light and sanitary conditions are virtually non-existent. Prison officers sometimes 'improve' the food by spitting in it.

Sean was a remand prisoner. He described the conditions prisoners endure when they go to court. 'The procedure begins the night before your court appearance. Your clothes are taken away along with your tranny (radio) and other personal belongings such as letters and photos. In the morning, about 5am, they come to your cell to wake you up.'

'While in reception you are not allowed to smoke. You are locked in a small cubicle with a steel door. You then have to sit around practically naked until you are moved into another cubicle, or "dog box", where your civilian clothes await you.'

'You are taken to the Barlinnie "dog box" for maybe two hours before being transferred again in handcuffs to the prison bus and taken to court.'

'You are kept in humid, dirty conditions in a court cell 'til your case is called. After a brief appearance at which you say nothing you are brought back to the cell and have to stay there until you go back to the prison. All in all you spend most of the day cooped up in cells and tiny "dog boxes".' This is the routine treatment of people officially classified as 'innocent'.

Not surprisingly, the result of Sean's experience is that he wants to see all Young Offenders' Institutions, like Longriggind, abolished. Sean Connolly left his home in Letterkenny, County Donegal, to escape the constant Garda (police) harassment he suffered as a known Sinn Fein supporter. Here, in Britain, he finds the same oppression directed against the working class.

Graham Johnson

VIRAJ MENDIS DEFENCE CAMPAIGN

MANCHESTER-LONDON BEGINS SATURDAY 5 JULY ENDS SATURDAY 26 JULY

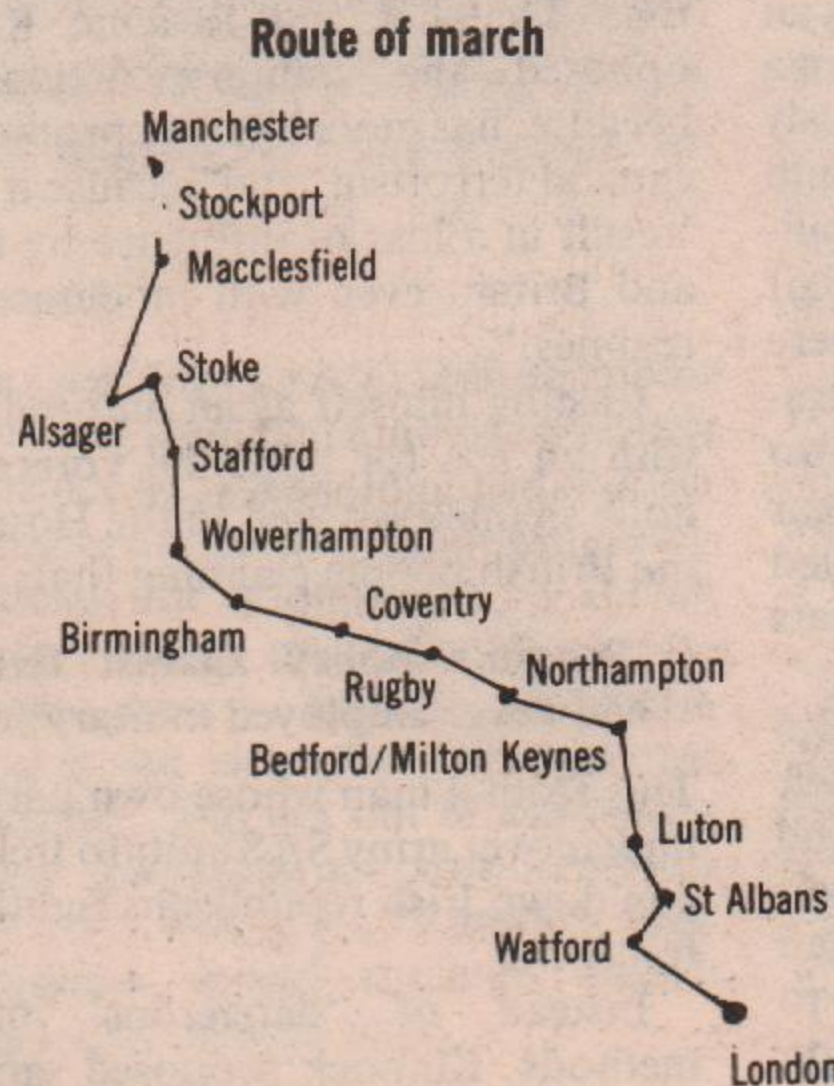
March

Route of march
Manchester Coventry
Stockport Rugby
Macclesfield Northampton
Alsager Bedford/Milton Keynes
Stoke Luton
Stafford St Albans
Wolverhampton Watford
Birmingham London

The VMDC needs your help: with publicity, organising meetings, food, accommodation and much else. If you can help fill in and return the slip below

Name _____
Address _____
Telephone _____

VMDC c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester M15 5AL



'This fight is for everybody, especially for the Asian community and black people in this country.'

The VMDC is now working full steam for its anti-racist march from Manchester to London which begins on Saturday 5 July. Representatives of Viraj's campaign have travelled up and down the country to build support for the demonstration.

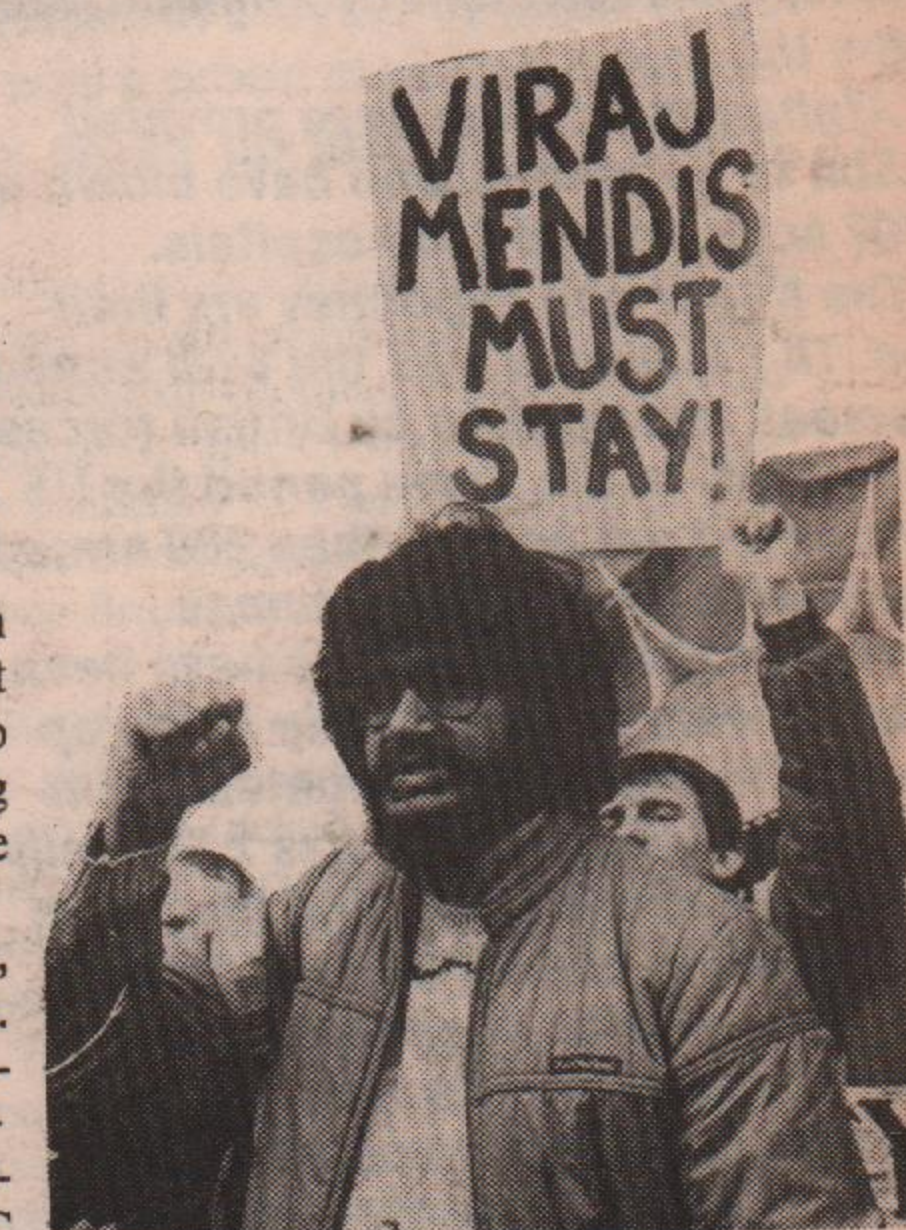
Naya Javan - New Youth, a black organisation invited Viraj to Loughborough to publicise the event. In Leicester, another black organisation, Red Star, hosted him on a visit and pledged their support. In Crewe, a VMDC supporters group is being set up to greet the marchers as they pass through. FRFI comrades in Scotland have organised a speaking tour for the VMDC in June and Liverpool comrades are beginning street campaigning. Viraj or other VMDC representatives have also been to Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Sheffield and London.

The march will begin as Parliament puts the final touches to a new Public Order Act and while the government continues its ruthless deportation campaign against black people and FRFI

comrade Viraj in particular. The march can become a national focus to resist these attacks and secure Viraj's right to live in Britain free of the fear of being deported to Sri Lanka where he will face political persecution.

Campaign leaflets, posters, stickers, badges and T-Shirts are now available. Leaflets have been produced in 6 different languages in addition to English - Urdu, Punjabi, Gujarati, Hindi, German and French. Already 19 VMDC supporters in Manchester have committed themselves to march the whole way to London. But an enormous amount of work yet remains to be done.

The VMDC needs your support to build a massive anti-deportation campaign. If you can help in any way whatsoever and if you want to receive



publicity material please contact the campaign. A donation will be much appreciated. It has cost a lot to produce the publicity. Cheques and POs to Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign, VMDC c/o, North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5AL (phone 061-795-3870).



...takes a bloodbath... let's get it
...with.' Reagan when Governor of
California.

...must be the core of Western policy
...there be no sanctuary for terror
...to sustain such a policy free men
...free nations must unite to work
...together.' Reagan 1986

...along Reagan's 'free men' and 'free
...nations' are Chile, South Africa and
...almost alone in approving Rea-
...gan's butchery in Libya.

Chile: Pinochet, the torturer, but-
...red 20,000 people in 4 months
...workers, peasants, trade unionists
...students - all in the name of
...democracy.

South Africa: The fascist Botha is
...city of murder in Mozambique,
...otho, Angola and Namibia. In South
...Africa itself he has murdered 1,500
...armed black people in the last 18
...months, 50% of them were shot in the
...back - all in the name of 'defending
...stern civilisation'.

Israel: The architect of the Sabra and
...Shatila massacres, slaughtered 20,000
...Palestinians during the 1982 invasion and
...occupation of Lebanon - all in the
...name of fighting against 'terrorism'.
...These are the types of person that
...appreciate Reagan and Thatcher: fas-
...cists drunk on hatred for the op-
...pressed.

...These vile hypocrites dare to call
...the one who stands up to them 'terror-
...ist'.

Thatcher: cried 'Rejoice' at the car-
...riage at Goose Green in the Malvinas
...Islands. Thatcher presided over the cruel
...and agonising murder of 10 Irish hunger
...strikers and today directs the shoot-to-
...kill operations in Ireland.

Reagan: is the 'democratic' President
...who saw fit to honour the fascist SS
...commander at Bitburg and boasted of enjoying
...breakfast as his bombers flattened
...a mental hospital in Grenada killing 40
...patients. Reagan is the financier of
...death squads across 3 continents.
...Like the gangster who cries thief,
...Reagan and Thatcher are the biggest
...petrators of state sponsored terror-
...ism in the world today.

El Salvador: They back a regime that
...has killed 60,000 people since 1979.
Nicaragua: They support 'freedom
...fighters' who have murdered 4,000
...people, the equivalent of 1 million dead
...in the US.

Afghanistan: They have provided
...aid to hoodlums who have blown up
...77 schools and 140 hospitals.
...The horror and hypocrisy are limit-
...less. The Malvinas was the 88th armed
...seas intervention by British forces
...since 1945. In the same period the US
...has carried out no less than 280 armed
...operations. Since the Japanese
...killed 20 million people have been
...killed in wars fought mainly in the op-
...pressed nations but instigated by im-
...perialism. Today the US has 2,600 mili-
...tary installations encircling the globe
...Thatcher boasts that the British
...army is stationed in almost 30 coun-
...tries. Thatcher and Reagan are the
...prime practitioners of terrorism.
...Like Hitler's 'blitzkrieg' the raid on
...Libya was designed to overwhelm with
...force and power, to strike awe and
...intimidation into all who witnessed the
...mighty machine. And like Hitler, Rea-
...gan is intoxicated with resurrecting the
...myth of US 'invincibility' from the
...pages of its humiliation in Vietnam.

LIBYA

Reagan and Thatcher international terrorists

'No one can kill Americans and brag about it. No one!'

Like a gangster intoxicated with power Reagan boasted of the 15 April terror strike against Libya. In the dead of the night 100 aircraft dropped 200 tons of explosive on the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi. 18 F1-11 jets left their bases in Britain loaded with laser guided missiles which blew men, women and children from their beds. While Libyans searched for their dead amidst the ruins, Thatcher declared that to have denied the US the right to launch its attack from Britain would have been 'inconceivable'.

43 Libyans were killed by Reagan and Thatcher, many more were injured and maimed. Besides aiming to 'teach Libya a lesson', Reagan hoped to kill Colonel Gadafy and provoke a coup to bring his government down 'We hoped we would get him' said an official who planned the attack which also killed the Libyan leader's baby daughter and injured two of his sons. Fidel Castro expressed the world's outrage:

'We knew that the United States had planned the assassination of political leaders from other countries - poisonings, personal assassination attempts, all kinds of methods and plans which they themselves have acknowledged, brutal and barbaric methods of overcoming political differences in the modern world. But what had never happened until now is that the government of one of the most powerful nations would use its armed forces, its most sophisticated bombers to try to kill the head of state of a country with which it isn't even at war, in a perfidious early morning surprise attack.'

The imperialists split

The US operation provoked one of the most serious splits yet in the NATO alliance. With over 200 companies engaged in \$13 billion worth of contract work, the European ruling class hesitated to risk its interests for a military venture with uncertain consequences. They condemned Reagan's and Thatcher's military adventure, recognising that it would not diminish but on the contrary increase support for Colonel Gadafy. They saw that beyond Libya imperialist interests throughout the region could be imperilled if such attacks unleashed massive popular protests.

Alone amongst the European powers Thatcher fully endorsed and directly assisted the raid. Above Britain's economic interest was Thatcher's vow to sustain her alliance with Reagan. But she too was confronted by a section of British ruling class opposition. The Westland and BL affairs revealed divisions between a 'pro-European' faction and that section of the ruling class backing Thatcher which sees its interests best served by uniting with the US political-military-industrial. These divisions also surfaced during the Libyan affair. Thatcher discovered opposition to her stand reaching right into the Cabinet from which she concealed her decision to sup-

port the US strike. Senior Conservatives such as Defence Secretary George Younger, Tory Party Chairman Norman Tebbit and others publicly expressed disapproval, while ex-Prime Minister Heath was outspoken in his opposition.

Despite this and opposition from the overwhelming majority of British people, Thatcher has, hand in hand with Reagan, campaigned relentlessly to coerce the European powers and Japan into supporting their strategy against Libya. At the Tokyo Summit Thatcher took it upon herself to formulate the unanimously endorsed condemnation of 'international terrorism' and Libya in particular.

Thatcher's brow-beating has however failed to unite Europe, which remains opposed to economic sanctions against Libya and any further military action against Colonel Gadafy. Immediately after the Tokyo Summit resolution, European NATO powers attacked Reagan's view of the statement as an endorsement of further attacks on Libya.

The US plans its next onslaught

'Yesterday the US won but a single engagement in a long battle against terrorism.' Reagan

The bombing of a West Berlin discotheque on 5 April was merely a pretext for the US raid. Not a single shred of evidence was produced linking it to the Libyan government. Like Goebbels at the controls of the Lie Machine, Reagan and Thatcher resorted to repetition to attempt to establish Libyan 'guilt' as an accepted 'fact'. The attack was in fact a long premeditated and meticulously planned operation. Between 1981 and 1986 the US conducted 18 major military exercises off the Libyan coast, 5 of them this year. Libyan defences were tested in 1981 when US fighters penetrated Libyan airspace to shoot down two Libyan planes. On 24 March this year the largest US battle-fleet assembled since 1945 attacked Libyan patrol boats and shore sites.

Colonel Gadafy's and Libya's 3.5 million peoples' real 'crime' is their refusal to yield to imperialist threats and designs for the Middle East. Their support for the right of the Palestinian people to statehood and opposition to the Zionist occupation of Lebanon remain a thorn in the side of imperialist strategy in the region. The US and Brit-

ish imperialists have in addition never forgiven the Libyan people who after deposing British puppet King Idris in 1969, threw out US and British military bases and used the country's oil wealth to improve the conditions of the people.

Ever since, they have been determined to bring down Colonel Gadafy's government. Since the 15 April raid, Shultz has made it clear that the US intends to persevere with its anti-Libyan aggression. Like Reagan, taken to speaking in gangster language, he declared of Colonel Gadafy:

'You've had it pal, you are isolated. You are recognised as a terrorist... The message is: no place to hide.'

While Reagan prepares for yet further military attacks on Libya, he is waiting on the collapse of oil prices to take its toll on the Libyan economy. Having failed to kill Colonel Gadafy, the US is calculating that its military and economic offensive combined with Europe's political and diplomatic measures against Libya will foster splits in the government and army, give rise to a pro-US opposition and bring about Gadafy's downfall. Meanwhile in a clear indication of US strategy in the Middle East, Syria has been added to the list of countries to be subjected to military attack if it proves an obstacle to US ambitions to subordinate the entire region to its dictat.

Labour Party loyal opposition

The Libyan affair brought into the open the imperialist class character of the Labour Party. Its response contrasted starkly with that of the genuine anti-imperialist, democratic and humanitarian stand of sections of the British population. On 19/20 April, over 25,000 people including FRFI contingents demonstrated around the country with slogans ranging from 'Hands Off Libya!' to 'US Bases Out Of Britain!' Admittedly the demonstrations were pitifully inadequate and failed to prevent the government's subsequent attacks on Libyans living and studying in Britain. But they were a hundred times more valuable for the socialist movement than the hideous performance of the Labour Party whose every declaration was stamped 'From Her Majesty's Most Loyal Imperialist Opposition'.

The Labour Party's indignant condemnation of the US action contained not an iota of concern for those killed or maimed, let alone any concern for the democratic rights of small nations attacked by imperialism. While bodies of little children were still being dug up from the rubble, Kinnock from his Parliamentary rostrum pledged his party's support for action 'to bring down a curtain on Gadafy's reign of terror' and ensure that 'his external and internal power is squeezed to nothing.' Concerned to be a better defender of imperialism than Thatcher and Reagan, Kinnock opposed the military action only because 'it is more likely to promote and expand terrorism' and because it would 'result in a loss of influence by the US and Britain even with moderate Arab regimes.'

Casting himself as an anti-militarist, with an eye for potential voters, Kinnock shamelessly lied to the House and the British people claiming that:

'Britain's policy against terrorism had never employed military force.'

This from a man whose own party sent undercover army SAS units to Ireland to gun down Irish republicans fighting for freedom!

Instead of 'dangerous' military methods, Kinnock proposed sanctions and other non-military means to isolate and bring down the Libyan government.

So when the Government launched a massive racist hysteria campaign against Libyan residents in Britain, it received unqualified Labour Party support. Soon after 15 April using its racist immigration laws the government arrested and deported 21 Libyan students deemed a danger to 'British Security'. Kinnock welcomed the measure and hoped that it was only a first step. Even before the government moved to stop 250 Libyan aircraft engineers training in Britain, Shadow Home Secretary Kaufman was protesting against their presence. He condemned the government for making it easier for 'terrorists' to enter Britain than an Indian grandmother to attend a family wedding. With a few honourable exceptions, the Labour Party has endorsed the government's campaign to force Europe to act against Libyan students and residents.

Given the critical role that the British state is playing in facilitating and encouraging the US war drive a powerful anti-imperialist movement in Britain is vital. The continued supine role of the Labour Party for the British ruling class now threatens literally thousands and millions of lives across the planet. The Libyan affair has yet again demonstrated that the Labour Party cannot and will not represent any opposition to an increasingly militaristic British imperialism.



Imperialism prepares for global war

The March and April US raids on Libya have a significance far beyond the British and US governments' attempt to topple Colonel Gadaffi's government. Reagan has used the attacks as a stepping stone for a more aggressive and militaristic offensive against oppressed nations and revolutionary movements across the globe. His secretary of State George Shultz, referring to the 15 April raid, could not restrain his enthusiasm for the precedent:

'What is clear tonight is that the US will take military action under certain circumstances. That's established. That's very important.'

With counter-revolution being checked in Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Kampuchea, the US is preparing for wider, deeper and even more direct intervention to defend the wealth of its banks and companies across the world. Disguised as a crusade against 'international terrorism' military action is being planned by the US and British imperialists determined to recover what they have lost since the victorious Vietnamese revolution in 1975: Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Laos, Kampuchea, Seychelles, Burkina-Faso, Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Iran.

Following the March attack on Libya, the US administration announced that it intends to provide advanced Stinger surface-to-air missiles to its mercenary bands in Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Angola. After 15 April, it proposed establishing new weapons stockpiles in Thailand thereby preparing to relaunch the war against Vietnam and considered opening supplies to Ethiopian counter-revolutionaries. It also plans to step up arms supplies to counter-revolutionaries in Kampuchea.

Imperialism's resort to such drastic

measures shows that it recognises that its fate may well be decided in the coming period in the oppressed nations. Their debt now stands near \$1,000 billion. The poverty, hunger, starvation and suffering it produces has provoked risings from Jamaica to South Korea and millions of workers have taken to the streets in Latin America. The flames of the South African revolution now threaten the vast British and US investments. If puppet governments and counter-revolutionary bandits fail to halt the revolution of the oppressed, US imperialism is preparing to unleash its own mighty military power.

With the first recorded use of the US military bases in Britain for an attack upon another nation since the Second World War, British imperialism has shown its readiness to help the US in escalating global war against oppressed nations. Critically, the Thatcher government today is providing US imperialism with the political and diplomatic support necessary to prevent the isolation of the US government which allows it to expand the range and dimensions of its attacks.

This page was compiled by Eddie Abrahams, Dave Hunter and Trevor Rayne

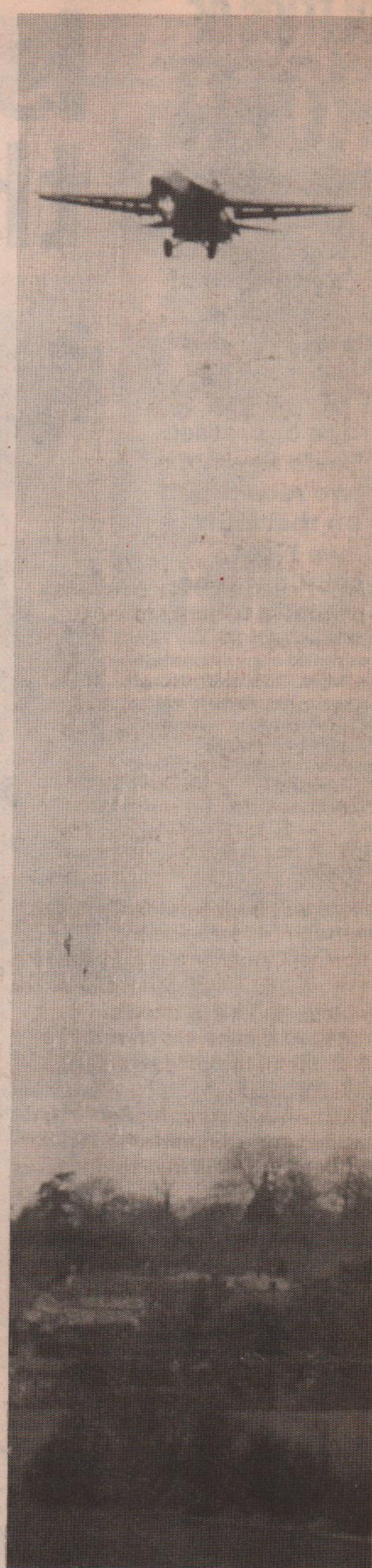


NUJ storm over Libya motion

On Friday 18 April the National Union of Journalists Annual Delegates Meeting voted overwhelmingly for a London Magazine Branch motion which not only condemned the murderous US raid on Libya but also sent its condolences to the people of Libya. For those of us who took part in bringing this about it was a proud moment. A British trade union had publicly and clearly stood up against the racist assault on the Libyan people.

Not surprisingly this stand provoked an outbreak of hysteria on the part of the government and its yapping poodles in the mass media. Thatcher was said to be seething; we were the National Union of Jerks; the more self-important among the union's right-wing publicly resigned. The outrage was undoubtedly fuelled by two factors. Firstly, we did not 'condemn' Libyan 'terrorism' or Colonel Gadaffi but concentrated rightly on the criminal actions of 'our' government and 'our' government's ally - the US. Secondly, the fact that it was the NUJ which took this stand. It is NUJ members in most cases who write, edit or otherwise process the racist, ruling class filth which has played an important part in creating the climate of public opinion in which Reagan and Thatcher can do their dirty deeds.

The reaction within the NUJ has been greatly exaggerated. Some Fleet Street chapels have dissociated themselves from the motion and a number of members have resigned. These include Adam



Raphael, political correspondent of *The Observer*, whose resignation will doubtless assist his promotion in *The Observer* hierarchy, and Clement Freud, whose commitment to trade unionism is such that he was lapsed from London Freelance Branch in January 1985 for non-payment of subscriptions. However, the resignations do underline the division in the union between the hardcore dealers in obscene racism and sexism (in Fleet Street and national broadcasting) and those in the NUJ who genuinely want to oppose such filth.

The Libyan affair once again confirms that media workers who want to take a stand independent of the government must fight not only government lies but also those within the media unions prepared to disseminate those lies.

Terry O'Halloran
(London Freelance Branch ADM delegate and NUJ Ethics Council in a personal capacity)

I'm profoundly convinced that Reagan is just as unscrupulous, opportunist and irresponsible as Hitler. He is potentially more dangerous than Hitler, because Hitler didn't have nuclear weapons nor such an arsenal of aircraft carriers, bombers, submarines, battleships, missiles, electronic weapons and all kinds of other sophisticated devices for destruction and death.

Fidel Castro

The Press Thatcher's poodles

68% of British people may have condemned the bombing of Libya. But the British capitalist press, that self-proclaimed 'voice of the people', had no room for their views except for a few column inches on letters pages. It performed its duty and ran to Thatcher's support. None of the mass circulation dailies condemned the US state attack. The 'popular' ones poured out a stream of anti-Arab racism, chauvinism and jingoism.

The *Sun's* headline for the killing of sleeping men, women and children was a massive 'Thrilled to Blitz'. The *Daily Mail* described this terrorist act as a defence of the civilised world' and the *Daily Express* a 'Vital Blow for Freedom'. The language of the 'high brow' dailies, while more restrained was equally despicable. *The Times* defending Mrs Thatcher found civilian casualties 'regrettable' but added that they would have been far greater had 'Mrs Thatcher not allowed the F1-11s to deliver their surgical bombs'. Using a life saving medical image *The Times* seeks to hide the mess of blood, hair and mangled limbs that the bombing

left behind.

The *Guardian* thought killing babies was 'wrong' but editorialised at length to convince its readers that such murder was 'understandable'. Only the *Financial Times*, the house-paper of British capitalists which circulates almost exclusively among British capitalists, expressed the view that the raid was 'deplorable'. But not out of any democratic or humanitarian considerations. Only that 'Reagan's Rambo style' adventurism would threaten British profits in the Middle East.

Regardless of whether the papers applauded or merely 'understood' the

murder in Tripoli and Benghazi, Libya's leader was hung, drawn and quartered. He was 'a mad dog', 'instigator of international terrorism' a sponsor of 'ruthless murder' and a 'maniac'. The British journalist is a past-master at this type of slander against the oppressed having practiced for decades on the Irish who like the Libyans today are guilty by dint of their mere existence.

The performance of the British press, which contained nothing of the genuine anger, democratic and humanitarian response of vast sections of British people is an object lesson for anyone who still believes the British press is a 'free' and 'democratic' one expressing the views of the common people. The British press, controlled by a few capitalists, is an instrument of the ruling class, a class that despises the mass of people, their lives, ideas and opinions. The poison that flows from the pens of British journalists is as much part of the fuel for war as the oxane burning in the jets of F1-11s.

Is there a solution to the debt crisis?

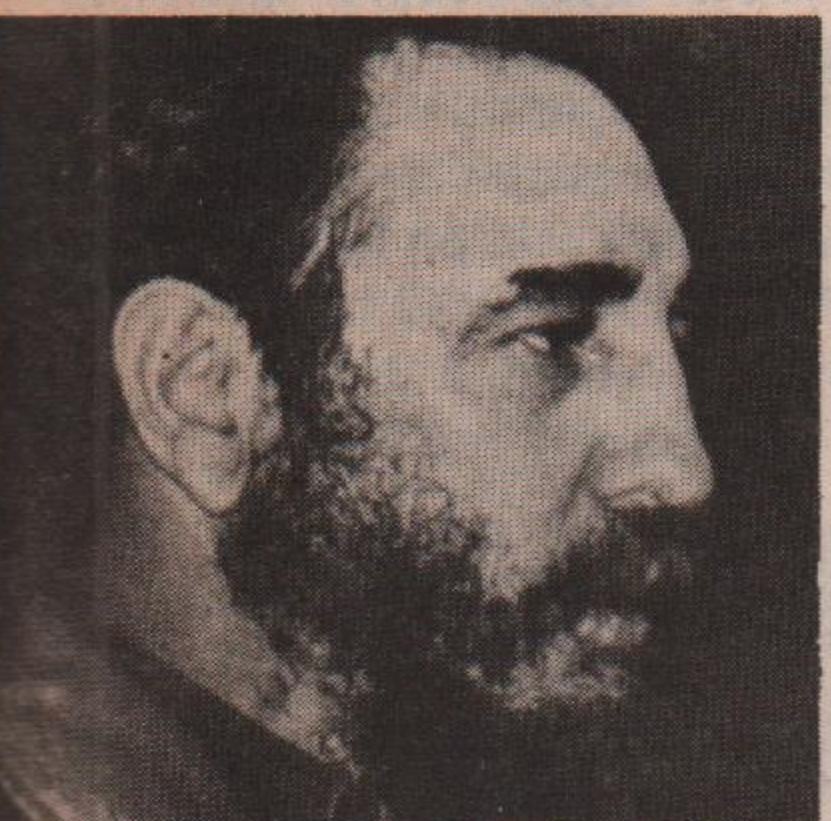
The debt crisis has recently been relegated from the front pages of the press. It remains, nevertheless, the critical question confronting hundreds of millions of people in the oppressed nations. David Reed, examining two recent publications on the debt crisis, shows Fidel Castro's solution to be the only realistic one.

Over the last six years *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* has carried many articles highlighting the role British imperialism, through its international banks, has played in making massive profits out of the misery and poverty of millions of oppressed peoples. 'British banks lead imperialist offensive' was the lead article on the front page of *FRFI* in September/October 1980.

However, unlike the RCG, the rest of the British left chose to play down the significance of the imperialist banks in defending British imperialist interests worldwide. They only see Britain as a declining imperialist power or, in some cases, not even an imperialist power at all (see *The revolutionary road to communism in Britain* p51ff). They refuse to acknowledge that the fall in the rate of profit on industrial capital in the imperialist countries during the 1970s led to a rapid rise in the export of capital and an enormously strengthened role for banking capital. And that imperialism's stranglehold over the oppressed nations has grown immeasurably as a result. In fact British imperialism through its banking system, was second only to the United States in gaining a commanding position in this process. In the last few years there has been one significant new development. Japanese banks have dramatically increased their international role and by the end of 1985 had overtaken US banks to become the largest holders of international assets (see *FRFI* 57).

As the debt crisis worsened and imperialism suddenly faced the dual threat of a major default and possible revolutionary upheavals in the oppressed nations, concern about the overall situation has dramatically increased. Books and articles have appeared, international conferences have taken place in a desperate attempt to stave off the greatest threat to the stability of the imperialist system since the 1930s.

A recent Penguin Special *Debt and Danger The World Financial Crisis* by Harold Lever (millionaire cabinet minister in successive Labour governments) and Christopher Huhne (economics editor of the *Guardian*) argues that decisive reforms could still re-establish sound credit and world economic growth and so defuse the serious threat to the imperialist financial system. Their reforms - Keynesianism on an international scale - would require the co-operation of imperialist governments, the imperialist banks, international financial institutions (IMF, World Bank) as well as the debtor nations.



Why this co-operation should be forthcoming in a world torn apart by imperialist greed is not at all clear. After an interesting and factually detailed analysis of the path towards the present debt crisis it is not surprising that we are left with a note of despair. 'The details of a new reform are less important than the mustering of political will in the advanced countries to change a perilous and unsustainable situation'. No reason is given as to why that 'political will' should be forthcoming.

Profits out of Poverty? British banks and Latin America's debt crisis published by War on Want is certainly more politically committed. From the beginning it makes clear that the 'main British banks are heavily involved in a chain of lending and debt which is forcing millions of women, men and children into poverty'. It also warns that if this chain is broken the western world could be plunged into new depths of economic crisis. War on Want



Bolivian women demonstrate against austerity measures. La Paz. March 1985.

know there is little immediate chance of a rational and internationally agreed solution to the debt crisis. They recognise that the British banks with the backing of the government are pushing for policies 'which actively promote poverty in Latin America'. This policy has to change. Interest payments on existing debt must be significantly reduced. 'The banks must take a major drop in profits in recognition of the irresponsible lending they have made in the past and of the large profits already received'. New lending must continue but the major role has to be played by governments and financial institutions like the World Bank. The needs of the poorest should be put first in any new lending. The conditions for new lending, by eg the World Bank, 'should encourage social and development programmes and link lending to the redistribution of wealth and the fair sharing of the benefits of economic recovery.'

Finally new initiatives must be taken to promote world economic growth. This requires a co-ordinated effort to reduce interest rates, promote economic expansion in the industrialised world and to resist the growing clamour for protectionism.

War on Want asks 'will the government and the banks choose a solution (to the debt crisis) which favours the poor of Latin America or one which merely protects the banks'. The answer is all too obvious. However, in order to put pressure on the government and the banks to move towards its own perspective, War on Want proposes setting up *Profits out of Poverty?* campaign groups which will publicise and campaign around the War on Want case. If Lever and Huhne are advocating international Keynesianism, War on Want are proposing another form of wishful thinking - international Fabianism. British imperialism, led by its imperialist banks, is fighting for survival. The British government has backed US imperialism in its efforts to destroy any progressive regimes which constitute a challenge to imperialism. The US invasion and occupation of Grenada, US imperialism's backing of the contra gangs in Nicaragua, the UNITA bandits in Angola and US state terrorism against Libya, all have British government support. While there is much that is valuable in the efforts of War on Want to make British people aware of the British banks' role in the debt crisis, no one can seriously believe that a pressure group can force the British government and its imperialist banks to choose 'a solution which favours the poor of Latin America'. Only the organised political movement of the people of Latin America and their allies in the imperialist nations can impose such a solution.

THE DEBT CRISIS BREAKS

In August 1982 Mexico announced suspension of payments of principal for 90 days, pending negotiations, on its massive foreign debt. The debt crisis had broken. The banks immediately cut back their lending to the oppressed nations and made further lending and rescheduling of debts conditional on the acceptance of IMF 'austerity' measures - massive cutbacks in public spending, removal or reduction of subsidies on basic foods, transport and other services, suspension of health, education and development programmes, devaluation of the currency and

the raising of interest rates. The overall effect was to drastically cut back living standards, fuel inflation and severely restrict vital investment needed for economic development. All this was occurring in a period 1981-3 when real dollar interest rates dramatically increased from below 2 per cent to over 10 per cent with the dollar rising in value against most other currencies. (*Profits out of Poverty?* p2)

The effects of these developments were devastating. After many years in which there was a net flow of funds to the oppressed nations a massive net transfer of funds to the imperialist nations began from 1983 onwards and is still taking place. This amounted to \$34bn in 1984 and was projected to reach \$36.4bn in 1985. Most of this outflow of funds, \$28.7bn, came from the 7 major debtor nations holding 44 per cent of the oppressed nations' debt. This amount alone was equivalent to nearly 19 per cent of their exports.

	1982	1984	1985*
	(\$bn)		
123 Indebted oppressed nations			
Total debt	747.0	827.7	865.3
Debt service	123.9	123.1	134.5
Transfer of funds (- outflow)	14.2	-34.0	-36.4
Transfer as % of exports	2.8%	-6.2%	-6.2%
7 major debtors**			
Total debt	336.4	360.2	339.3
Debt service	61.8	53.5	57.3
Transfer of funds	7.3	-28.7	-29.2
Transfer as % of exports	5.2%	-18.8%	-17.9%

* IMF projection

** Argentina, Brazil, Indonesia, South Korea, Mexico, Philippines and Venezuela (From *Debt and Danger* p 74)

This net transfer of wealth to the imperialist nations sustains the profits of the imperialist banks while dramatically reducing the living standards of the peoples of the oppressed nations. In Latin America economic growth was halted and reversed. It fell by 3.3 per cent in 1982 and 5.3 per cent in 1983. By the end of 1984 the fall in income per person was nearly 10 per cent below the 1980 level. Real living standards fell further still. Mexican wages fell by 40 per cent in real terms in the three years after 1982 (See *Profits out of Poverty?* pp 4-5).

BANKING SYSTEM UNDER THREAT

The banks are enormously dependent on their profits from the oppressed nations. Latin America holds about 37 per cent of the total oppressed nations' debt and about 60 per cent of its commercial bank debt. In 1983 the interest received by major US banks on Latin American lending was equivalent to more than 40 per cent of their profits. Brazil alone was, in 1983, responsible for 20 per cent of the profits of Citicorp, the leading US bank, and in 1984 a third of that bank's profits came from just four Latin American countries - Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela and Argentina. British banks are also playing a central

role in the plundering of Latin America. 43 per cent of Lloyds' international pre-tax profits since 1982 came from Latin America. The other main British banks do not publicly announce their profits from Latin America but given the size of their loans, these must also be a significant proportion of their international profits. (See *Profits out of Poverty?* pp 8-14). Most of the major US and British banks are also represented on one or more of the Latin American advisory committees of banks established for each major debtor country in that area. These committees coordinate negotiations on behalf of all the lending banks, and it is these committees which insist on IMF 'austerity' measures being imposed before new loans are made.

However, the plundering of the oppressed nations by the banks now threatens the stability of the international financial system. Throughout Latin America there has been a growing movement against attempts to force the people to pay for the debt. In Brazil in early 1984 thousands of starving peasants attacked warehouses in more than 40 cities and carried off food for the people to eat. In April 1984 millions of people demonstrated on the streets of Brazil's major cities. Bolivia has had six general strikes in two years against austerity measures and the impact of hyper-inflation. In the first few months of 1986 100,000 people demonstrated in Mexico City calling for the non-payment of the foreign debt. In Argentina a general strike against austerity measures paralysed the country for two days and a visit by the US

British bank lending to Latin America (end 1984)

	Lloyds (£m)	Barclays (£m)	Nat West (£m)	Midland (£m)
Brazil	1,857	571	700	1,871
Mexico	1,181	1,010	795	1,590
Argentina	556	450	475	757
Venezuela	554	278	250	400
Others	1,133	706	492	681
	5,281	3,015	2,712	5,300
% of all lending	17	6.2	6.1	14.1
% of shareholders' funds and reserves (primary capital)	257	116	102	310

banker Rockefeller sparked off riots. And there was another general strike in Bolivia which lasted two days and brought clashes with the army.

The foreign debt of the oppressed nations is unpayable. The people will not tolerate the conditions the imperialist banks are imposing on them for very much longer. A major default is inevitable, and with it runs a very serious threat to the imperialist banks and their international banking system. Lever and Huhne make this point admirably clear:

'Today a unilateral and long-standing default by Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela could wipe out the capital of seven of the nine largest banks in the United States and two of the four in Britain, with consequential damage to the entire banking system' (p 22)

Just nine US banks (out of about 15,000 US banks) hold 63 per cent of US loans to the oppressed nations. 60 per cent of this is in Latin America and amounts to more than 154 per cent of these banks' primary capital. At the

end of 1984 the four largest British banks had loan exposures in Latin America which matched those of the major US banks. (See table below). Midland's loans may even be much greater. Although in February 1986 it sold Crocker, its US subsidiary with loans of some \$2,428 million in Latin America, it is thought that Midland will retain Crocker's loans to Latin America on its own books.

In October 1985 the US government came up with the Baker Plan in an effort to prevent debtor nations taking unilateral action as conditions deteriorated. Peru had already announced it would spend no more than 10 per cent of its export income on servicing its debt. The Plan proposes that new lending of \$40bn should be made available between 1986 and 1988. Half should come from the banks and half from the World Bank. \$40bn will barely cover a third of the debt service payments Latin America alone must pay over the next few years. So the outflow of funds would continue. Further, the conditions attached to the loans will merely serve the interests of the imperialist banks: free-market policies; greater penetration by multinational companies; an end to protection of local industries, price controls and wage indexation; and the sale of public industries and assets.

There is a great deal at stake. The banks will do everything in their power to retain interest payments on their loans. The US and British governments will back them to the hilt with military force if required. We have to take sides. And we must unequivocally take the side of the oppressed people fighting for their countries' independence, sovereignty and economic development.

The most serious, detailed and thorough analysis of the debt crisis in the recent period has been contained in the articles and speeches by Fidel Castro (see 'Castro calls for a general strike of debtors' in *FRFI* 51). His conclusion is that the foreign debt is unpayable. Lever and Huhne dismiss his position by saying he is perceived by most Latin American leaders 'as attempting to make as much self-serving mischief as he can' (p 105). War on Want faithfully report Castro's position but only see it as one of several approaches, if a radical one, to the debt crisis. However, Castro's position is the only realistic one.

Castro argues that only a general strike of debtors will force the imperialists to the negotiating table. Only unified action of this kind by Latin American and other oppressed nations can achieve a solution to the crisis in the interests of all the oppressed. As he stated in a recent speech to the 3rd Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba:

'The formula proposed by Cuba is simple, understandable and perfectly feasible: that the governments of the developed creditor countries assume the debts of the Third World countries, with their own banks, and that 12 per cent of what is now invested in military expenditures be used to pay off the debts.'

A simple write off of the debt will however not solve the problem:

'the principles of the New International Economic Order adopted by the United Nations must be implemented to end unequal terms of trade, protectionism, dumping, usurious interest rates and the monetary and financial manipulation on the part of a few developed capitalist powers; and that unconditional economic solidarity be extended to the poorest and most economically backward countries.' (*Granma* 16 February 1986)

Our contribution to that end here in Britain must be to demand the nationalisation of the banks and the writing off of all oppressed nations' debt.

David Reed

Profits out of Poverty? British banks and Latin America's debt crisis can be obtained from War on Want Campaigns Ltd, Suite 4-6, The Hop Exchange, 24 Southwark Street, London SE1.

Spain — reality strikes home

The 'yes' result of the Spanish referendum on NATO membership on 12 March was won through a succession of lies, deceptions and threats against the Spanish people (see FRFI 58). It was presented to the people as the only way of achieving peace and security in their country; yet only 1 month and 3 days later the US bombing of Tripoli placed the Spanish people in the front line of just revenge attacks against the US bases in that country and the people have seen for themselves as worthless deceits the words of President Gonzalez and his so-called Socialist government.

It is suggested that Gonzalez succeeded in persuading Reagan to postpone the full-scale attack on Libya until after his referendum victory had been secured. The Libya raid has brought fierce fighting onto the streets of Spanish cities between thousands of people and the brutal Spanish police force, and for the first time in many years street barricades have been built in Madrid to ward off the police. The Madrid Anti-NATO Commission, an alliance of progressive forces against imperialist aggression, plans a militant march to the US base 12 km outside Madrid on 11 May in protest against the attack on Libya and to demand the termination of the US-Spanish Bilateral 'Friendship' Treaty which comes up for review shortly.

Lucy Francis



Haiti: the people's anger continues

Despite the military government's appeals for reconciliation, the people of Haiti continue to call for a clean break with Duvalierism. Every day, demonstrations, strikes, and barricaded streets and roads show the people's determination to sweep out the accomplices of the former dictator.

General Namphy's regime faces other pressures. His American backers, who arranged Duvalier's final departure, want to see some semblance of democracy introduced, so that the people's anger can be channelled into parliamentarism, but not until suitable pro-American bourgeois politicians have been groomed for power.

The people's movement already threatens these plans. Trade unions are springing up from their underground roots and demanding an increase in \$3 per day 'mini-

mum wage' (though few workers receive even this), the unemployed (50-70% of the labour force) are demanding jobs, and the movement against Duvalier's cronies threatens all the local bourgeoisie, whose prosperity has depended for twenty-five years on their complicity in the Duvalier family's exploitation of Haiti. It is also a short step from opposition to Duvalierism to opposition to US imperialism in Haiti. On 26 April troops opened fire on 10,000 demonstrators marching of Fort Dimanche to remember those slain there by the Duvaliers. Eight demonstrators were killed and dozens injured.

The prospect for Haiti now is one of further bloody clashes and continuing development of the people's struggle.

Dave Hunter

Chile — pressure builds against Pinochet

The Pinochet military dictatorship which has tyrannised the Chilean people for 13 years since it toppled the socialist Allende government in 1973, with CIA support, is facing increasingly militant resistance led by the Manuel Rodriguez Front (FPMR). Formed in 1983 on the wave of popular protests against the regime and named after a pioneer who fought the Spanish colonial forces between 1810-1818, the Front have carried out more than 500 sabotage operations against the repressive forces of the dictatorship, in some cases raiding police stations and armouries.

The government and members of the centre right Democratic Alliance (DA) have denounced the FPMR as terrorists in league with the Chilean Communist Party. The Front counter this propaganda saying, 'we do not set out to be an ideological alternative but to provide military leadership and are therefore above the partisan. Our members are of different ideological tendencies: from left parties, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), Communists, independents, Christians... The armed struggle is fully justified because every day that passes means greater political and social costs and a greater loss of human lives in Chile: Pinochet is the real terrorist of the people.'

FPMR activities have escalated this spring with a bomb attack on the US embassy which left 4 army officials wounded and 7 other bombings around the Santiago area. These were a protest at US support for the Nicaraguan Contras and the Libyan air-raid. This followed a week of violent clashes between riot police and demonstrators. The worst incident occurred in the southern Chilean town of Tenuco when protestors shouted anti-government slogans only a few yards away from Pinochet who was on a provincial visit.

The regime has responded by sending troops and riot police into three working class areas of Santiago to round up so-called terrorists. 178 were held after a thousand people had been taken to a sports field for interrogation. Pinochet

is also considering re-imposing the 1984 state of siege, lifted only last year.

The regime's position is further weakened by Chile's current economic plight. Between 1984-1985, inflation got completely out of control and the foreign debt rose above \$22 billion. This was contracted by private enterprise but the burden of repayment has been forced on the whole population. Agrarian reforms carried out under Allende have been reversed leaving the peasants to carry the burden of the crisis.

Dissatisfaction has increased among Pinochet's former supporters. The US government, worried about Chile's ability to pay the crippling interest rates demanded by its banks and continuing opposition to the regime has signalled its disaffection and elements within the military are fearful of a people's uprising which would sweep them away with Pinochet.

The imperialists are also worried by signs that the Democratic Alliance are willing to seek a common strategy with Marxist Leninist Groups. Three DA leaders have said that Pinochet has left them no option but to look for new ways to exert pressure on the regime. Pinochet's reluctance to consider a move to civilian rule was emphasised when he responded to a personal appeal by Cardinal Fresno, archbishop of Santiago, to begin talks with representatives of civilian parties by saying 'Look Cardinal, let's turn the page and change the topic'.

Andy Price

US urges army offensive in the Philippines

The coalition of class forces that propelled Corazon Aquino to power in February remains intact, and is providing US imperialism with political cover as it directs the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) against the communist guerrillas of the New People's Army. As Chief-of-Staff Ramos put it, 'this time we are going to use people's power against the insurgents'.

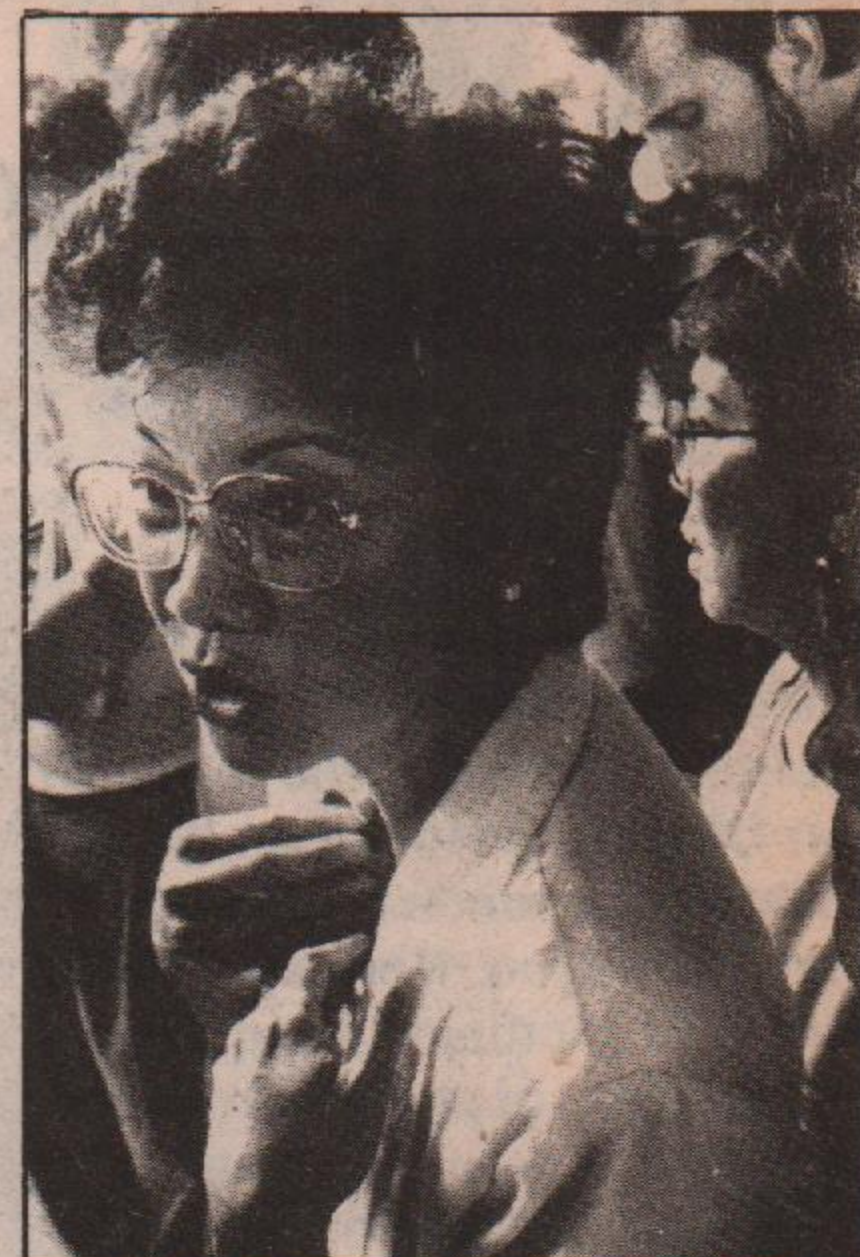
It was the combination of 'people's power', the mass struggle for democracy, and the defection of the armed forces from the Marcos camp which installed Aquino as President. Her government includes both liberal reformers and right wing military figures formerly associated with Marcos, such as Defence Minister Enrile.

The liberal reformers, largely drawn from the professions, while in a minority have retained influence in the government through the pressure of the mass movement for democracy. Aquino has pleased the urban trade unions by announcing labour legislation reforms establishing the right to strike and form trade unions. In the rural areas she has removed provincial governors and town mayors closely associated with Marcos. However, in a country where 40 per cent of the workforce are underemployed, where 15 million acres of land lie fallow due to the system of landownership and extortionate credits, amidst the 22 million acres that are farmed and 51 per cent of families live in absolute poverty, these reforms do not solve the problems of the majority of the people. The majority of the government are capitalists opposed to widening the scope of any reforms.

It is in this context that the US is directing its two major allies in the government, General Ramos and Enrile to intensify the attacks upon the NPA. While Aquino passes cosmetic reforms and continues to call for a ceasefire and talks with the revolutionaries her army is engaging in major battles across the islands leaving over 400 civilians dead since she came to power. While Aquino promised the release of all political prisoners, a Christian human rights group, Task Force, reveals that the military and constabulary are continuing to hold 498 people in gaol for political 'crimes'. Enrile has publicly chided Aquino for treating the NPA with 'kid gloves' and with Ramos, opposed the release of any communist prisoners. It is clear that the critical relationship within the Aquino state remains that which dominated the Marcos era: the link between the US and the military. As soon as it became clear that the NPA would not lay down its arms at Aquino's request the AFP went on the offensive. It is fairing no better under Aquino than under Marcos: an average of 12 soldiers were killed each day in 60 days of her Presidency. NPA counter-attacks killed 61 AFP soldiers in 5 operations over 3 days at the end of April.

With the Philippines' foreign debt of \$27.5 billion now consuming half of the country's export earnings the US government recognises that significant economic improvements are impossible. It knows that it must break the armed resistance; that Aquino's usefulness depends upon her ability to neutralise sections of society that mobilised against the state under Marcos; and that it must prepare to establish a full military dictatorship should Aquino prove difficult or redundant. To these ends the US has offered immediate aid of \$150 million, on top of this year's existing \$240.9 million. For next year, Reagan has asked Congress that the military component of the aid be doubled.

Trevor Rayne



Aquino — balancing act between right and left



Members of the Sandinista People's Army

Reagan out to win money for contras

The tide of bellicose chauvinism whipped up among US people over Libya is being channelled by the US government to advance its proxy-war against Nicaragua. Just seven days after the bombardment of Tripoli and Benghazi, Reagan declared: 'I hope every member of Congress will reflect on the fact that the Sandinistas have been training, supporting and directing as well as sheltering terrorists. And in this sense they are trying to build a Libya on our doorstep. And it's the contras, the freedom fighters, who are stopping them.'

Reagan's objective is to secure \$100 million in aid for the contras, \$70 million of it in the form of weapons. This would unite the US political establishment behind the aim of removing the Nicaraguan government by force. To do this Reagan intends to overcome Congressional resistance by fermenting war-fever among the US people with a concoction of lies and provocations.

Embarrassingly, for some US government employees, habitual liars tend, in their enthusiasm, to lose all sight of reason and thereby give themselves away. Reagan is such a liar. Intending to break the opposition to his war drive from the Contadora group of Latin American nations Reagan recently stated that Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and the Dominican Republic were all the victims of Nicaragua's 'expansionist plans'. Puzzled by this assertion Brazil's acting foreign minister summoned the US chargé d'affaires in Brasilia for clarification. Brazil has had no serious internal security problem since the murder of thousands of left-wing guerrillas in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The US ambassador to Argentina suffered a similar embarrassment to his colleague in Brazil.

On more than one occasion Reagan has claimed that 'top Nicaraguan officials are implicated in the drugs traffic'. While his very own Drug Enforcement

Agency has repeated that there is no evidence whatsoever to support this allegation both the FBI and Democrats in the US House of Congress are investigating contra leader Adolfo Calero's involvement in cocaine smuggling. Other nasty habits of Reagan's 'freedom fighters' have come to light. Writing in *The Observer* Hugh O'Shaughnessy reveals that one of the contra's favoured practices is to slit their captives' throats open and pull their tongues down onto the breast bone.

If all of this is of little concern to Reagan, perhaps he will worry about a survey conducted by the Honduran Congress. It reveals that 30 per cent of Honduran children under the age of 12 in the city of Comayagua, next to the US Palmerola military base, have been sexually abused by US soldiers. AIDS is also spreading among the local population through prostitutes that service this, the general quarters, of US troops in Honduras. The Nicaraguan people know from experience what barbarity imperialism is capable of and they know that the campaign of lies is an integral part of the military preparations against them. Sandinista soldiers and worker volunteers have stepped up civil defence exercises including fire fighting and rubble clearance in readiness for the expected attack.

Trevor Rayne and Mike Webber

British prisons explode

On the night of Wednesday 30 April prisons throughout Britain exploded as prisoners rebelled against being used as pawns in the trial of strength between the Home Office Prison Department and the Prison Officers Association (POA). At least 16 prisons were involved. Millions of pounds of damage was done and over 800 prison places were destroyed. Northeye prison was gutted. Riot police had to be sent into Horfield. More than 50 prisoners escaped. Across the country fires of revolt burned in Western Europe's worst prisons.

In 1982 the government introduced its Financial Management Initiative throughout the Civil Service. FMI has meant that separate budgets are set for each prison with the governor being responsible for keeping costs within the target. This has led to cuts in the already offensively inadequate education and recreation facilities in the prisons. Lately, however, the target of cuts has extended from prisoners' conditions (cutbacks here provoked no 'concern' from the Home Office, prison officers or the media) to the massively-inflated overtime payments made to prison officers.

Home Office figures for 1986/7 show that 70% of budgeted expenditure on the prisons of £639 million is for staff costs. Of this, £86 million (13.5%) is the estimated figure for overtime payments. Prison officers earn, on average, over £15,000 pa. In many cases this rises to over £20,000. In 1985, out of 638 prison officers at Brixton prison, 103 earned more than £20,000. Some 30% of prison officers' earnings come from overtime payments.

Cuts already made have directly affected prisoners' conditions. A prime example is Grendon Underwood's psychiatric therapy unit. This unit was distinguished from the norm in British prisons by its efforts to avoid relying on physical or chemical repression. In order to achieve a 17.8% cut in overtime costs, psychiatric therapy sessions have been cut from 5 days a week to 2. Doctors working there have dissociated themselves from the programme as a consequence. The POA's only concern, however, has been the bulging wallets of its members.

The POA's justification for the high level of overtime working is that this is caused by a staff 'shortage' in the prisons. There are some 18,500 prison officers in England and Wales. With the prison population hovering around 47,000

PRESTON, WHAT A SUMP!

On release from Preston Prison on 26 April 1986, I found that your newspaper had been sent but not given to me, but put in my property in reception. I was not even told they had arrived. As far as I knew I was the only inmate to obtain your publication and as you imagine it was much in demand for passing around. 1 or 2 were given me but they suddenly stopped. I thought you hadn't sent them. I enclose the envelopes for proof that the governor disallows them.

In Preston the conditions are unbelievable. I was 'banged' up for 23 hours a day for the whole 14 months I was there, not even knowing where the workshops were, never mind get a day's work. I was refused rule books time and time again, and the Home Office's 'Standing Orders' weren't even admitted to exist when I asked for them. I must have been in 18-19 different prisons, I thought Stafford was the worst but Preston takes the biscuit, what a 'sump', sump of the northern prison system. They bend the rules in all ways possible to suit themselves. Blatantly ignoring the basic rights of inmates. I kept a check on all routine matters putting in many complaints through Wing POs, gov, BOVs, and Regional Director. But all to no avail. I've now experienced such, that I know just how the people of this country are being suppressed and manoeuvred to suit the few. Police tactics are now unbelievable to the 9 to 5 man. Specially them as always deals with me. Regional crime squad three (Leeds) they are worse criminals than I'll ever be.

Yours freely
D.S Fisher
ex Prisoner Preston Prison

this means there is one prison officer for every 2.5 prisoners. This translates into a working ratio of 1 to 5. There is, in reality, no shortage of highly-paid thugs to run the prisons.

While the POA naturally wants to sell its members' ability to run the inhuman British prison system as dearly as possible, the Home Office, equally naturally, wants to buy its repression at the lowest possible cost. It is this conflict that stands at the heart of the confrontation.

The Tory government has initiated the biggest prison-building programme ever. It is spending nearly £400 million on building 16 new prisons. It has also started some 25 other capital schemes which will provide an additional 5,000 prison places. This expansion programme, providing for a prison population of 55,000, demands that running costs per prison place are severely reduced to avoid a major increase in annual expenditure. If the present average cost per prisoner were maintained with the extra prison places, it would require an increase in annual running costs of more than £130 million (20-25%).

This is why the Home Office has provoked its present battle with the POA. The prison building programme is already responsible for an 8% a year increase in prison expenditure over the next three years.

The dispute escalates

On 16 April the POA got an 81% ballot vote for industrial action. On 24 April prison officers at 10 prisons in the South-West region refused to take any new prisoners. This was in response to the Home Office's unilateral imposition of cuts in staffing levels. About 1,800 prison officers were involved. The dispute was bound to escalate, however, when the governor of Gloucester prison suspended a prison officer for refusing to work normally. The Home Office was determined to call the POA's bluff.

The next day the action spread to 15 prisons in the South-East, Midlands and North regions. The Home Office threatened to cut all domestic visits at Rochester Youth Custody Centre from 1 May. Both sides were now planning to use prisoners against each other.

Three days later 13 officers were suspended at Gloucester and suspensions were threatened in other prisons. On 29 April the Home Office escalated the dispute once again when all prison officers were locked out of Gloucester prison.

It was following this lock-out that 20 prisoners broke out onto the roof and began hurling tiles and other missiles down. The POA, hoping that such limited protest by prisoners would strengthen its negotiating position, announced that nationwide disruption would begin on 30 April - including refusing to accept new prisoners; refusing to work any overtime; and, possibly, even strike action. The Home Office was not particularly disturbed by this threat. After all, it was only prisoners who would suffer.

The prisons explode

On the night of 30 April, however, it was the prisons that suffered the worst single night of prison protest ever seen in Britain. Prisoners were not prepared to be sacrificed on the altar of prison officers' pay packets or Home Office cost-cutting.

All prison officers were forced to withdraw from Northeye prison when prisoners, masked as a protection against identification, broke out of their



Northeye prison at Bexhill, burnt to the ground

cells and began to lay waste to the buildings they had every reason to hate. The canteen, recreation blocks and workshops were set ablaze. The prison records, where every kind of lie and prejudice is recorded about prisoners, were burned. Northeye was burned to the ground. The flames could be seen up to 5 miles away. It was a no-go area for 14 hours.

At Horfield prison 140 riot police with dogs had to be sent in after the prisoners had taken over two wings of the prison. At Erlstoke Youth Custody Centre 40 out of 150 prisoners staged a mass breakout. At Lewes remand prisoners refused to return to their cells and staged a rooftop protest. The remand wing was reported to have been extensively damaged. Wymott prison was reported as 'out of control'. Fires burned at High Point, Wormwood Scrubs and elsewhere.

Albany, Holloway, Norwich, Northallerton, Leicester, Crumlin Road, were among the 16 prisons where some form of protest took place. More than 50 prisoners escaped (about a dozen are still at liberty) and 841 prison places were put out of action. On 1 May ex-Northeye prisoners at Sand Detention Centre barricaded themselves into the gymnasium and threatened to burn it down whilst 20 prisoners broke through to the roof at Stafford prison.

The aftermath

Following the nationwide revolt on 30 April, the two sides in the prison dispute have started moving swiftly towards a resolution. Douglas Hurd has announced an inquiry into the rebellion to be conducted by Sir James Hennessy, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons. The Law and Order Labour Party has demanded that Hurd resign as being responsible for the night of 'anarchy'

(Labour Shadow Home Secretary Gerald Kaufman). No one has bothered themselves about the prisoners.

Throughout the dispute the Labour Party has supported the POA and accused the Tory government of undermining order in the prisons. Not a word of condemnation has passed Kaufman's lips about the POA provoking such a night of 'violence'. Imagine Kaufman's rhetoric if anything remotely comparable were done by the NUM? or black youth? The Labour Party's grovelling support for the POA is typical of its record on prisons. Merlyn Rees, as Labour Home Secretary, actually boasted of putting more people than ever before behind bars.

Prisoners have no particular interest in the details of the resolution of this dispute. Their only interest is to ensure that the dispute is not resolved at their expense. The events of 30 April have once again confirmed the fundamental instability of the British prison system and the ability of prisoners to rebel. However, if prisoners are to protect themselves against the revenge that the Home Office and POA will seek in the coming months, it is vital that they begin now to organise.

No information has yet emerged about the conditions transferred prisoners are being held in, nor how exactly the protests were put down. Prisoners must ensure that this information gets out as soon as possible. Prisoners need to prepare now for the round of 'adjudications' that will follow the protests and the inevitable attempts to isolate 'ring-leaders'. FRFI will publish this information and work to get it wider publicity. The organisation of the defence of the prisoners has to begin now.

Terry O'Halloran

Send material to Terry O'Halloran, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

CENSORSHIP OF PRISON PAMPHLET

FRFI's pamphlet, 'Scottish prisons - lift the lid', has been officially classified a threat to security and good order in Peterhead prison.

Prisoner Tom Moffat was denied a copy of the pamphlet. He wrote to us. We wrote to the prison, as did Gerry Birmingham MP and Lord Avebury. Back came the explanation of the censorship: 'The Governor has discretion to disallow correspondence with a person or organisation if he has reason to believe that the person or organisation is planning or engaging in activities which present a genuine and serious threat to the security or good order of the establishment.'

Praise indeed. We will be taking steps to counter this blatant political censorship. We urge readers to write letters of protest to:

The Governor, HM Prison, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire AB4 6YY.
Terry O'Halloran

POWs: NEWS AND GREETINGS

POWs: News and greetings
We have news of four POWs' new locations: Vince Donnelly has been ghosted to Leeds from Durham; Noel Gibson has been transferred from the Scrubs to Parkhurst; Paul Norney from Hull to Wakefield; and Roy Walsh from Parkhurst to the Scrubs. Greetings to all these comrades.

Four birthdays are coming in May and June. Our greetings to these comrades. We ask our readers to send cards, preferably recorded delivery to ensure their arrival:
Joe O'Connell, 338635, HM Prison, Welford Road, Leicester, LE2 7AJ. 15 May.
Robert Campbell, B32954, HM Prison Gartree, Leicester Road, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 7RP. 1 June.
Con McFadden, 130662, HM Prison, Love Lane, Wakefield, Yorkshire, WF2 9AG. 19 June.
Paul Holmes, 119034, HM Prison, Frankland, Brasside, Durham. 22 June.

HANDS OFF IRELAND!

As Loyalist terror continues

Move towards new talks

Against a background of continuing loyalist street protests, sectarian attacks and confrontation with the RUC, Unionist leaders have decided to begin talks about talks with the British government. Their previous position that no talks would be possible until the Anglo-Irish Agreement was suspended has been carefully scaled down to the demand for its 'non-implementation'. On the other side both Dublin and London have bent over backwards to offer to operate the deal 'sensitively' (ie even more invisibly) so that talks could begin without loss of face for either side.

Given the state of loyalist unrest, the move towards talks and ultimate reconciliation may yet break down. However, both sides know the risks of a permanent breach between loyalism and British imperialism. British rule in Ireland through the Six County statelet, can only exist on the basis of loyalist support. Equally loyalist supremacy can only continue by virtue of British imperialist rule. Eventually, however serious the differences, these inescapable facts must draw the two sides together again.

Even as the diplomatic shuffle towards the negotiating table began, Paisley was making his plans clear:

'In the ring when your opponent wobbles you do not hold back, you go for him with everything you have got. We need to go for Thatcher with all we have got.'

In other words the loyalist campaign both constitutional and unconstitutional will continue. It suffered a set back however, when 5 Unionist councillors rebelled and voted with the opposition to end the suspension of Belfast city council. But whilst Paisley and the other Unionist leaders emphasised their rather lame scheme for a rates strike and a day of prayer against the Agreement, the real plan relies on something altogether more worldly, continuing loyalist violence.

Most worrying for British imperialism has been the strain on the RUC over past months. With 300 RUC attacked by loyalists and regular anti-RUC rioting in some areas, a question mark has been growing over whether the RUC would crack and decisively reveal its sectarian character. On 10 April, Alan Wright, Chairman of the Northern Ire-



Thomas Cutney (68) in his gutted Lisburn Home

land Police Federation said that attacks on the RUC would be reduced if RUC Chief Hermon stayed away from the Anglo-Irish conference. This political intervention by a major RUC spokesman was welcomed as a propaganda victory by loyalists and a sign that their campaign was working.

On 14 April Keith White died, after 2 weeks on a life support machine, the first loyalist victim of the plastic bullets which have claimed 16 lives in the Six

Counties. His death was followed by pickets of RUC stations and heightened anti-RUC feeling in loyalist areas.

But whilst the attacks against the RUC have been widely publicised and condemned by British press and politicians, a serious campaign of sectarian attacks against Catholics has been virtually ignored. Within hours of the funeral of Keith White, two Catholic families in Lisburn were attacked and their homes petrol bombed. A loyalist mob

sealed off entrances to the area to delay the fire brigade. On 20 April and 22 April in Belfast, two Catholic families homes were set on fire. In other areas schools, churches, shops and homes have been attacked and individuals have been beaten up on the streets.

RUC figures for April claimed that 79 sectarian attacks had occurred, Sinn Fein put the figure much higher and accused the RUC of suppressing information on the widespread and co-ordinated campaign of sectarian violence which is taking place. This campaign has now claimed another life. On 7 May Mrs Margaret Caulfield was shot dead and her husband wounded by sectarian killers who had broken into their homes. Mrs Caulfield was a Protestant who married her Catholic husband only three weeks ago. Four such killings have taken place this year and the random and brutal manner of the murders is clearly aimed at striking terror into the nationalist people.

Loyalist opposition to the Agreement has tended to bolster its credibility and that of its Twenty Six Counties and SDLP backers. But reality will out. After six months the Agreement has not improved life for the nationalist people one iota. On the contrary state repression has increased. The war being waged by British imperialism against the Irish people continues: on 26 April undercover British soldiers shot dead IRA volunteer Seamus McElwaine and seriously wounded Sean Lynch. Sean Lynch later revealed that Seamus had been initially wounded by the British soldiers who, after interrogating him for half an hour, cold bloodedly shot him dead.

Seamus McElwaine gave his life in the revolutionary struggle to free Ireland. It is that struggle, not the false reforms of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which will eventually liberate Ireland.

Maxine Williams

Free the Guildford 4

In January 1977 an IRA unit, captured in the famous siege of Balcombe Street, were brought up for trial at the Old Bailey for 25 incidents forming part of a bombing campaign in the London area in 1974 and 1975. Although as captured IRA volunteers they offered no defence, certain other incidents had mysteriously been omitted from the charge list.

In his statement from the dock Joe O'Connell explained the bizarre cover-up that was taking place:

'We have recognised this court to the extent that we have instructed our lawyers to draw the attention of the court to the fact that four totally innocent people - Carole Richardson, Gerry Conlon, Paul Hill and Paddy Armstrong - are serving massive sentences for three bombings, two in Guildford and one in Woolwich, which three of us and another man now imprisoned, have admitted that we did. The Director of Public Prosecutions was made aware of these admissions in December 1975 and has chosen to do nothing... Higgs (the police forensic expert) admitted in this trial that the Woolwich bomb formed part of a correlated series with other bombings with which we are charged. Yet when he gave evidence at the earlier Guildford and Woolwich trial he deliberately concealed that the Woolwich bomb was definitely part of a series carried out between October and December and that the people on trial were in custody at the time of some of these bombings.'

Arrested on 30 November 1974, Paul Hill was the first person to be detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act rushed through Parliament the night before, following the Birmingham pub bombings of 21 November. Savage sentences were handed out on 22 October 1975 by Judge Donaldson 'natural

life' for Paul Hill recommending that he remain imprisoned 'to a great age' or unless suffering from 'great infirmity'; Patrick Armstrong - life, recommended minimum 35 years; Gerry Conlon - life, recommended minimum 30 years; and Carole Richardson - detention 'during the Queen's pleasure'. The only 'evidence' against them were statements made to the police under duress. Paul Hill maintains he had been severely beaten. There was no corroboration, forensic evidence or evidence of conspiracy. Paul's alibi was brushed aside and Carole Richardson was supposed to have covered a distance in 45 minutes (from Guildford back to London) that the police themselves were unable to do in a 2½ litre Triumph in less than 46.

Since they were sent down, the British state has done its best to bury them alive with all evidence of the frameup. Brendan Dowd, the other prisoner referred to by Joe O'Connell as having been jointly responsible for the bombings alongside the 'Balcombe Street' unit, was 'ghosted' around solitary units in various prisons for 2 years so that he was too disorientated to face cross-examination at the appeal for the Guildford 4 in 1977. Joe O'Connell, Eddie Butler and Harry Duggan however were still able to describe accurately the layout of the bombed pubs. The 3 appeal judges then upheld the original frameup relying on a letter, found in one of the Balcombe Street men's safe houses, which referred to '2 Belfast boys'. Being Irish means you're guilty! The only legal means now open to the Guildford 4 is for the Home Secretary to be forced to

grant either a retrial or their release. This is the aim of the new campaign.

Paul McKinlay, Tony Sheridan

Interview with Liz Hill and Theresa Cushnahan

For over 11 years the 'Guildford 4' - Paul Hill, Gerard Conlon, Carole Richardson and Patrick Armstrong - have maintained that they were in no way involved with the Guildford and Woolwich bombings in 1974. Paul Hill's relatives are now calling for a major public campaign to expose what has happened and to win their release. The relatives are especially concerned about the extreme brutality Paul has suffered, and the isolation amounting to four years of solitary.

He has been moved from prison to prison the length and breadth of England for 11 years - a total of 41 moves, designed to inflict a total sense of instability and to disrupt his ties with family and friends. The latest move in February was back to Hull, where there are no long term facilities and where he is in a special unit. This move breaks a promise given him by the Home Office, following his being beaten up by prison officers in the 1976 Hull prison revolt, that he would never be sent back there. Gerard Conlon's father Giuseppe endured a lingering death between Wormwood Scrubs and Hammersmith Hospital in January 1980. He too had been framed and imprisoned and died protesting his innocence. Since then there has been growing public interest and media coverage of the framing of Irish political prisoners. Paul's family

are hoping to build on this through the Free the Guildford 4 Campaign. FRFI spoke to his aunt, Theresa, and sister Liz about the campaign.

Theresa ... They won't recognise that they're innocent because they don't actually want to expose that a frameup has been committed here in a time of anti-Irish hysteria... They're doing everything possible to prevent from coming out what a dreadful thing they've done to them (the Guildford 4), so now I think it's up to the people...

FRFI What do you hope to achieve through the campaign?

Theresa I believe in 'people power', so I think that if we can build up a very good campaign with a lot of people interested and wanting to see justice done in this and similar cases then pressure will build up. That's the only way we're ever going to achieve anything... We're looking for support from active and committed people, from all groups

who would like to set up a committee on the Guildford 4, and financial support for leaflets and posters, mailing, distributing and banners etc.

Liz We want a very strong campaign and anyone who's interested and wants to lend their support to come forward, and not just to speak or whatever, but obviously that as well. We want every group that is interested to give their support and not to let this happen again.

FRFI If successful what effect do you think it will have on the situation for Irish prisoners and the PTA?

Theresa ... Whenever there's a trial people will take a really active interest to make sure this doesn't happen again... At that time with all the anti-Irish hysteria being whipped up people didn't care. They must be guilty because they were Irish and that was good enough; but it's not good enough...

Liz If it's successful they'll think again before they try to frame anybody up whether they be Irish or whatever they are and it will be tremendous for everybody...

FRFI So what would you say to non-Irish people here, such as the black people of Broadwater Farm who now face the might of the British state?

Theresa The PTA was used on the Irish people, and people didn't question that, so they're picking on the next ethnic minority... Everything they've done in Ireland within a short space of time they've introduced here... So if people don't speak out about Ireland, before they know it, it's on their doorstep and happening to them.

FRFI Did the Maire O'Shea campaign and her victory against the PTA and conspiracy charges have any effect on your feelings about a campaign for Paul?

Liz There's a lot to be learned from her and she did broaden campaigning tremendously and got everybody involved. That was the great thing that she did. That's what we intend to do with our campaign. She was a great inspiration.

FREE THE GUILDFORD FOUR

PUBLIC MEETING

7.30 Thursday 15 May
The Carleton Centre
Granville Road
Kilburn NW6

Speakers:
Maire O'Shea
Alastair Logan
Liz Hill
Paul McKinlay (Irish Solidarity Movement)
Steafon O'Muiris (Campaign for Irish Prisoners in Britain)

Free the Guildford Four campaign, BM
Box 6944, London WC1N 3XX

Vietnam the tunnel war

The Tunnels of Cu Chi by Tom Mangold and John Penycote, Pan Books, 1986, 287pp £2.95 pb.

Tunnels of Cu Chi tells an amazing story: how the workers' and peasants' army of US-occupied South Vietnam won an enormous victory over the most powerful imperialist state in the world. The war for the liberation of South Vietnam was, for the important years, literally the war of the flea and the elephant — and the flea won!

The tunnels of the book were an ingenious invention by the people's army; one which sprang from the conditions of war forced upon them by the occupation and one which had been used formerly and successfully in the war against French imperialism which had successfully liberated the North of the country. The tunnels of Cu Chi, which the book is mainly about, were the most highly developed part of a complex tunnel network which in the mid-sixties stretched from the gates of Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) to the borders of Cambodia (now Kampuchea). They were dug deep enough to contain living areas, storage depots,

ammunition factories, hospitals, HQs for the storage of information and for meetings of the army command, and kitchens.

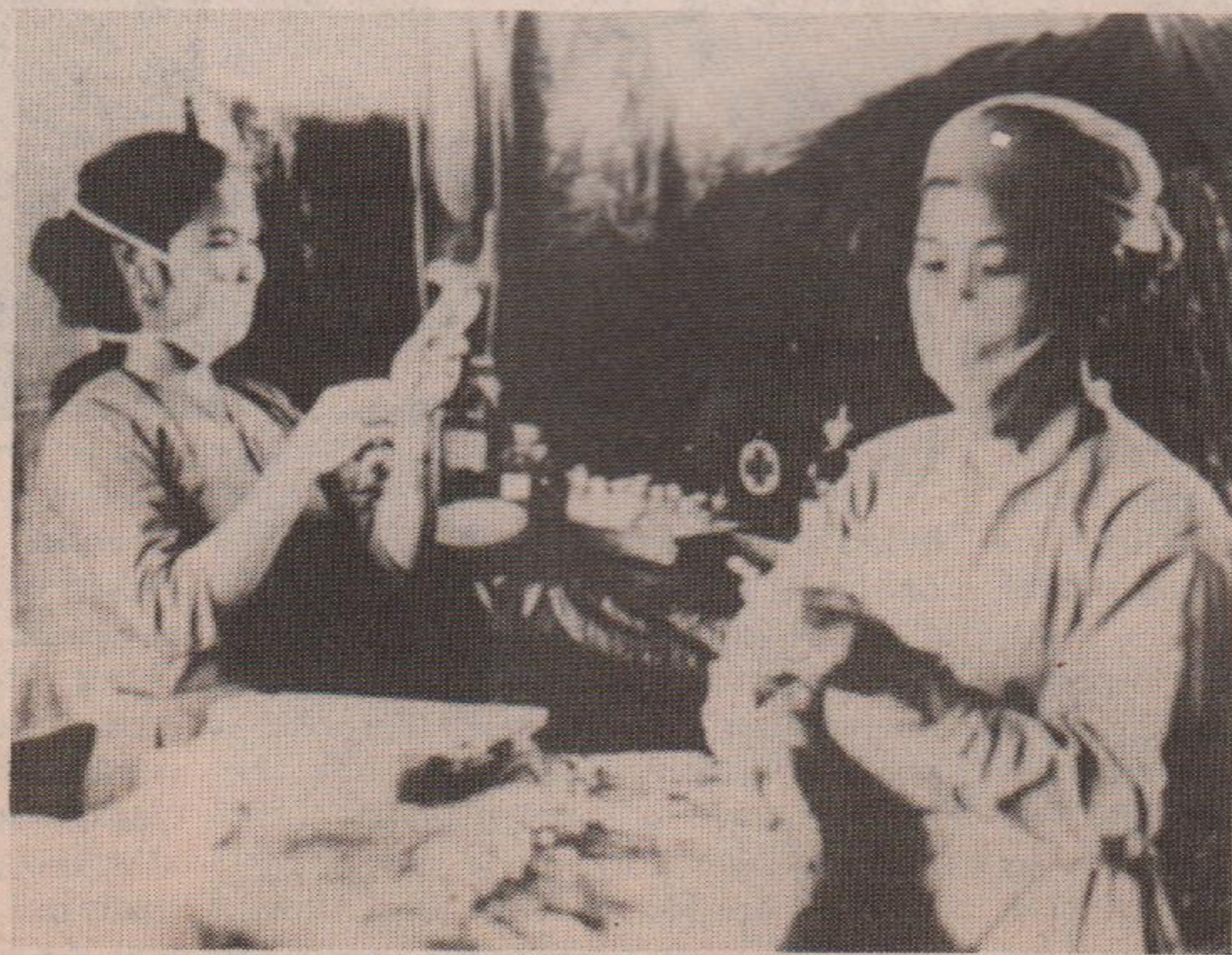
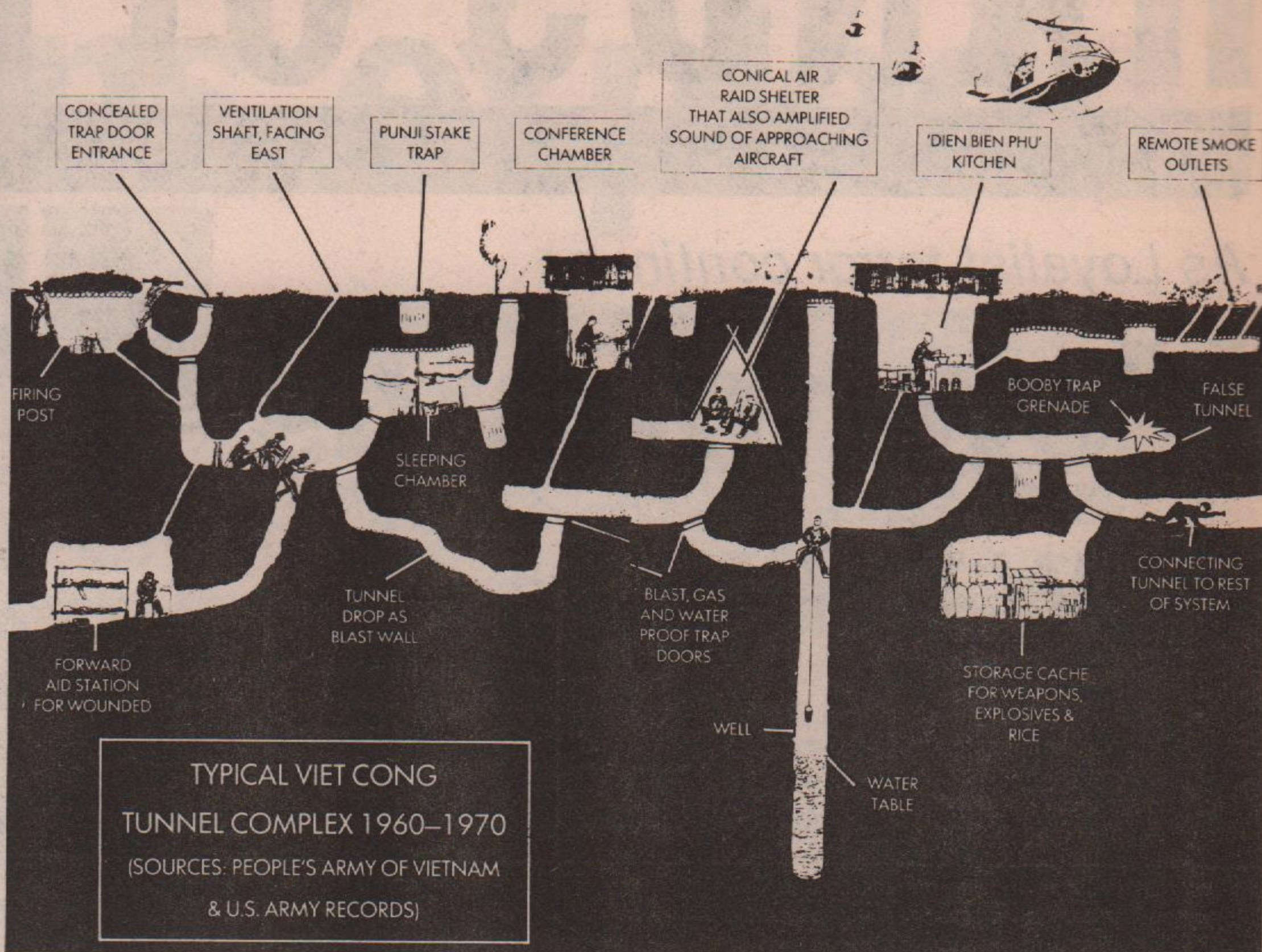
They were booby trapped and held many hidden dangers for the US 'tunnel rats', the specially trained squads formed to try to destroy the tunnel fighting network. U-Bends containing water, and trapdoors between up to three different levels of the tunnel system were built in in order to prevent the spread of CS gas and other poisons which the Americans used. The tunnels were so solidly built and so deep that grenade attacks and heavy mortar shelling on them from the surface had barely any effect beyond the immediate area of the explosion. Many secret entrances and exits were built in, as were well-concealed link tunnels from one complex to another.

The Vietnamese lived, fought and died in these tunnels — they also sang, wrote poetry, gave birth to children and were entertained by films and revolutionary theatre troupes. Doc-



tors and nurses, trained in the North, had to perform quite intricate operations with minimal equipment.

The hardship of this life was enormous; sometimes no daylight for days on end, endless precautionary camouflaging and decoying against the US and the army of the puppet state in the South. Many died, many were injured, retribution was wreaked against the local villagers who lived in the area. In the end, the US



NLF nurses prepare for surgery inside a tunnel hospital

army razed the whole area leaving it totally uninhabitable, and with the ghastly legacy of deformities and death caused by Agent Orange and other poisons. But the Vietnamese won!

The book attempts to be 'even-handed' in describing the activities of the tunnel rats of the US army — men who describe themselves as crazed 'gook-hating' murderers. Those who the authors could find who were willing to tell their tales, are traumatised and unsocial creatures even yet — and their tales are full of hatred and inhumanity for the most part. Others can still not bring themselves to tell of their deeds and their feelings during

the US war against the Vietnamese people.

In contrast, the accounts of the tunnel war given by the men and women of Vietnam are real tales of heroism and humanity. Those who have not since died of wounds and poisonings inflicted on them are still involved in the reconstruction of their country, and in repairing the damages of war, in liberated, communist, united Vietnam.

This book must be read.

Maggie Mellon

Racist film

Out of Africa. Director Sydney Pollack, 1985 US.

It was not enough for the British colonialists to go into other people's countries to steal, plunder and enslave. They also took with them their missionaries, anthropologists and poets to put the seal on imperialist conquest. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the life and times of Karen Blixen and her European cronies in Kenya in the 1920s and 1930s. They were a particularly vicious bunch of degenerates whose racism was unbending, and who lived a life of luxury.

Karen Blixen came from an aristocratic house in Denmark. She was a 'writer' who, at one time, Ernest Hemingway considered proposing for the Nobel prize for Literature. Her attitude to the African people is deeply insulting, deeply ignorant. She writes:

'The dark nations of Africa, strikingly precocious as young children, seemed to come to a standstill in their mental growth at different ages. The Kikuyu, Kavirondo and Wakamba, the people who worked for me on the farm, in early childhood were far ahead of

white children of the same age, but they stopped quite suddenly at a stage corresponding to that of a European child of nine.'

And much, much more in the same vein.

That her life, her sex life, her money life, her greedy life, should be the subject of an 'award-winning' film directed by Sydney Pollack, tells us all we need to know about the international capitalist entertainment business... it stinks!

African extras in the film were paid a fraction of fees paid to white extras: as the Kenyan press stated, the Kenyan people won't stand for this racist exploitation 'simply because a racist woman wrote a racist book about us'.

Readers of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* are urged to read the writings of the great Kenyan revolutionary Ngugi wa Thiong'o whose novels, political writings and play, 'The Trial of Dedan Kimathi' are all easily available in the Heinemann African Writers Series.

Susan Davidson

Robben Island — the struggle for freedom

Prison Walls. A play written by Strini Moodley and presented by the Afrikan Cultural Centre of Johannesburg in London, Bradford and Leeds. March 1986.

This play was brought to Britain for the International Book Fair of Black and Third World Books and was performed in Bradford, Leeds and London. It is based on the experiences of the author Strini Moodley, a comrade of Steve Biko, who spent five years on Robben Island. While centred around 3 prisoners in isolation cells in a South African prison, part of the play's strength lies in the fact that the cells could have been anywhere where people are fighting for freedom. Strini Moodley's dedication reads:

'I dedicate this to him (Steve Bantu Biko), to Bobby Sands, George Jackson and all great revolutionaries of the world who died for what they believed in and who lived life so fully that their passing struck at the core of their respective nations.'

A truly anti-imperialist play which

portrayed not only the horror of imprisonment of those fighting for freedom but also looked at the hopes and ideas that sustain people. With a simple stage setting and plot, the exploration of the 3 characters was very clear. Knox saw all the power of the people coming out of the barrel of a gun, and saw his task as just serving his sentence so that he could get out and rejoin the struggle as soon as possible. For Laro the struggle for human dignity and the need to maintain self-respect in face of the prison authorities was essential. For him the struggle continues inside the prison and is not separate from the struggle outside. The third character Stix vacillates between Knox's and Laro's positions. Laro wins Stix to his side at the start of a protest about the terrible food served up and Knox is also drawn into the protest. But with the confrontation between the prisoners and warders growing,

Knox and Laro fall out. Stix then sides with Knox who seems more 'reasonable'. He thus strays from the principle of the right to be treated as a human being. The divisions between the prisoners allows Laro to be taken off by the warders, and as we found out later, be beaten to death. Laro the most militant prisoner has been murdered.

But that was not the end. The audience was questioned as to why they were there. Was it because of guilt or was it to observe? Strini Moodley and the Afrikan Cultural Centre, through their drama and the discussion which followed began to show what the struggle against apartheid actually means to the people of South Africa in the much broader context of the struggle against oppression throughout the world. It was a chance to catch a glimpse of the culture of resistance in South Africa written by one of the founding members of the Black Consciousness Movement.

Hopefully if the Afrikan Cultural Centre come to Britain again they will be able to perform in many more venues around the country.

Chas Millington

Revolution in Angola

Mayombe by Pepetela, Heinemann 1983, 184pp £3.50

Mayombe was published several years after the People's Republic of Angola won independence under the leadership of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in 1975. It is a rare book, being a novel set amid the experiences of a revolutionary organisation in struggle. It was published at the express wish of Angola's first President, Agostinho Neto, who considered that the open debate on the dangers of tribalism and racism was vital in the wider context of Africa's struggle against imperialism and for independence. Pepetela, who wrote the book in 1971, served with the guerillas in Cabinda, Angola's enclave province, and discusses frankly the tensions within a national liberation movement that included in its ranks people from all the regional cultures in Angola, such as Kikongo in the North, Kimbundu in the Centre and Umbundu in the South.

The novel is set in the Mayombe forest of Cabinda among a group of guerilla fighters with the MPLA in the early 1970s, and at Dolisie in the neighbouring Congo Republic, where the MPLA had a rear-base and a school.

The style switches from narrative to the first person, as Pepetela gives the reader detailed insights into the thoughts of the individual guerillas. This device cleverly exposes and dev-

elopos the themes of contradiction, prejudice and personal insecurity which were the human material out of which the revolution emerged and which run through the novel. *Mayombe*, the forest, pervades the men's struggle and becomes a character in its own right: 'Mayombe had accepted the axe blows that opened up a clearing in it. A clearing invisible from above... and the men dressed in green, turned green like the leaves and chestnut like the colossal trunks... Thus was born of Mayombe the guerilla base.' *Mayombe* is both an ally and an adversary: a cover for their operations and a source of ceaseless demands upon their physical strength.

The discussions between the men provide the reader with an appreciation of the political and tactical differences and battles which exist in any revolutionary organisation. Many of these centre upon the different levels of theoretical knowledge and understanding among the individuals and the conflict between the need for political development and the need for practical experience and training. As inexperienced fighters engaged in fierce conflict with the Portuguese imperialists, many of the men see their political development as of secondary importance. These attitudes are confronted and overcome in the course of the struggle.

As the novel opens a dispute

emerges over whether a group of local timber workers should be shot because they are working for the tuga (Portuguese). It emerges that the true motive for this hardline attitude is that these workers are Cabinda people and it is the problem of tribal chauvinism which permeates the novel and which the MPLA has to battle to wipe out from its movement. One of the guerillas steals money from a local worker who has been captured. The arguments which arise out of this crime expose the problems of discipline, or lack of it, within a revolutionary organisation and again demonstrate the dichotomy between theory and practice: the thief, in theory, should be shot, and yet in practice he is a good comrade and fighter and the movement cannot afford to lose a good man. Yet his offence also has clearly damaging implications for the successful mobilisation of local people behind the movement. Through these discussions, the base commander emerges clearly as the hero of the novel. He is a humorous and human character who moves the reader to admiration and strong involvement.

From this novel we learn how a revolutionary people emerges, how experiences are welded to create a determined force that will not be turned back to the days of ignorance and oppression, that will honour its fallen and fight imperialist aggression today and in the future.

Lucy Francis

Solidarity to all prisoners

Dear FRFI

I am out of jail a year now, but very active on the prison issues. I was on BBC's 'Cause for Concern', speaking about the abuses that prisoners are subjected to in Scottish jails of which you are aware. I've also had numerous articles in the press, and last night I spoke at the Cawane Centre in Stirling to a fair-sized audience who I put in the picture regarding the abuses in our jails. The audience were tremendous - a number of youngsters not long out of Glenochil Death Camp also spoke about the brutality of that regime and I was heartened to see them come forward to expose the perversities who daily torture and bully youngsters who are not in a position to fight back.

In 1967 I slashed a detention screw at Glenochil. I'm not ashamed of it, he more than deserved it. Unlike those bastards, I don't drive teenagers to commit suicide.

I've been working with the Scottish Prisoners Support Committee and I've been on a few pickets as well; my girlfriend is as dedicated as me to the cause of prisoners' rights and writes even more letters than me

on the subject.

I'm getting a lot of hassle from the local police who regard me as some kind of terrorist. It seems anyone who is prepared to speak out is a terrorist these days.

Pass on my solidarity to all prisoners and publish my address for anyone who wants to know more about the real situation in Scots' jails as I am an expert on the subject. My job is to expose these abuses whenever I can enlighten even one person - it's my duty as I see it to do so. I'm terrified at what they're doing in our jails, and I'll never rest until the general public are as terrified as I am. I may be afraid but my anger overcomes my fear. I may be out, but thousands are still at risk to the corruption of the British penal system. I owe them a moral debt. I won't shut up - they'd need to put a bullet through my brain first, and I'm no hero or martyr, my courage was born in the ashes of misery and despair. I beg all prisoners to speak up for their mates' sakes, if not for their own. Venceremos.

Mick McCallum
74E Buchanan Road
Kirkmichael
Helensburgh
G84 7LZ

Alliance of collaborators

Dear FRFI

... The day I leave here will be, for me, both a happy one and a sad one. Happy because I will enjoy some freedom after serving five years, but equally as sad when I am saying goodbye to my many comrades, some of them who are now entering their 12th, 13th and 14th years of incarceration in a British Prison. It is a normal thing, for a comrade to say to you while walking around the yard, 'I'll be here 10 years next month' and so on. Some of my fellow-prisoners have lost their mothers and fathers without being released for a few hours to pay their last respects. Others have sat helplessly in their cell as their young sisters, brothers and friends have been murdered by a plastic bullet.

Today these same Republican prisoners witness, with nothing but contempt, Free State politicians, members of the Catholic hierarchy and the opportunist partitionist SDLP attempting to use them against the Republican Movement and therefore against the right of the Irish people to resist British rule. The '1985 Hillsborough Treaty' has effectively linked all those collabora-

tors together to prolong imperialist interests and to defeat our struggle for national self-determination.

When I am leaving here I will not only be leaving my comrades in the H-Blocks but also the many men and women Republican POWs throughout Ireland and abroad. My thoughts will go out especially to women comrades in Ireland and England who are undergoing a daily practice of degrading and humiliating strip-searching, carried out by a callous regime for the sole purpose to demoralise and break the spirit of our women prisoners.

It is only proper that I take this opportunity to thank you, once again, for all the work you and your comrades have done for us. We look forward to your paper each month. It keeps us up to date on the many struggles that are happening throughout the world and it also keeps us well informed about the many protest groups in your main cities who demonstrate continuously against apartheid, racism, deportation and for prisoners' rights etc...

Gerard McDonnell, HMP Brixton in his letter to you, (FRFI Feb) spoke for us all when he said 'The papers once read are then given to others and the message read by a greater readership'. I will finish off for now, Yours in solidarity
Eugene Cosgrove H Block 5

No surrender?

Dear FRFI

On Saturday 7 April a former mining village (Cowie) in Stirlingshire was up in arms after the council agreed to permit an Orange Order Parade.

The application was granted to the Kingdom of Fife 'No Surrender Club' which was trying to break new ground. However, from the start it was obvious that the entire village had decided that on no account would the parade take place. Several women both Protestant and Catholic decided to squat on the road and prevent the Orangemen from carrying out their programme.

At this point the police told the parade organisers that if the event were insisted upon there was likely to be a dangerous confrontation.

Leaders in the village including the parish minister and priest expressed great concern that the Orange Order in Fife should seek to invade the village and supported the majority of the villagers in their protest.

The local authorities granted the permission for the parade on condition that the route was changed and did not, as had been planned, pass the local Roman Catholic Church.

However these determined women and the rest of the village demonstrated in no idle manner that they wanted no march under no terms and made sure that 'The No Surrender Club' in fact *did surrender*, took police advice and left Cowie.

CB
Dundee

MANCHESTER IRISH SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

Public Meeting
Anglo-Irish Agreement - Is it the answer?
Tuesday 3 June 7.30pm
Longsight Library, Stockport Rd.
MISC c/o Raven Press, 75 Picadilly, Manchester 1

Reductionism?

Dear FRFI

I am writing this letter as an RCG supporter in an attempt to balance what I see as a drift toward reductionism in the paper of late.

Firstly, I would like to take issue with Mike Ryan (FRFI 57) and a number of others who claim that we must defeat or at least expose the ruling class on the one hand but in the very same breath complain about the 'lengthy explanations of the ins and outs of high finance skulduggery'. Just *how* are we expected to place more emphasis on 'who was doing the skulduggery and how they were allowed to escape', at Westlands without investigation? Do we only engage in issues which are clearly laid out for all to see? I think not.

Secondly I wish to congratulate you on last month's 'Trading in Death' piece. I feel that this kind of 'in depth' approach is too often passed over in the paper and should become a more regular feature. How about it?

Occasionally it is important to *pull together* some of the strands of the

The struggle or the Labour Party

In response to Jimmy A's letter in FRFI 57. It is important that we all learn to sharpen up our arguments against Militant particularly since at this moment this organisation is in the business of 'lending credibility' to the Labour Party. As was pointed out in the paper's editorial, what Militant and the Labour Left do is provide a left cover for the rotten, pro-imperialist Labour Party. What does this mean in practice?

It means that those youth involved in fighting back against Newman's

thugs who go on to recognise the need for political organisation will turn to whatever *appears* to answer that need. During the miners' strike, the people in struggle who saw the need to speak to other workers, to broaden the base of the struggle were provided with the opportunity to do so by groups like Militant. Militant gave credibility to the idea that the Labour Party and labour movement could be transformed to win the strike and kick out the Tories and many young people joined them. Real communists know the dead end which Militant are leading people into, but it's no good keeping this to

ourselves.

People like Doreen Humber see the Labour Party's limitations but also recognise the need for political organisation to take struggles forward. Sooner or later, a clear choice will have to be made by such people - the struggle *or* the Labour Party. It is in the course of people making such choices that communists must intervene and say that the Labour Party is not a poor friend, a second best or a tenth best, but does not represent in any way the interests of the working class.

Derek/Mike Dundee

with national minorities as it does in third world countries.

As a token of this recognition we ask for support for the Merthyr Rising march to be held in Merthyr Tudful, South Wales on 7 June. The Merthyr rising of 1831 was an early working class uprising when iron workers from the Cyfarthfa works seized the town for 5 days. For the first time the Red Flag was raised as the symbol of Working Class solidarity.

The march will celebrate this famous workers rebellion - join in the fight for socialism and national liberation.

For more information contact: Marc Jones, 7 Stryd Albert, Wrecsam, Clwyd, Wales or phone Wrecsam 363908.

Marc V Jones

Merthyr March

As Plaid Cymru and the Labour Party shift to the right with alarming speed there is a growing need for a revolutionary alternative for socialists in Wales. Past experience has shown us that British based organisations fail to take into account the exploitative colonial relationship between Wales and England, which is as evident as that between England and Ireland.

With this in mind a small group of Welsh socialist republicans are establishing a Welsh Socialist Party. We ask for your support in this move to weaken British imperialism and for recognition that national liberation struggles are a key in defeating multi-national capital. This applies equally in advanced capitalist states

High profile for communism

Dear Comrades

I commend your group of revolutionary communists on your staunch support of the progressive cause. It is very rarely today, that we see any left-wing group actively declaring their support of Moscow and condemning 'moderate' parties of the left who call themselves 'communists'.

All progressive peoples must realise now that not to support Moscow on any issue, is equal to undermining the social cause that we all want. As

FRFI FUND DRIVE

We need your money—and last month we got it. The FRFI Fund in April reached £567, which is £67 more than we need every month to subsidise the unwaged rate of the paper. This extra helped us make up for previous shortfalls and the FRFI Fund for the year now stands at £1925, just £75 below what we need.

Most of this money was raised by our FRFI Supporter Groups throughout the country: £252 in South London, £99 North London, £91 Edinburgh, £70 Liverpool, £17 Dundee, £11 Glasgow, £9 Leeds, £8 Manchester. £10 was sent by FRFI readers.

Why don't YOU help raise the £500 we need—either by contributing individually or by joining in the collective effort of our Supporter Groups.

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global web of imperialism. Capitalism is nothing if not a *dynamic* system. As Marx observed 'constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier times. All fixed, fast-frozen relationships, with their train of venerable ideas and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become obsolete before they can ossify' (*Communist Manifesto*).

Rayne's piece showed how in a particular context the constantly shifting flux that is the bourgeoisie operates. Financing heroin production in the East whilst making hollow speeches in the West about Drug Barons. The Capitalist state from Washington to Hong Kong locked into a network of banks organised crime and the CIA. And, when communities fight back against the pushers in Dublin they are called IRA terrorists! We need *more*, not less of these exposes.

In solidarity
JA
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FRFI Supporters Groups - Join them!

FRFI Supporters groups exist in North and South London, Manchester, Liverpool, Bradford, Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee. We hope to set others up—in Bristol and the North East of England and the Midlands.

For more information write to:
FRFI BCM Box 5909 London WC1N 3XX

SACY Address

Dear sir,
Thankyou for covering our benefit evening for SWAPO in your issue number 56 (February 1986). However, we note with dismay that the address given for people wishing to contact SACY (South Africa Concerns You) is that of FRFI in Glasgow.

The impression, thus created, is that SACY is somehow linked to FRFI. We wish your readers to understand that this is not the case. We request you to publish this letter, together with our address.

Yours faithfully,
Simak Ali (Secretary)

Shafiu Rahman (Chairperson)
4 Camstradden Drive East,
Glasgow. G61 4AH

FRFI replies

FRFI published the address above in 1985 when SACY was established. Our comrades in Glasgow were subsequently informed that SACY had received threats and were no longer using it as a public address. We offered the use of the Glasgow FRFI Box when we published an account of their activities. This was agreed. SACY now has a PO Box address: PO Box 275, Glasgow G61 4AR. They have requested that we print both addresses.

An Appeal to Readers and Supporters

£3,000 for a series of FRFI pamphlets in 1986/87!

We only have £661.56 left to raise to reach our target! The grand total now stands at £2338.44. Thanks this month especially to South London comrades who organised a jumble sale bringing in £330 and to our marathon runners in London and Leeds who raised over £150 through sponsorships.

We are raising this money to reproduce the most important material from past FRFIs in pamphlet form. Soon back issues of our newspaper will become unavailable. We have to ensure that our analyses and views are widely available to new comrades entering struggle. We aim to produce six pamphlets as soon as we have raised the money.

Have you made your contribution yet? Do so immediately and help us reach our target by the end of the month.

Send your donation to: Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX (cheques and POs payable to Larkin Publications)

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It is impossible in a few lines to attempt to portray all that the hunger strike was, all the emotions, the feelings, the happiness, the joys and the sorrows. No one event can be chosen from the rest to say 'this represents the hunger strike' or 'it happened like this'. But then it itself cannot be seen as an event separate from the history which preceded it, nor different from the events which followed after it; it was, rather, a stage, an important stage, in the evolution of this phase of Republican struggle and contained within it were the seeds of development which were to gather strength within the Republican movement following the hunger strike and which even now, have yet to reach their full potential. Such factors cannot be quantified by applying some simple standard of measurement, but 'signs' of them can be observed in the events and actions which they generate.

Individuals in the course of their lives go through various phases of development, some more quickly than others, some attaining a high degree of maturity at an early age, others seeming to never quite reach maturity at all, and while some may say otherwise, I don't believe that the particular level of development each of us reach is determined by our inborn characteristics, but is the result of the situations with which we are confronted in the course of our lives. How we confront and deal with these situations greatly influences the path our development, or otherwise, will take.

Reading this you may say, OK, but what has this to do with the hunger strike, but as I said above, the hunger strike was the result of what went before it, a period of rapid and violent (in the revolutionary as well as the physical sense) development, no doubt, but a period nevertheless – not an event. As such, I see it as a stage which introduced

Looking back at the Hunger Strike

From the H-Blocks POW Lawrence McKeown has contributed this profound and moving assessment of the momentous 1981 Hunger Strike. As we commemorate the murder of 10 Irish freedom fighters, Lawrence McKeown's assessment is a fitting tribute to the abiding revolutionary and internationalist significance of the hunger strike. We are proud to print it.

that such a process is a never-ending one. We must also keep in mind that we, as the Republican movement, only exist at all because of those who have gone before us and who have carried the banner of resistance in the most darkest hours.

The years of protest, struggle and resistance within the H-Blocks (I don't mean in any way to neglect the struggle of our comrades in Armagh prison during the same period, but as this specifically refers to the hunger strike, the Armagh prison struggle though closely interconnected with our own, is outside of this article) prior to the hunger strike both made it inevitable as the ultimate conclusion to such a form of struggle, and also created the determination, the awareness, commitment, strength, maturity and resolve which was to confront that inevitability with such tragic consequences. I don't say 'tragic' in terms of 'if only they had known better'. They did know – only too well. They knew because they had been involved

became divided into oppressor and oppressed, rich and poor, unjust and just. We became 'deeply proud' of the 'wretched oppressed'.

The prison struggle therefore, in the minds of most involved in it became not merely a struggle about 'prison' but a struggle against oppression – capitalism, imperialism, militarism, in all their manifestations. To allow the enemy, the oppressor, to claim a victory in the aftermath of the first hunger strike would have meant a defeat not only for the Republican Movement in its struggle, but a defeat for the oppressed everywhere; just as the victory of the black people of South Africa will be a victory for all peoples everywhere – who are struggling to be free economically, politically and culturally. Bobby, more than others, could articulate the feeling and his writings constantly express the theme of battle between those who desire to be free and those who desire to imprison.

What I have said may appear strange, or new to some who were directly involved with the prison struggle and/or hunger strike either through their own imprisonment, or role within the movement, or indirectly, as someone who was deeply interested in the situation. I don't myself pretend to have interpreted events in such a manner at the time of their actual unfolding, but analysis of them now and also of the events directly preceding the hunger strike lead me to formulate my understanding of that period in the manner in which I have just described.

Various 'explanations' have been advanced as to what it is that makes people follow through such a course of action with such dire and inevitable consequences, 'the IRA ordered them to do it', 'they had suicidal tendencies', or believed in 'blood sacrifice' – even a cursory examination of those involved and the conditions prior to, and during the hunger strike will discredit such theories instantly. The IRA leadership was totally opposed to, for tactical reasons, another hunger strike; those participating were full of life and wished to remain alive and Bobby had tried by every means to prevent it – going to great lengths to 'prove' to the prison authorities how flexible the prisoners were within the terms of their demands. No, they initially adopted such a course of action because they felt the situation demanded it, all else had failed, and continued on it because nothing changed to render that same course of action no longer necessary.

After the death of 4 comrades, Bobby, Frank, Raymond and Patsy, the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace became involved in talks with the Northern Ireland Office and next met with the prisoners on hunger strike. The latter talks lasted many hours over a period of two days – talks with men who were 20, 30, 40 days and more without food and who had already witnessed 4 of their comrades dying. On the second day 'arrangements to end the hunger strike agreed to by NIO Ministers' were explained to the prisoners – arrangements which the NIO later totally denied. These arrangements were described by the delegates of the ICJP as being, while not totally, still the greatest portion of our demands. One member of the delegation, an SDLP member, described them as 'even more than what you actually asked for'. An analysis of the 'arrangements' however very quickly showed that what was being spoken of was a 'surrender' and with that conclusion an immediate and total rejection of the proposals by the men on hunger strike.

Maybe the people who make up such delegations are just politically naive,

maybe some have a more devious reason for their actions or maybe they simply do what the Church hierarchy tells us we all must do – ie compromise. But whichever, what they weren't prepared for was the analytical minds and strength of convictions with which they were confronted. They found they weren't talking to people who were 'caught up in a dilemma' or who 'wanted an easy way out' but people who knew exactly what

'event' separate from all others – but a stage, a special stage, in the development of our struggle. We continue that same struggle today, not out of a sense of duty to our fallen comrades of the prison and other battles, but because we believe in the justice of our struggle. However, we do seek inspiration, strength and courage from their example, not in the act of their dying, but in the act of their living and working daily for the pursuit of victory, applying themselves studiously to the tasks at hand, educating themselves in the art of revolution, analysing deeply situations which confronted them and helping each other overcome their own personal fears, worries and weaknesses.

The initial stages of the revolution cannot be said to have begun in 'such and such a period' of time as even they have roots in history; nor does it end with the attainment of a certain set of objectives, instead, it is an ongoing process. The hunger strike was an important stage in the process and progress of our revolution – it is the task of all of us to further that progress in the days ahead.

**Lawrence McKeown
H-Blocks**



Funeral of Bobby Sands 7 May 1981. IRA volunteers salute their fallen comrade.

"The prison struggle... became not merely a struggle about 'prison' but a struggle against oppression..."

a process of much more rapid rate of change and development within the movement and which ultimately will bring about the formation of a truly revolutionary organisation. I would hope that no one would interpret that as a slight upon them as individuals or the movement as a whole, as it exists today, or as it existed prior to the hunger strike, but if we accept 'the process of development' and agree that we learn from the 'lesson of history and our own experience', then we must also accept that we are all, as individuals and as a movement learning and maturing all the time, and

Demonstration October 1981



daily, 24 hours a day, for years, in a struggle against an enemy who they knew was merciless, and devious with it. They knew because they analysed the factors involved in it and knew the odds were stacked against them. But they also knew from what they had learned by their daily involvement in the struggle (that it was) up to them, that there was only one choice they could make – wanted to make. They weren't supermen, nor did they possess outstanding abilities over and above others, but what they did possess was a selflessness which relegated to last in their list of priorities their own existence. As Bobby said at the beginning of his fast, 'I am dying, not just to attempt to end the barbarity of H-Block and to gain the rightful recognition of a political prisoner, but primarily because what is lost in here is lost for the Republic and those wretched oppressed whom I am deeply proud to know as the risen people.' 'Primarily' for the 'wretched oppressed' whom he is so deeply proud of.

The blanket protest brought about an 'equality amongst all' if ever anything did – even if it was an equality of brutal existence. Each man had 3 blankets, a mattress and a chamber-pot; as well as that, he had his thoughts and his special 'social status'. Regardless of age, reputation, length of sentence, charges with which he had been convicted – all were meaningless. What mattered was how each, and as a unit, were to get through another day. That common bond of struggle over and above everything else was to provoke thought in the minds of any one willing to open his mind to it, and for those who did, a critical look at themselves and a re-assessment of previously held beliefs ensued. The result of such a process was to very clearly distinguish the superficial and materialist aspects of life, and, conversely, the aspects which really mattered, ie, the freedom, happiness, dignity and well-being of a people. All the various forms of oppression and discrimination, the subtle and the not so subtle, practised upon people came to light in the course of discussions between comrades and with it a deep feeling of unity with those people unknown to us, both within our own society and elsewhere who experience oppression in all its various forms. Differences in race, culture, language etc became meaningless and the world

they were doing and what they wished to achieve, and who were committed to bring about that end. They were in a position to have those qualities as they daily, for years, had been to the forefront in an ongoing struggle, had heightened their awareness in the course of that struggle and identified the forces which were ranged against them. They could distinguish between those who were on their side and those who were not, and amongst the latter they would also include those who forever say 'we must have peace, reconciliation, forgiveness' and who attempt to cover over the system which, until it is destroyed in its entirety, will forever enslave to its will for its own perverse ends, the minds and bodies of men, women and children. A small pamphlet I once read, written ironically by a priest, Fr Albert Nolan, said that a 'myth' exists that Christians must always seek a 'peaceful solution to their problems and conflicts' must 'forgive their enemies' and 'talk out their differences'. But that it is *only* a myth, no one can compromise between good and evil, between justice and injustice and between oppressed and oppressor. I suppose it is not so ironic after all – he works amongst the black slaves of South Africa. Today, politicians, the church hierarchy and others who generally benefit from the present way in which society is ordered, tell us we should support the 'Hillsborough Agreement' as 'through it we shall find peace'. But 'peace' is not what we are searching for; a new order of society in which people are no longer enslaved, exploited and abused, and in which justice, equality and humanity are more than just words, is what we are in search of, and in struggle for, and with those will be created the 'peace' which comes with them and which is unattainable without them.

It is in such a way that I today look back on the hunger strike. It wasn't an

Ireland: the key to the British revolution

David Reed

The anniversary of the hunger strikes, the current Old Bailey political trial of Irish people and the renewed campaign to expose the Guildford 4 frame-up make this book essential reading. It contains a detailed history and analysis of the momentous 1981 hunger strike. It also exposes the history of show trials and frame-ups of Irish people in Britain, including that of the Guildford 4.



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