

# FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

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## Peterhead prison burns

At 12.15pm on Thursday 13 November the Peterhead prison rising – the longest in the history of Scottish prisons – ended after 91 hours. As the prisoners released prison officer, John Crossan, flames spread through A Hall. D Hall was damaged by fire and smoke. For four nights and three days the prisoners forced the world to look at Scotland's most hated prison: Peterhead.

'They treat us like animals', 'Long term mental torture', 'Violence stems from a corrupt system', 'We want out. We are all hostages' and 'Living death must end'. The prisoners' banners told the true story of Peterhead prison more graphically and honestly than any number of official inquiries and reports – not that there has been any number of official inquiries and reports.

The Peterhead rising began on Sunday 9 November about 4pm when three prisoners took Crossan hostage and used his keys to release more than 50 other prisoners. They took over A Hall and soon broke through to the roof to make their protest public.

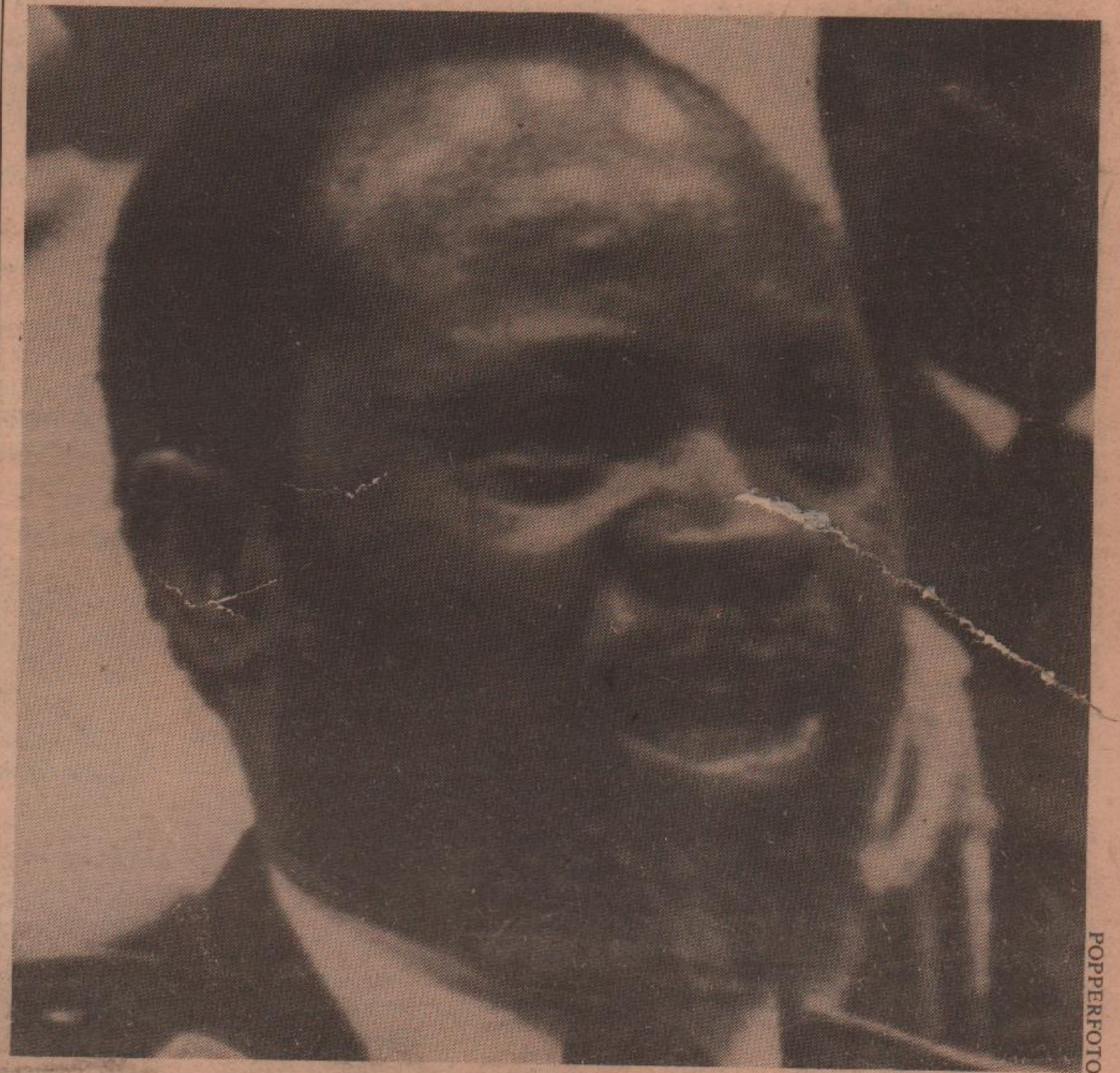
The prisoners fought to breach the wall of censorship that the prison authorities tried to build round them. They painted their demands for a phone on the roof for all to see. And all would know that the prison governor, Alf Smith, and his cronies in the Scottish Home and Health Department (responsible for prisons in Scotland), refused to let them have a phone.

They shouted their demands from the rooftop at a press conference they called on 12 November at 9am. The prison governor had a noisy generator switched on to drown out their voices. Scottish police then cleared press and camera crews away from the prison, under threat of arrest.

On 12 November it looked as though the authorities were planning to end the

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Scottish prisoners on A Hall roof: banner reads 'We are all hostages'



POPPER/PHOTO

## Apartheid murdered Machel

'The Boers killed the best son of the Mozambican people' read the banner at the funeral of the President of the People's Republic of Mozambique, Comrade Samora Moise Machel. The racist apartheid regime murdered Samora Machel and 33 comrades – the known facts leading up to, during and after the crash of the Tupolev 134A aircraft on 19 October make that conclusion inescapable.

South Africa has refused to send the aircraft's four black box flight recorders to the Soviet Union, where the plane was made, even though this is normal practice in aviation disasters. Ivan Vasin, the Soviet Union's Deputy Civil Aviation Minister has made it clear that:

'The only conclusion that one can come to is that a powerful radio station on South African territory working on the Maputo airport frequency drew the plane off course.'

Pretoria's instant 'theory' that the crash was due to a combination of stormy weather and pilot error bears no relation to reality. The weather was clear at the flight's destination and at the scene of the crash.

Victoria Brittain and Paul Fauvet, two journalists whose committed reporting has exposed Pretoria's disinformation, report in the *Guardian* that

'the pilot who died, Captain Yuri Novodran, had 16,000 hours of flying behind him... He was logged as perfectly on course throughout the flight until the final moment when he lost contact with Maputo ground control after asking them to turn on the runway lights which were already on'.

The evidence that South Africa interfered with the aircraft's communi-

cations and navigation equipment accumulates. There are many documented cases of the South African military using the technique of blocking radar signals and mis-directing planes in Angola. The morning of the crash a South African Air Force Captain phoned a news agency in Johannesburg stating that Pretoria had,

'placed a decoy beacon inside Mozambican territory to lure the Presidential plane off course.'

Unusually, the flight had been announced a week in advance and South

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Inside



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## Tamils die in fire bombing

On Friday 14 November, three Tamils were brutally murdered by a petrol bomb attack on their home in Burges Road, East London. Six survivors were detained by the police for 16 hours, were bloodtested and access to lawyers and friend was continually obstructed. Suspecting that this firebombing may have resulted from inter-Tamil rivalry, the police moved with unheard of speed. The area was flooded with riot police, the Anti-Terrorist Squad was called in. On Sunday 6 Tamils were arrested and detained for questioning. The police have never responded with such swiftness when called to investigate the hundreds of clearly racist attacks in this very same area: attacks which have created a state of terror for the Asian community.

When FRFI comrades visited the area on the evening of the attack they heard at first hand a horrific catalogue of racist attacks and police indifference. Since July 1985 there have been five arson attacks on Asian families living in Burges Road. We spoke to Mr Roberts whose own house was petrol bombed in June this year causing thousands of pounds of damage, but luckily no deaths. He told

us that his children remain terrified as a result. The police response to Mr Roberts was that he was mistaken in thinking he was a victim of a racist attack. Indeed the police have denied that any of the five bombings were caused by racists and have not arrested anyone for them.

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The burnt out shell of the fire bombed house

BOB GANNON



# Tebbit tunes BBC to right wavelength

October was a cruel month for the BBC.

● On 1 October BBC journalist, Sarah Crowe, at the memorial ceremony for 177 miners killed in the South African Kinross mining disaster, raised a clenched fist in respect for the dead miners. The BBC sacked her.

● On 21 October the BBC paid just under £281,000 costs and damages in an out-of-court settlement of the libel action brought against *Panorama* by two far-right Tory MPs, Neil Hamilton and Gerald Howarth.

● On 26 October Tory Party Chairman, Norman Tebbit, issued a dossier accusing the BBC of anti-government bias in its reporting of the US bombing of Libya.

The political onslaught against the BBC has nothing to do with its alleged 'left-wing bias' - totally invisible to the Irish, blacks, women, gays, trade unionists, the poor and unemployed - but everything to do with the timing of the next election.

The Tories are simply trying to intimidate the BBC into ensuring that nothing is broadcast, between now and the election, that might interfere with the re-election of the Thatcher government. That the plot has backfired, to some extent, is due to the crude, blatant, downright ignorant character of the Tory attack, particularly Tebbit's ludicrously flimsy dossier.

There is certainly no praise due to the BBC. In the Hamilton/Howarth case not only did Director-General Alasdair Milne cave in to the Board of Governors' demand to settle, but he also attempted to cover up for the Governors by claiming that he was thinking of settling anyway. This is simply a lie.

The BBC sacked Sarah Crowe because of its fear of being accused of being 'left-wing' in its coverage of South Africa. In fact, the BBC's coverage has conformed strictly to the apartheid regime's censorship regulation. The BBC, as the single most powerful British news service operating in South Africa, could defy the censorship regulations. That it refuses to do so is testimony to the BBC's unswerving loyalty to the interests of the British ruling class; however much it may fall out with any particular party.

The attack on the BBC also reflects the progress of censorship, repressive laws and greater police powers which the ruling class necessarily resorts to as social and political conflict grows more acute. For this reason it is more important that the Tory attacks be resisted. It was the strike action taken by journalists in August 1985 that forced the BBC to screen the banned *Real Lives* programme, albeit in a censored form. Decisive action needs to be taken now by journalists at the BBC to reinstate Sarah Crowe and defeat the Tebbit onslaught.

Terry O'Halloran

# Public Order Bill passed

On Friday 7 November the Public Order Bill became the Public Order Act when the Queen signed the Royal Assent. On Wednesday 12 November, in the Queen's speech, the government outlined yet another piece of repressive legislation - the Criminal Justice Bill which aims to abolish the right to challenge jurors. The Prevention of Terrorism Act, the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, the Public Order Act and the Criminal Justice Bill form a massive attack on democratic rights.

The Public Order Bill was hurried through Parliament with 60 or 70 amendments being 'discussed', accepted or rejected in less than an hour. There is, as yet, no date for when the new Act will come into force but it is believed that it will be phased in from 1 January 1987.

This repressive Act has been passed in a smokescreen of talk about 'football hooliganism' and 'rowdy' demonstrators. The Labour and trade union movement leadership, apart from a delegation of senior TU officials six months ago, have done nothing - apart from praising clauses against racism and cheering on amendments which tinker with powers without doing anything about the fundamentally repressive character of the legislation.

The clauses on racism require the Attorney-General's consent to bring charges. The other powers on demonstration and pickets can be implemented by a single Police Constable. The history of the 1936 Public Order Act shows that the new Act will be used against anti-racists, black people, youth and the left.

As reported in last month's FRFI, a new offence of criminal trespass was included. In its final form this gives the police power to remove vehicles and their passengers which are situated on land, where there are 12

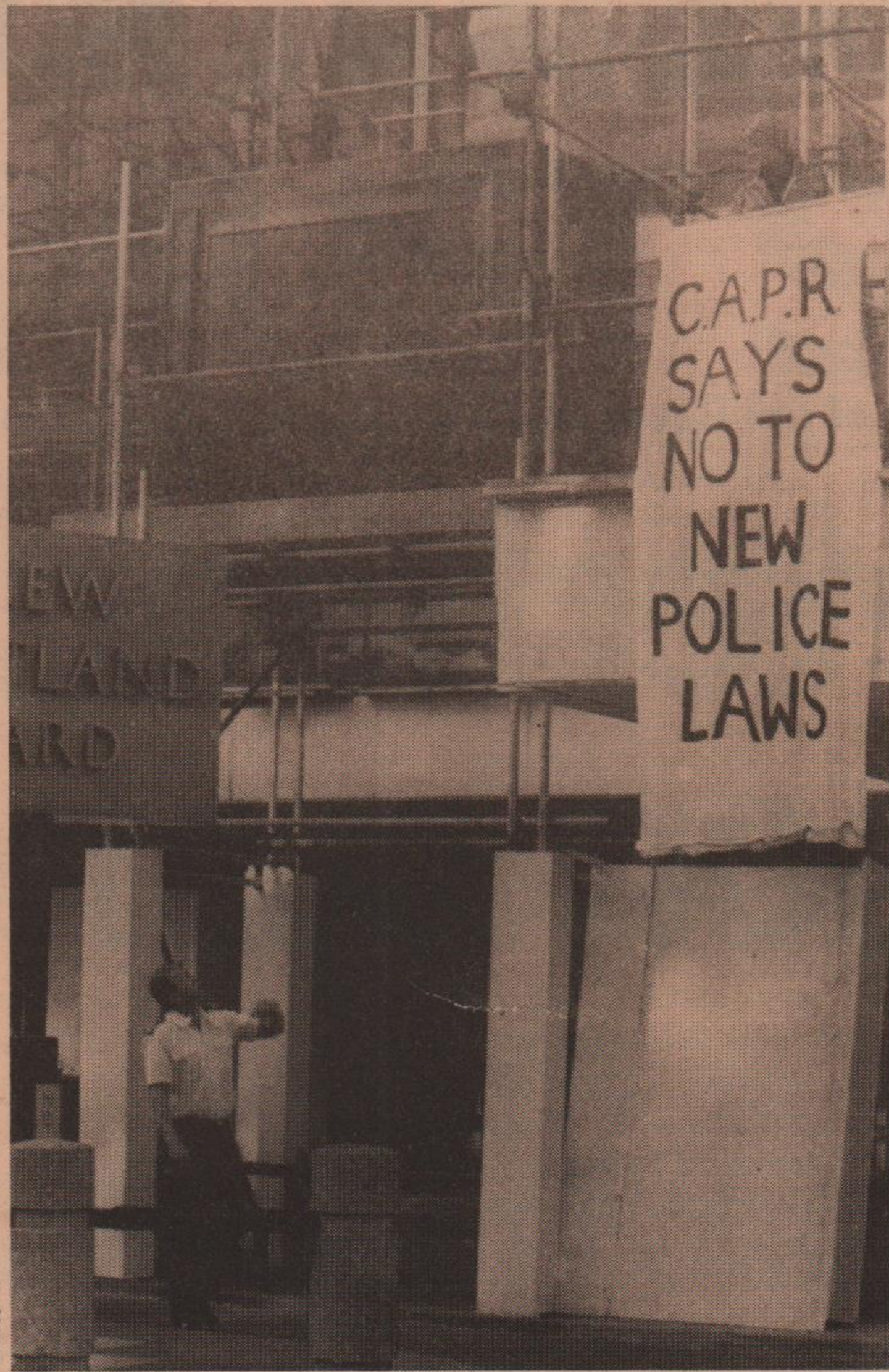
or more vehicles assembled and the police believe they are assembled with intent to commit criminal damage, threatening behaviour or disorderly conduct. Breaches of this power carry a maximum sentence of three months in prison and/or £1,000 fine. Anyone convicted is also debarred from returning to the same site for three months.

James Aptaker

**National Demonstration**  
against the  
**Public Order Act**  
March to Action Conference  
29 November  
Assemble 12 noon  
Tower Place, Market Rd N7  
Coordinated by CAPR

Money is urgently needed by the Campaign Against Police Repression to oppose the Act. Send donations to: Box CAPR, 83, Blackstock Road, London, N4. Further information from CAPR at the address above or phone 01 881 2938.

Weekly planning meetings:  
Tuesdays, 7.30pm  
Stoke Newington Community Centre, Leswin Rd, London N4



CAPR takes the message to the Yard

# Kinnock's ploy fails at Knowsley North

The victory for Labour but with a vastly reduced majority (from 17,000 to 6,724) in the byelection at Knowsley North (Merseyside) comes as no surprise. Nor is it a surprise that 43% of the electorate simply did not vote. Knowsley has unemployment at well over 30%; the vast majority of people claim benefits and live in some of Britain's worst council housing. Knowsley has the highest number of teenage jobless. 12,000 jobs have gone in the ten years up to 1984 and thousands since.

The byelection was brought about by the resignation of Robert Kilroy-Silk who claimed alleged persecution by the Militant Tendency. (He is now headed for a career in television.) It soon became the backdrop for a political struggle between left and right in the Labour Party.

Thus we saw the overturning of the local party candidate, so-called 'hard' left-winger, Les Huckfield, by the Labour NEC, in favour of their own candidate, right-winger, George Howarth. We saw High Court injunctions from Huckfield and the local party turned down by judges, in favour of the NEC; we saw police keeping out local Labour Party activists from a Kinnock election rally in their own constituency. Kinnock has threatened to disband the local party after the election.

In Knowsley, however, as else-

where, Militant and the left have been unable to fight back against Kinnock's onslaught. Tied to their existence inside the Labour Party, they are just as much a part of it as Kinnock himself. Thus Militant ended up in the ludicrous position of calling for a Labour vote in Knowsley, ie a vote for Kinnock, while at the same time taking their party through the High Court.

Labour's vastly reduced majority shows that Kinnock's campaign did not work. While the Tory candidate nearly lost his deposit, the Liberal candidate did well at both the Tories' and Labour's expense. Kinnock ended up neither capturing the votes of the 'middle ground' nor those of the thousands of people who know that a vote for any party will do nothing to give them jobs and decent houses.

Olivia Adamson

# Compromise on teachers' pay

As we go to press a deal has been reached with four out of the five teachers unions at the pay talks at ACAS in London. The deal comes at the end of 7 days of talks during which Education Secretary Kenneth Baker made an unprecedented threat to impose a solution by law if none was reached. He backed this up by including an Education Bill in the Queen's speech at the opening of Parliament, which could, if necessary, become law in just a few days. This would impose not only pay, but conditions of service on teachers.

Baker's threat certainly worked in the case of the NUT, the largest teachers' union. The second largest, the NAS/UWT (and most militant in the current situation), is refusing to sign the deal but has said it will not fight on if the deal is accepted. One of the head teachers' unions, the NAHT, also refused to sign.

The new offer of 16.4% over two years falls far short of restoring teachers' pay to levels reached in the Houghton pay deal in the early seventies. It does not include the much wider differentials favoured by the government for heads and senior teachers. However, teachers' unions have accepted both a 13-point list of duties in their contracts (the government had a 19 point list) and regular assessment both of which will go a long way towards satisfying Baker. The government wanted detailed

contracts in order to forestall any repetition of the teachers' action which mainly took the form of withdrawal of 'good will'.

As for improvements in conditions, the deal will entail an extra £250 million over the next 5 years to allow for smaller class sizes, free periods and cover for absent teachers. Baker's willingness to commit the government on the latter will play a big part in determining how the deal is received by rank and file teachers. A major source of concern will be that the employers have agreed only 'in principle' to supply teachers being brought in - after one day in primary schools; after two days in secondary schools.

The deal follows two years of unprecedented militancy from teachers during which venom poured forth from Tory leaders. During that time, continuing Tory cutbacks and rate-capping have seen the further decline of education - school buildings are in short supply and pressure on teachers has intensified.

Action over lack of supply cover continued in a very large percentage of schools even after the extra 5.5% was won in May last year. It even continued this term after an 'interim' agreement by the NUT which placed trust in the 'endeavours of Local Authorities to find supply cover'. This was recognised by a majority of NUT members as simply ridiculous, when certain Local Authorities were docking teachers' pay for refusing to cover.

There is no doubt that teachers' refusal to back down, even if their leaders have shown themselves willing to do so, will put pressure on Baker to accept the new deal, particularly with the prospect of an early general election. With 16.4% on the table and the promise of better conditions it remains to be seen whether most teachers will fight on for their original demands, given that NUT leaders have accepted the deal.

Olivia Adamson

# PRIVATISATION PILOT SCHEME

A pilot project in Cambridge in six schools allows each individual school to run their own budget, independently of the Local Education Authority. This is to be extended to all Cambridgeshire schools next year. The government, of course, warmly approves this plan and sees it as a means to eventually abolishing all Local Education Authorities. At one time simply incredible, such a possibility seems likely if Thatcher is re-elected for another term.

The eventual outcome of course, would be to further widen the divisions between 'successful' schools, sought after by the middle classes, and the rest. This layer of schools would then be ripe for privatisation. The last pretence at providing an education for working class children would be gone.

Olivia Adamson

# In brief

## Nuclear protests grow

Cruisewatch is an organisation which tracks cruise convoys between the airbase at Greenham Common and Salisbury Plain where the US missile launchers go to 'practise' launching mass murder and destruction on the world. In the early morning of 4 November hundreds of members of Cruisewatch succeeded in ambushing a cruise convoy by driving a car and trailer in between the lead vehicle and the police escort out in front.

One launcher was immobilised by having a pneumatic brake line cut; paint was splashed over windscreens and slogans sprayed on military vehicles.

The ambush was clearly a huge embarrassment for the Ministry of Defence. A spokesman tried to brazen it out by saying that the convoys were not carrying live warheads and therefore the ambush presented no danger. In case of a war situation, he said, smirking, such protestors would simply be 'shot'.

Also in October came a mass protest in Scotland: a chain of 35,000 people joined hands across the country against nuclear weapons. Scotland has the highest density of nuclear installations in Europe.

Olivia Adamson

## Wapping: deal rejected by majority

Last month SOGAT members rejected Murdoch's deal by 2,372 votes to 960: a margin of 1,412 (the margin in May was only 666 votes). This crucial vote was also a rejection of SOGAT leader Brenda Dean's recommendation that the deal be accepted. The NGA and AEU also rejected the deal by large majorities.

The response of TUC General Secretary, Norman Willis, has been to ignore the ballot result and continue to try and impose a deal very close to Murdoch's offer. Willis has threatened the withdrawal of all TUC support if the print unions insist on disciplinary action against the EETPU. Willis is far more concerned to protect scabs than he is to defend printworkers' jobs and trade union rights.

The NUJ NEC has finally expelled a scab: *Sun* journalist Carson Black. However, the NEC only expelled Black because he joined the *Sun* after the dispute began. It is, therefore, unlikely that any serious action is going to be taken against the majority of the NUJ scabs at Wapping and Kinning Park.

It is reported that 1,650 sacked workers have either accepted or inquired about Murdoch's offer to allow them to accept his deal individually. The NGA has now agreed to work alongside EETPU scabs at News International. SOGAT has rejected this. Thanks to the lack of action by the Labour and trade union movement, Murdoch appears to be winning the war of attrition.

Terry O'Halloran  
Secretary, London Freelance Branch, NUJ

## Bristol: police serve writs on press

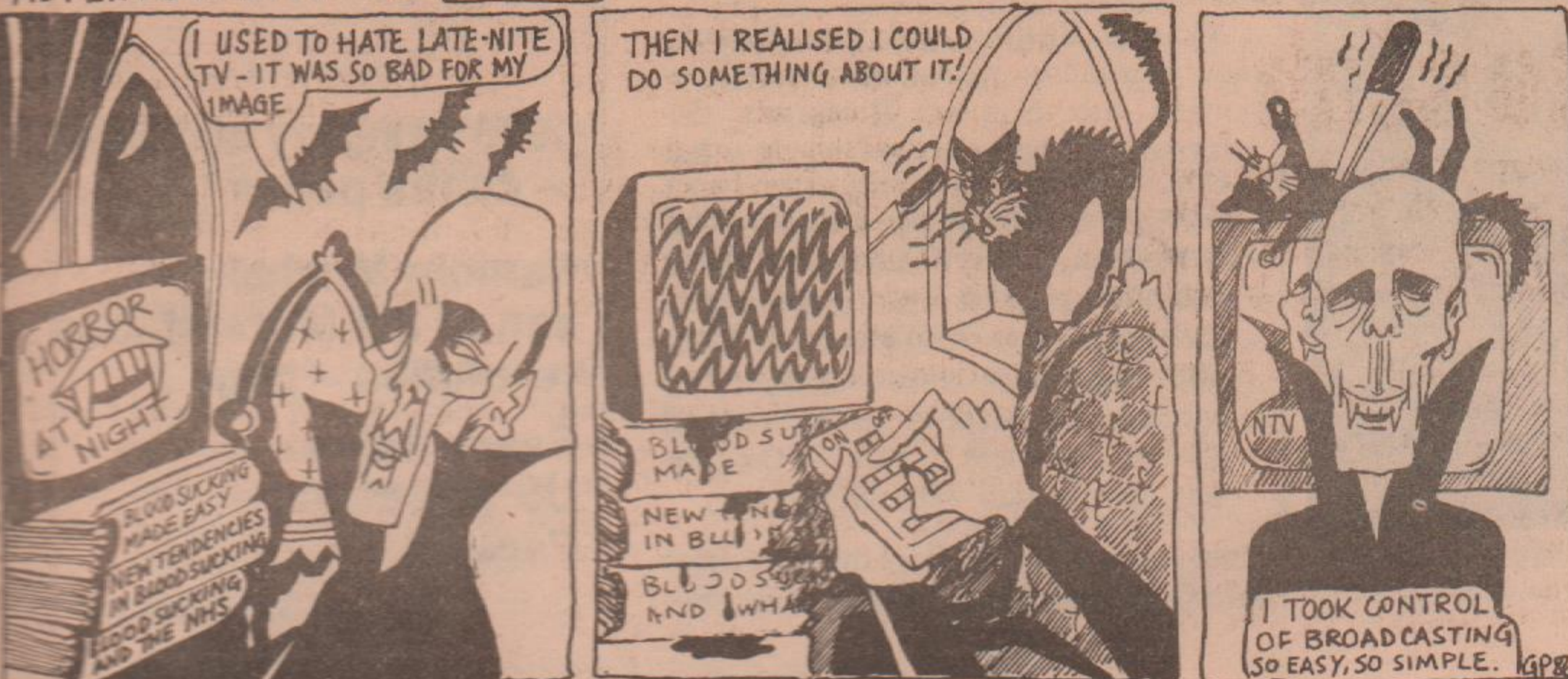
The Avon and Somerset police have served writs on HTV and BBC to force them to hand over untransmitted film of the police raid on St Pauls, Bristol, in September. On 14 October, HTV was ordered by Mr Justice Stuart-Smith to make the material available to the police, but the film had been destroyed.

On 23 October, two local Bristol newspapers, the *Western Daily Press* and the *Bristol Evening Post*, were ordered to hand over unpublished photographs despite attempts by the editors to challenge the police's right to demand unpublished material. The judge, of course, said that the 'police investigations would be likely to benefit if the material was obtained' and would ensure 'that those guilty of crime should be brought to justice'.

The police action has been taken under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act - another lesson in the repressive character of this law. As barristers said, these powers should have been challenged before they became law.

Alexa Byrne

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# The rising tide of poverty

Official figures released in July this year showed that nearly a third of the population – 16.4 million people – were living in or on the margins of poverty by 1983. Of these, almost 3 million had incomes below supplementary benefit level. In just four years from 1979, there had been a staggering rise of 42% in the numbers of those in poverty.

In a new report, *The Rising Tide of Poverty*, the Child Poverty Action Group and the Low Pay Unit show that low pay and rising unemployment are major causes of this massive increase in poverty. By 1983, 3.5 million people lived in poverty because of unemployment: a rise of 206% since 1979. The report states, 'For an increasing number of households, earnings are barely covering subsistence requirements.' Poverty is not confined to those without work, or to the elderly. In 1983, the number of those in poverty below pension age was 10.7 million, an increase of 88% since 1979.

CPAG and the LPU show that while unemployment and low pay worsened from 1979 to 1983, benefits were regularly cut, and 'people working for low earnings saw their tax burden rise dramatically.'

Since 1983, however, the situation has become even worse. The report points out that unemployment rose by 222,600 (8%) from 1983 to 1986, and the number of those without work for over a year rose by 264,000 (24%) in the same period. The latter group now represent 40% of the total unemployed. The number of low paid workers rose from 8.3 million in 1984 to 8.6 million in 1985. CPAG

and the LPU claim that deregulation policies and privatisation mean there will be many more low paid workers by now. Further, the gap between low and high paid workers has widened by some 30% under Thatcher.

While the number of supplementary benefit claimants has risen sharply since 1983, with latest figures showing 7.7 million dependent on it, a 'steady stream of benefit cuts' has continued. Cuts in housing benefit, SB single payments and board and lodging payments for young people have been particularly severe.

While *The Rising Tide of Poverty* shows that millions face only misery, life at the top has never been better. Recent surveys show the average salary of managing directors 14% up on last year, at £43,014. 94% have free medical insurance, 98% a company car. 50% of directors in large companies have share options worth between two and four times their annual salaries. Inland Revenue statistics for 1986 show that the richest 1% of the population have increased their share of the marketable wealth to 21%. This is three times the share of the poorest half of the adult population – about 21 million people!

Dave Burton

Increasing Poverty: 1979-1983					
	1979		1983		% increase since 1979
	Nos	% of population	Nos	% of population	
Below SB	2,090,000	4	2,780,000	5	33
On or below SB	6,070,000	12	8,910,000	17	47
On or below and up to 140% of SB	11,570,000	22	16,380,000	31	42

Source: DHSS Low Income Family Tables SB = supplementary benefit

# New attack on unemployed

Unemployment continues to increase. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) forecasts a sharp rise in job losses before the new year. In response, the Tories have launched yet another vicious attack upon the unemployed. All newly unemployed people now face an 'available for work' test. Benefit will be withdrawn for up to 13 weeks if a claimant cannot make 'immediate arrangements' for the care of children, disabled or elderly relatives, or if the claimant refuses to move, to work shifts, or to accept the wages offered. Lord Young, the Employment Secretary, recently assured people on the dole, 'You have not been forgotten.' Now he says the 'genuine unemployed have nothing to fear' from 'merely administrative' changes.

The Department of Employment has even stopped recruiting fraud staff, to appoint 1,400 new dole interrogators at a cost of £14 million. For the test has several crucial aims. Firstly, it will reinforce a mobile workforce, conscripted into low-paid jobs with worse conditions: vital for any restoration of the rate of profit. In particular, women will be forced out of benefit and out of the workforce. Secondly, the test aims to create division and cage votes by playing the 'scrounger' card again. Thirdly, unemployment statistics are now based on numbers of claimants. A pilot scheme proved the test would reduce claims by 5% (2% being needed to cover costs.) Thus a fraudulent 'reduction' in unemployment of over 200,000 will be made before the next election. The test represents the eighteenth change in the way unemployment figures are calculated since 1979: 17 of these caused apparent reductions.

Previous Tory plans have sought to cut wages, cheat claimants, and fiddle the figures. The 'Young Workers Scheme' gives £15 a week to firms paying a young person under £42. The government attributed 'A major slow down in the rate of pay for those under 18' to this scheme. The 'Restart' scheme, glossily promoted as an advice bureau, actually exists to intimidate the long-term unemployed. This month it was

revealed that thousands of those who weren't conned and missed their interview had benefit stopped: before the necessary regulations even became law.

Not content with attacking the newly unemployed, the Tories have admitted that the 'work test' has been used in a cynical experiment on the long-term unemployed in six selected towns. As a result, many elderly and disabled people have had their supplementary benefit stopped.

Benefit office staff have called for the test to be boycotted, while their union leadership is pressing for security guards to protect staff from rejected claimants. Dole offices patrolled by uniformed thugs: a fitting image of Thatcher's Britain!

Some argue that a future Labour government would protect the poor and the unemployed. Yet, asked by the charity Youthaid if Tory cuts of £6.60 per week for the unemployed youth would be restored, Kinnock replied, 'We would like to be able to pledge its complete removal... We have no wish to mislead the young people likely to be affected, however. We cannot at this juncture offer specific details of time or method of the removal of the age barrier.' It must be asked: what would Kinnock do about the 'work test'?

Dave Burton

# Thatcher winning battle for semi-detached Britain

This week we were confronted with a remarkable and disturbing fact. If there was a General Election in the next few weeks it is highly likely that the Tory Party would be returned to power.

After seven years of Thatcher governments, Tory economic policy is in tatters. Britain's industrial base has rapidly declined with manufacturing output still nearly 5 per cent below that of 1979. Unemployment is at record levels with taxation and state spending higher than in 1979. The wealth of North Sea Oil has been squandered as Britain has built up massive assets overseas. Britain's balance of payment surpluses of the last six years will, in 1986, be reversed – the current account will soon be in the red. Education, health and welfare services have seriously deteriorated. Poverty is now widespread. Already in 1983 some thirty per cent of the population, 16.4 million people, were living in or on the margins of poverty. The rise of unemployment since then will have made the situation much worse.

There has been a fundamental attack on our democratic rights. Trade union rights have been severely curbed. Police powers have been enormously increased with our right to organise, protest and demonstrate ever more limited. Corruption, incompetence and hypocrisy have been exposed at the highest levels of the Tory Party. And yet the Tory Party leads Labour and the SDP/Liberal Alliance in the opinion polls. How can this be?

The most obvious reason for the Tories' political strength is the weakness of the opposition. The SDP/Liberal Alliance is bereft of any independent policies, or any consistent policies at all, and increasingly appears as a less rabid but totally unconvincing version of the Tory Party. Its low rating at the present time has primarily benefited the Tories. It may pick up votes from Labour when the bureaucratic contempt the Labour Party has for democracy and its own ordinary party members creates divisions in Labour's ranks and is publicly exposed. Knowsley was an example of this.

The Labour Party's star has waned recently precisely because it has been outflanked by the Tory Party in the battle to win semi-detached Britain. The Tory Party's vision of a 'people's capitalism' with its very real handouts of hard cash to those prosperous enough to buy shares is far more alluring to semi-detached Britain than any version of capitalism, 'caring' or otherwise, which the Labour Party has on offer. The Tory Party's hard line on law and order, the very real curbs on the democratic right to organise and protest, has a very tangible appeal

for this layer offered an even more prosperous future at a time when millions of ordinary working class people are confronted with poverty, unemployment and despair.

For a Labour government to be elected it has to win back the votes of the better-off sections of the working class and middle class who deserted it at the last election. The Kinnock-led Labour Party has to shift to the right. It has to present a respectable and moderate image to this section of the electorate. In this process, backed by the official trade union movement, it has brutally and unceremoniously isolated the left, expelled dissident elements and prevented any mobilisation of the real class forces which could begin to challenge Thatcher.



There has been no campaign involving the millions of unemployed. There has been no organised protest against benefit cuts and the crude intimidation of claimants. There has been no support for a campaign against the arrests, harassment and framing of black and white people as a result of the inner city risings. There is no mobilisation against increasingly brutal and murderous racist attacks against black people. There is no backing for organised protest against racist deportations of black and oppressed people. There is no support for those trade unionists forced to fight for jobs and trade union rights. There is no campaign against the increased powers given to the police. No support will be given to those effectively campaigning against nuclear weapons or the dumping of nuclear waste. And there is no mass campaign against Britain's open collaboration with the racist South African regime. All have been sacrificed to the reelection of a

future Labour government whose programme, in reality, will offer the unemployed, the low paid, the oppressed and the poor precisely nothing.

It is this background that explains the bankrupt and cynical character of much of what is called politics in Britain today. It is a political culture where slick and expensive advertising techniques count for more than political honesty. It is the political climate which allows the Tory 'plans' for an unplanned increase in public spending, as unveiled in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, and so-called 'non-controversial' legislation for the next parliamentary session, as outlined in the Queen's Speech, incorporating a major attack on the jury system, to be seen as paving the way for a Tory election victory in June or October 1987.

The Tory Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, on 6 November announced an increase in public spending of £7.5bn in 1987-8 and £8.1bn the following year. £10.2bn of this will be additional spending over and above the previously announced planned levels, the rest coming from the Treasury's contingency reserve against unforeseen expenditure. So startled were MPs by what appeared to be a total reversal of policy that one Labour shadow Cabinet member 'sarcastically remarked that the Chancellor had implemented the first year of Labour's reflationary package in just 15 minutes' (*Financial Times* 7 November 1986). The cynicism and political bankruptcy behind that remark is clear once the package is examined in any detail.

Last February an article 'Planning for our Poverty' (*FRFI* 56), analysing the government's White Paper on public expenditure, stated that even for a Tory government committed to slashing state expenditure,

'in order simply to maintain a larger and larger proportion of the population at poverty levels of subsistence... state expenditure has to rise'.

The government is doing no more than planning for our poverty and the article concluded by saying that should we protest it has made contingency plans. 'One of the fastest growth areas of public expenditure is on the forces of repression to put us down'. The new expenditure plans confirm this analysis.

The main increase in spending, £4bn in 1987-8, is by local authorities and does no more than make a virtue out of necessity bringing plans in line with legal and practical necessity to cover basic services. This will also include the proposed rise in teachers' pay in the hope of buying peace in

the schools in the period leading up to the next General Election. Social security expenditure will rise by £1.7bn because of higher unemployment and more people taking up benefits due to them. Spending on the health service will have to rise by £630m in 1987-8 simply to meet the minimal demands of an ageing population and modern technology. Finally the Home Office provision will increase by £530m in 1987-88, £650m in 1988-9 and £820m in 1989-90. Over those three years there will be a £1.26bn increase mainly to strengthen the police force. A further £105m will be added to the already extensive plans for building new prisons. This is planning for our poverty with a vengeance.

The government confirmed in its Autumn Statement that those in well paid jobs will continue to have a real rise in incomes. Last year incomes rose by nearly 8 per cent, a 5 per cent real increase after inflation. Next year a rise of 6 1/2 per cent is forecast, a real rise of nearly 3 per cent. The privatisation of British Gas, followed by British Airways and the remaining holding in British Telecom will all occur before the next election, yet another handout of national assets to those with the money to pay for shares. All this together with a consumer boom financed by higher earnings and massive consumer borrowing for those with access to money (£42bn outstanding at the end of 1985) make it likely that semi-detached Britain will stand by the Tories.

While semi-detached Britain thrives, the economic and social conditions of black people, the poor, the unemployed and low paid are going to get far worse. The ruling class has consciously created this divided nation as a means to holding on to its power as the economic crisis of capitalism sharpens. So long as the unemployed, the poor and oppressed people of Britain have no political organisations to defend their interests, so long will these divisions deepen and conditions get far worse.

The left and democratic movement, if it is to survive, has no time to lose. It has to end the concentration of its political work on the organisations of the privileged sections of the working class. Those organisations belong to the past. The future is with the poor and oppressed – those who must fight back if they are to survive. It is their struggles which must be fought and won – against racism, against deportations, against unemployment and against police repression. The leadership of the future revolutionary movement will be determined by who organises the fightback of the poor and oppressed.



November 11: The heirs to a century of imperialism – racists, fascists, and Labour traitors – commemorate the slaughter of two world wars, each in their inimitable militarist style. Left, President of Apartheid PW Botha at the South African cemetery, Longneral, France. Centre, Kinnock and Thatcher weep crocodile tears with the Generals at the Cenotaph. Right, National Front fascists march on the Cenotaph with the slogan 'No more brothers' war'.

# Ruskin tutor wants freedom to scab

In the last month *The Guardian*, in the shape of Hugo Young, has led an outcry in the media in defence of the 'academic freedom' of David Selbourne, a lecturer at Ruskin College. In the same period, the same media have buried David Kitson's academic freedom, and his right to a job, in the deepest silence.

Compare the two cases. David Selbourne is an ex-radical now well on his way to becoming a darling of the right-wing in the style of Paul Johnson. On 26 March he broke the boycott of Murdoch's Wapping titles by writing an article – attacking Militant – in *The Times*. Previously

just an irritating bore, Selbourne now became a scab.

Students at Ruskin demanded an apology. Selbourne refused. The students instituted a boycott – 'intimidation' in the brightly-coloured world of Hugo Young – and Selbourne's lectures were soon desert-

ed. On 22 October Oxford Student Union backed the Ruskin students' stand by 200 votes to 149. Selbourne has now left Ruskin, telling his heart-rending story to anyone who will listen, and issuing writs.

The establishment media have flocked to Selbourne's banner not to defend 'academic freedom' but to further the onslaught on the fundamental trade union principle that you do not cross picket lines.

David Kitson's case is very different. He emerged with honour from 20 years in prison as a fighter against the apartheid regime. Whilst he was in prison his union, TASS, promised him a job for life. Now TASS, led by Ken Gill (*Morning Star* supporter expelled from the CPGB for his politi-

cal views), are trying to deprive David Kitson of his job at Ruskin College.

David Kitson's offence is that he refused to join in the sectarian attack on City AA, FRFI and others, by the present leadership of the AAM. He has argued consistently for a fighting, democratic AAM open to all trends. For this, Ken Gill tramples on promises made years ago and seeks to sack a proven fighter against apartheid.

David Kitson has the support of the students and staff at Ruskin. So far, Hugo Young, *The Guardian* and all the other defenders of 'academic freedom' have done nothing to defend David Kitson.

Terry O'Halloran



# This month in South Africa

## Deaths in detention

● **Detainees**

Over 20,000 people have now been detained under Botha's state of emergency. At least two detainees died in prison in October. Xolus Jacobs, a 20 year-old activist, 'hanged himself,' and Mbuyisela Songelwa died 'of an asthma' attack, according to the authorities. There can be little doubt that both died as a result of torture.

Many of the detainees who have been released have been subjected to 'reorientation' programmes, run by the Department of Education and the prison service. In some, soldiers have passed themselves off as civilian lecturers. Other detainees have been released then immediately placed under restriction orders banning them from all political activity. All this has failed to stop the wave of resistance to apartheid. 70 to 80 per cent of detainees belong to affiliates of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Under a law not used since the 1970s, Botha has declared the UDF an 'affected organisation', in order to prevent it receiving funds from abroad. 50 per cent of the UDF's funds had previously come from abroad—mainly Scandinavia. In London this month, Dr Allan Boesak attacked the censorship under the state of emergency. He also attacked the South African and British press for collaborating in the cover-up: they accept the regime's version of events, refuse to send black reporters into the townships and refuse to defy the censors and print the truth when it does get through.

● **Miners getting stronger**

The major mining companies backed down in a hurry when the NUM started to ballot for strike action in support of its pay claim. They raised their pay offer to 19½-23% and accepted the NUM's proposals for 'income security' i.e. temporary guaranteed incomes for workers who are hit by industrial injuries and diseases. 30,000 miners in three mines immediately struck against Gold Fields, the one major employer which refused to make these concessions. The employers are terrified of a confrontation with the miners, who showed their strength on 1 October when 350,000 struck to mourn their 177 comrades killed in the Kinross mining disaster. With the power to stop the vital gold and coal mining industries, the NUM could strike a decisive blow against the apartheid economy.

South African miners continue to be mur-



Roselyn Mpeha, wife of jailed trade unionist and anti-apartheid activist Oscar Mpeha, died in Cape Town in October. The regime refused to allow Oscar Mpeha to attend the funeral.

dered in the drive for profits. In the month after the Kinross disaster, two more underground fires broke out in the same mine. Another six black miners were killed when a metal transport cage crashed to the bottom of a new ventilation shaft, in the Randfontein Estates mine.

● **Imperialists pull out**

Two of America's most influential multinational companies, General Motors and IBM, announced they were withdrawing all investments from South Africa. They were quickly followed by IBM's rivals, Honeywell, bringing the number of US companies who have pulled out this year to 23. However, it soon emerged that both General Motors and IBM were planning to continue their collaboration with apartheid in a more lucrative form. They have sold their subsidiaries to South African capitalists who will continue to produce the same products, paying licence fees to the Americans and buying components from them. The multinationals will have a guaranteed profit from South Africa, without having to risk their money in investments there. Furthermore, their ex-subsidiaries will now be able to ignore US government codes of practice on employing

black workers, and restrictions which prevent them selling direct to the apartheid state. 30,000 General Motors workers went on strike for worker representation on the new board at an assembly plant in Port Elizabeth. General Motors, which has tried to cultivate the image of an 'anti-apartheid' employer, promptly applied to the courts for permission to sack the strikers.

● **Oukasie - 10,000 to be evicted**

The regime's claim to be 'reforming apartheid' was again exposed as a sham when the black township of Oukasie was 'deproclaimed' at the stroke of a cabinet minister's pen. The order turned Oukasie's long established legal residents into 'squatters', and now 10,000 face forced removal. Already, 5,000 have moved under pressure of threats and cuts in essential services such as water supplies. Many others are determined to resist the removals, which community organisations and trade unions in local factories are organising against. As Brits Action Committee member Abel Molokoane said, 'If we see bulldozers, there is going to be a riot.'

● **Schools boycott continue**

Black school students in Soweto, Alexandra, and the Eastern Cape continued their boycott action. One teacher said 'On average, pupils might have been in class for less than a month this year.' Where schools are operating, some students are running their own classes. Meanwhile, Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'sponsor' of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement, was forced to halt his lecture series at the University of Cape Town after his first two lectures were stormed by protesting students: O'Brien had previously described the boycott campaign as 'Mickey Mouse stuff.'

● **Trials**

On 6 November Marion Sparg, the first white South African woman known to have served as a soldier with Umkhonto we Sizwe, was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment for bomb attacks on police headquarters in John Vorster Square and a police station in East London. Charged with treason, she stated that she regarded herself as a patriot not a traitor: 'I do not owe any loyalty to a government which is clearly not based on the will of the people.'

● **Soweto rent boycott**

On Wednesday 5 November at least six people were shot dead at Orlando West when Soweto Council police tried to cut off the electricity of rent boycotters. Youths raised the alarm by blowing whistles. Police opened fire on residents who were marching to try to stop the council police action. Security forces in armoured vehicles were involved in the attack.

A bus boycott started in Soweto on 3 November when bus fares were increased by 17½ per cent. According to the bus company, Putco, only 40% of commuters are using the buses. Since the boycott started, two buses have been destroyed completely, and windows and tyres have been slashed. The bus company is now using familiar terror tactics to try and break the boycott. One 11-year-old-boy was shot dead by a group of white men firing from a bus. The boycott committee also says that vigilantes are being used to force people onto buses and to violently attack the boycotters.

● **Angola invasion**

Thirty-nine SWAPO members were killed by South African troops who, once again, invaded Angola on 14 November. The pretext used for the raid was the build-up of SWAPO soldiers intending to 'infiltrate' Namibia during the rainy season. But in reality the Angolans protested ten days before the raid that the SADF had invaded deep into Angolan territory in order to help the counter-revolutionary South African-backed UNITA bandits.

## Around Britain

All over Britain, support is growing for City Group's Non Stop Picket. FRFI comrades and City AA supporters have been out on the streets campaigning for an end to British collaboration with apartheid and building support for City AA's Non Stop Picket. Over the past month, we have distributed thousands of leaflets, spoken to hundreds of people and organised numerous events. For example:

● **London FRFI** has regular street meetings in Wood Green, Holloway, Brixton and Camden. We supported the Labour Party Young Socialists march on 18 October: the LPYS, though, did not join the picket when the march ended in Trafalgar Square. We have been informed that the police instructed them not to! London FRFI holds weekly discussion groups at the YWCA, 16 Great Russell Street, WC1, each Sunday at 7pm—all welcome!—and on 2 December is holding a public meeting in Brixton.

● **City AA** held a memorial picket for Samora Machel on 28 October, and on 4 November celebrated 200 days of Non Stop Picketing. Thursdays on the picket has been designated a special day for women.



On 25 October, City AA launched its boycott campaign at seven supermarkets across London; City AA activists simply fill trolleys with South African produce, then refuse to pay at the check-out, informing management of why we will not pay for the produce of apartheid. This tactic has proved very effective in getting the message about people's sanctions across!

One of the highlights of the month was on 8 November, when two coachloads of Non Stop picketers, including FRFI and Workers Press joined a march against imports of South African coal to Gunners Wharf on South Humberstone where apartheid coal is handled. The march was organised by Hatfield Main NUM and Doncaster AA, and miners and supporters from 11 pits took part. Carol Brickley, speaking for City AA at the social that evening, pledged City Group's solidarity with the NUM and the fighting people of South Africa. Coal has been exempted from the EEC package of 'limited economic measures' against South Africa—as Dave Douglass, Hatfield Main NUM branch delegate told the march, the South African miners 'paid for that cheap coal with their blood'.

● **Manchester FRFI** has organised trips to the picket with VMDC comrades, and will be joining the picket again on 29 November. The District of Manchester AA recently passed an FRFI proposal to support the Non Stop Picket! As well as street meetings, Manchester FRFI is organising public meetings with a City AA speaker and a screening for the Non Stop Picket video.

● **Glasgow FRFI** had the most militant contingent on the Scottish AAM march last month. We hold regular Saturday street meetings from 11am—3pm at the Sauchiehall Street Precinct in Glasgow City Centre, and support Glasgow AA's weekly picket of the South African consulate.

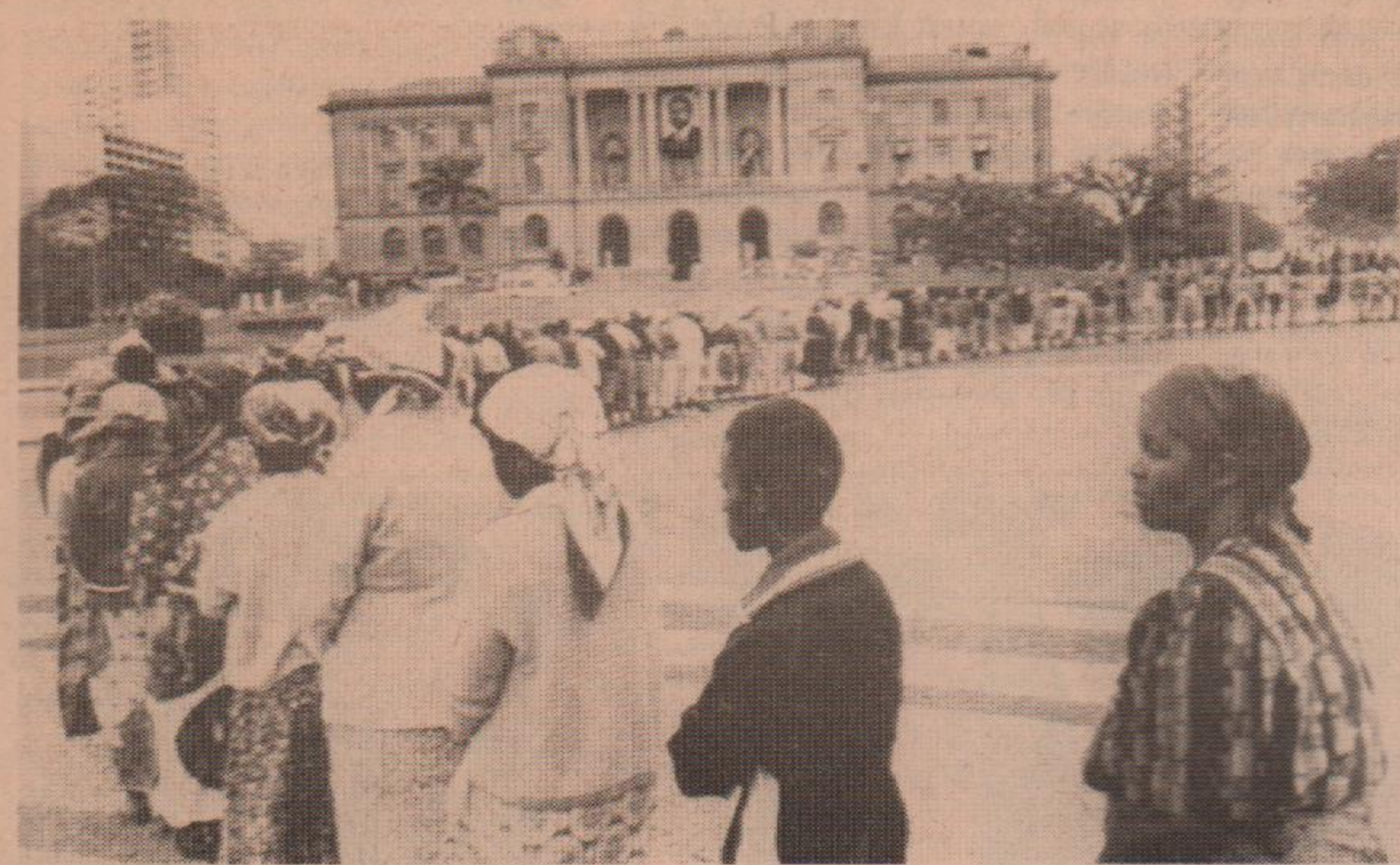
● **Liverpool FRFI** have organised transport to the Non Stop picket with St Helens youth, are planning a speaking tour with a City AA speaker. On 26 November, Liverpool FRFI is holding a public meeting to publicise the picket as well as holding regular street sales in Church Street, on Saturdays from 1 to 2pm.

● **Chesterfield and District AA** held a public meeting on 20 October, addressed by Catherine O'Reilly, Dunnes Stores striker. The AA group has a display in the public library from 3 to 24 November, and holds a monthly picket of Barclays bank on the first Saturday of every month from 10am to noon. On 8 November, they held a collection for Namibia week and are holding a social on 6 December.

● **Hull** The Hull Non Stop Picket Support Group continues its activities to publicise the picket. Anti-apartheid activists held a Picket of Hull University's administration building, calling for all University investments (last year they totalled £1.25m) to be withdrawn from South Africa.

FRFI comrades hold regular activities in Dundee, Leeds, Bradford and Edinburgh in support of the liberation struggle in South Africa. If you would like more information or would like to plan any events in your area or be put in touch with any of the above groups, please contact FRFI.

Build the Non Stop Picket! No collaboration with apartheid! **Charine James**



## Apartheid murdered Samora Machel

continued from page 1

Africa had been building up a massive destabilisation campaign aimed at killing Samora Machel. South African Defence Minister Malan issued several threats in the week preceding the crash: Mozambique was being destroyed 'by a terror of its own making'. South African commando units were sent into Maputo province, air force squadrons moved to bases next to the border, thousands of South African backed MNR bandits were infiltrated in from Malawi. Malan boasted: 'What emerges clearly is that Mozambique is hovering on the brink of collapse'. What emerges is that Pretoria was preparing to move in for the kill. South Africa put all its armed forces on a 48 hour full military alert on 18 October.

Samora Machel's delegation was returning from a meeting in Zambia where he, President Kenneth Kaunda and Pres-

ident Eduardo dos Santos of Angola attempted to dissuade Zairean President Mobutu from supporting the South African sponsored Unita rebels. As well as the Soviet aircrew the delegation included 2 black Cuban volunteer doctors and the Ambassadors of Zaire and Zambia. All were to perish.

Five minutes after 9pm Fernando Joao heard a bang. The lights went out and the engines failed. Three minutes later the aircraft crashed into the top of a mountain in South African territory. Comrade Joao, who had the least injuries of the ten eventual survivors, went in search of help. By midnight he had contacted the South African police at Komatiport and asked them to immediately notify the Mozambican authorities. At 2am, nearly 5 hours after the impact, the South African police arrived at the

scene. They went straight to the aircraft wreckage and took away documents and diplomatic bags. Another survivor, Almeida Pedro, saw that

'they didn't go to the aid of the people who were crying out. There were people there who died for lack of assistance.'

Local villagers reported that amongst those still alive was Samora Machel. The villagers were cleared away by the police who declared the scene a restricted area. By 6am comrade Joao still had to argue with a police inspector to get medical attention. The first of the injured did not reach a hospital until 8 am—11 hours after the crash. The Mozambique Government was not notified of the disaster until 6.50am on 20 October. The delays are inexplicable unless the South Africans were preparing the crash site to fit Pretoria's version of events before the Mozambican crash team arrived at 1pm in the afternoon.

Since the crash Pretoria has released a stream of misinformation including malicious false allegations. South African interrogators urged one hospitalised survivor, Vasco Langa, to say that the Soviet air crew was drunk. They offered him intensive medical care and suggested he join the MNR counter revolutionaries. A spokesman for the MNR bandits said:

'With the death of Samora Machel it is easier to work... This is a good opportunity for us.'

Despite the great sadness of the people at the loss the last thing they would do is to allow apartheid and the MNR that opportunity. Samora Machel represented the policies of a collective leadership that has worked closely together for 15 years of harsh struggle.

At the state funeral on 28 October Maputo was a sea of people gathered to bid Samora farewell. Foreign Minister Joaquim Chissano has been elected the new President. He has called on FRELIMO and the people to unite until the MNR is destroyed and racist aggression ceases. The MNR has now formally declared war on Zimbabwe. Robert Mugabe addressed a memorial meeting of 50,000 in Harare stating that Zimbabweans are prepared to die in defence of Mozambique's sovereignty as they will be defending their own.

Thousands of youth and students destroyed the South African Airways offices and stoned the apartheid trade mission in Harare. They attacked two Malawi buildings and stoned the US Embassy. Similarly, the Mozambican people's anger was demonstrated when the youth attacked Malawi's offices in Maputo.

FRELIMO angrily rejected Botha's request to attend the funeral as an insult, there were no apartheid representatives present. Magistrates in South Africa banned memorial services arranged by the UDF and COSATU. Pretoria refused the applications to go to Samora's funeral made by UDF Co-President Albertina Sisulu, and Nelson and Winnie Mandela. The Mandelas' message to Samora's comrades raised the rallying cry:

'Our struggles have always been linked, and we shall be victorious together. A caring world is with you. It cannot and will not fail you. With their support and the legendary resolve of the people of Mozambique you can only emerge as victors. AMANDLA!'

**Andy Higginbottom**



## AAM AGM – political censorship

Political censorship is the theme of the AAM leadership's preparations for the movement's Annual General Meeting. The Annual Report omits all reference to City AA and the Non-Stop Picket. Censorship can reach ludicrous extremes. A photo of the blocked road on 'Surround The Embassy' day is captioned 'Student sit-down outside the South African embassy in Trafalgar Square, 19 October 1985'. Thousands of students did join the event, organised by City AA, acting against the wishes of the NUS who were urging them to march away from the Embassy!

Motions to the AGM from City AA and FRFI supporters have been rejected. One motion which applauds the black Commonwealth nations for their boycott of the Edinburgh Games and deplores AAM Chairman Bob Hughes for scabbing on that boycott has simply disappeared!

'With Friends Like These ...' a 'dossier on the attitudes and activities of certain groups' compiled by individual members of the AAM has just come to light. The dossier was secretly circulated before the last AGM and mainly consists of cuttings from FRFI which, the anonymous 'compilers' claim, constitute 'an organised sectarian attack' on the AAM. The document is itself evidence that a secret anti-RCG and anti-City AA caucus operates to influence the AAM. Sectarianism means putting the narrow interest of a sect or section above the needs of the overall movement. It is precisely the sectarianism of the AAM leadership – and those like Neil Kinnock and the *Morning Star* who back it – which led it to expel City AA. City AA showed in practice that by campaigning on the streets a new alliance of fighting forces – especially the youth and black people – could be drawn into the movement and such an alliance could deliver effective solidarity.

Both the RCG and City AA have political differences with the AAM's leaders. Both organisations have expressed their intention to broaden and democratise the AAM. Unfortunately, representatives of the ANC and SWAPO have chosen to side with the AAM leadership in these disputes. Wakefield AA has received an unannounced visit from Sheffield AA and SWAPO and been told that unless their support of the Non-Stop Picket stopped SWAPO would not accept any donations from or send any speakers to Wakefield AA events. Under this pressure Wakefield AA regrettably withdrew its support for the Non-Stop Picket.

The AAM leadership's escalating campaign of threats and censorship shows that they are not committed to building a single, united democratic movement. The RCG supports City AA and plays a central role in it, working as comrades with hundreds of dedicated activists, because City AA points to a new way forward that involves ordinary people. Only a fighting movement that actively organises tens of thousands of working people can seriously challenge Britain's collaboration with apartheid. And it is that challenge which the AAM leadership seeks at all costs to avoid.

**AAM AGM 10/11 January, The Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London NW1.**  
Registration deadline 1 December, 13 Mandela St, London NW1.

## Court dates

- 20 November Mervyn Martin appeal: Southwark Crown Court 10am
- 24 November Anver – Highway obstruction. Bow Street, 2pm
- 26 November Amanda, Cat and Simone. Assault and obstruction of the police. Wells Street, 10am (from 17 September 1986) PICKET OF THE COURT
- 27 November John Coleman – 2pm Bow Street, obstruction of police
- 1 December Kayode, Tinuke, Adam, Jan, Ruby, Linda, Teresa, Anita, Kenny, Susannah, Dave. Various charges (from 13 June 1986) Bow Street 10am, continuing for 4 days
- 8 December Amandla, Amanda, Satish. Highway and police obstruction. Horseferry Road, 10am (from 16 June 1986)
- 10 December Neville Milburn, Wells Street 2pm (from 11 October 1986)
- 30 December Lorna, Noise under the bye-laws, Wells Street, 10am
- 31 December Sonia and Danny, 10am Wells Street. Highway obstruction, obstruction of police



# Victory in the courts

October and November saw major defeats for the police campaign of harassment. The central plank of the police campaign – summonses and arrests for illegal street collection – was dismissed by magistrates at Bow Street Court. A judgement by the Divisional Court on highway obstruction charges will also mean that police will have greater difficulty in gaining convictions against peaceful demonstrators.

At the end of September the police brought a charge of illegal street collection against Carol Brickley, City Group's convenor, to court. This case was a test hearing for 13 other picketers who had been summonsed. Following ludicrous manufactured police evidence defence counsel, Terry Munyard, called for the charges to be dismissed on the grounds that the regulations did not apply to open-air public meetings. The magistrate immediately ruled that the picket outside South Africa House is indeed 'open air', 'public', and 'a meeting' – case dismissed with £250 costs awarded. The police have now decided not to appeal and all charges have been dropped.

This is a major victory for all demonstrators. The police used charges for illegal street collection during the miners' strike to stop financial support for the strikers. They had hoped to do the same to the non-stop picketers but failed.

Animal Rights protestors also struck a blow for political demonstrators on 7 November when their appeal against conviction for obstruction of the highway was allowed by the Divisional Court. The demonstrators were convicted following a peaceful demonstration outside a fur shop. The Divisional Court Judge ruled that demonstrating peacefully is a *reasonable use of the highway*. The new judgement will mean that police will not be able to use this law for routine harassment of demonstrators or for easy convictions.

On 4 November, Anver, Nicki and Simone were acquitted of police obstruction. All three were arrested on 19 June when the police arrested Horace, a rasta-farian, whose crime was to walk through the front gates of the embassy. Charges against Horace were thrown out in August. During the trial A611 found the strain of lying too much, and in a last-ditch attempt to win the sympathy of the magistrate, fainted in the witness box. It didn't work! The notorious PCA464 also got his come-uppance when Phil Heaton won £170 costs and his appeal against conviction for assault was upheld. Theo Bakker was awarded £140 costs when his highway obstruction charge was dismissed.

The high court ruling on highway obstruction didn't come in time for six women demonstrators arrested on Mandela's birthday who were convicted

after a three-day trial. They were each given a year's conditional discharge and ordered to pay £75 costs. Regular picketers Lorna, Danny and Richard, who suffer constant police harassment, were bound-over or fined for highway obstruction and threatening behaviour.

The police are now pursuing charges for breach of Westminster bye-laws following the defeat of illegal street collection charges. The South African Embassy alleges that the noise made by picketers is disrupting their work.

Having claimed that Westminster Council would have to make the decision on whether to pursue the charges, the police – under the auspices of the new 'independent' Crown Prosecution Service – are now acting directly on behalf of the Embassy. Westminster Council has decided not to press charges. The Embassy will appear to give evidence against picketer Lorna Reid on 30 December.

In a letter to Carol Brickley, Chief Superintendent Laidlaw of Cannon Row Police Station states that: 'I emphasise that the Metropolitan Police is not taking an active role in pursuing prosecutions on behalf of the South African Embassy but is merely trying to uphold the rights of the sides involved (!) within the law and under the difficult circumstances prevailing.' There is no evidence that the police have acted to defend the rights of demonstrators outside the embassy. Cannon Row Police have an appalling record from 1984 onwards of doing precisely the opposite. So tell us another, Mr Laidlaw.

The police continue to take names and addresses of picketers for breach of bye-laws, and in some cases make arrests. Picketers have been reported as many as ten times in three hours! Dominic and Andy, arrested on 7 November, will face the same charge as Lorna.

Writs are in process against the police for sexual assault on Simone and Amanda. Amanda will appear in court on 26 November charged with assault and obstruction of police on 17 September. There will be a picket of the court case which involves officers who have been counter-charged under the writs.

Carol Brickley and Nicki Rensten

## City AA pledges Forward with the non-stop picket!

'The City of London Anti-Apartheid Group will continue the Non-Stop Picket outside South Africa House until Nelson Mandela is free.'

On 19 October, over 100 City AA members overwhelmingly passed this motion at City AA's Extraordinary General Meeting.

Speaker after speaker – including many young people – spoke movingly of the picket as a vehicle for challenging apartheid and racism and of their commitment to the people of South Africa.

They were determined to continue the picket, despite the police harassment, the cold weather and the intransigence of the AAM leadership in refusing to take effective action against apartheid.

City AA's EGM voted on a Programme of Action which will include an Apartheid Free Xmas Campaign, a national demonstration in March 1987, and a boycott campaign – which got off to a flying start on 25 October. The EGM also voted for a drive to double City AA's membership. To match plans for increased activity, the City AA committee was expanded to include new posts such as Women, Lesbian and Gay organiser and Trade Union organiser. Leading RCG member Carol Brickley was unanimously re-elected Convenor, with Norma Kitson as Deputy Convenor.

To survive the long winter ahead of us, City AA urgently needs waterproof materials and warm clothing – anything from wellington boots, jumpers to plastic sheeting and raincoats will be greatly appreciated – we urge our readers to donate these items to City AA. It is also vital that we maintain an effective presence on the picket: we especially urge our readers to pledge a regular time to the picket rota.

City AA's EGM showed the spirit and determination of its members to give effective solidarity to the South African masses now.

On 28 June, 250,000 people on the AAM's march showed their willingness to take effective action against apartheid but were given no lead. Rather, the AAM is taking democracy out of the hands of its members. City Group, on the other hand, has pledged itself to a bold and exciting future. We are determined to win – against the apartheid regime, the police and the forces which wish to limit us.

Lorna Morgan and Richard Roques

## RALLY!

6pm Wednesday 10 December  
**CELEBRATE NAMIBIAN WOMENS DAY**  
on the  
**NON-STOP PICKET!**  
outside the South African Embassy, Trafalgar Square  
Speakers · Singers · Poets · Bands · Creche · Material aid collection – bring sanitary towels to donate to the fighting women of Southern Africa

JOIN THE ACTION NOW!

## CITY AA DAYSCHOOL

10am Sunday 7 December  
Polytechnic of Central London  
Marylebone Road

Workshops & Discussions

Registration: £1 waged, 50p unwaged  
Food and Creche available  
Contact City AA 01 837 6050

## MUSIC FOR MANDELA BENEFIT

with

- Horns of Jericho
- City Group Singers
- Sambatucada ● Taxi Pata Pata

Saturday 13 December 7-12pm  
Islington Town Hall

Tickets £2.50 unwaged/£5 waged  
Benefit for South African Liberation

## LONDON FRFI PUBLIC MEETING

Apartheid in South Africa  
Racism in Britain

## YOUTH FIGHT BACK!

2 December  
Lambeth Town Hall  
Brixton SW2

Speeches · Songs · Stalls · Video

Build the Non-Stop Picket  
Further details from 01-837 1688

## Break the Chains

Five arrests and two people hospitalised were the results of a vicious police attack on the Non-Stop Picket on 11 October when 750 people demonstrated outside the South African Embassy in solidarity with political prisoners in South Africa and Namibia.

The Day of Action attracted young people and students who want to take action against apartheid. A double line of crash barriers was used to pen in the demonstrators and a police video team was in operation. A PA system lent to City Group for the day by Workers Press became the focus of police attention. They ordered its removal on the grounds it was causing an obstruction of the highway – it was behind the barriers. The police surrounded the demonstration and violently removed the PA. Norma Kitson was punched, one man had an epileptic fit.

The demonstration reached a peak when three comrades chained themselves to the gates of the apartheid embassy in a symbolic gesture of solidarity with the prisoners. They were immediately surrounded by 40 police, removed and arrested. Photographers were removed from the scene and on the pretext of arresting someone for allegedly throwing a tomato at the embassy the police again waded into the demonstration. A young man was crushed against the barriers and punched by a policeman. He collapsed and was taken to hospital with injuries to his ribs. Another demonstrator was badly bruised by police.

The Metropolitan Police engaged in an operation of systematic violence and intimidation in an attempt to destroy City Group's demonstration. Only the discipline and tight organisation of the demonstrators prevented further injury or arrest.

Lorna Morgan



## Racists attack Mosque

On Tuesday 28 October a gang of racists attacked worshippers from the Markazi Mosque in East London. FRFI spoke to two witnesses who described what happened.

'A man was coming to the Mosque for prayer when he was attacked at the nearby bridge.' When those already in the Mosque heard the man screaming they went out and 'saw a mob of about 50 white people which then set upon the worshippers. We telephoned the police for assistance. Instead of searching out the culprits who had made the racist attack and sorting them out, they arrested our worshippers - innocent worshippers, I should add.' The inspector who arrested three black people 'used very foul, very racist language' saying 'If I had the powers, I would deport you Pakkis.' The youngest was 'kicked into the van, laid face down, handcuffed and then beaten'. The three people appeared in court on 5 November charged with threatening behaviour. Their case has been adjourned to the end of the month. Meanwhile the racists were set free while police claim to be continuing their investigations.

'The police have actually pointed out the leader of the mob to us, but refuse to arrest him . . . Feelings are running high in the community and they want to take it out onto the streets.'

Ken Hughes and Trevor Rayne

## Victory for Chapeltown against racist police

The people of Chapeltown have scored a resounding victory against police harassment. In the first week of November, at Leeds Crown Court, Derek Jeffers and John Grant (see FRFI 61 and 62) had charges against them dropped. Earlier, after a 4 day trial, Derek was found innocent of attempting to seriously wound a police officer with a machete.

All four policemen involved in the events were exposed as liars. The defence showed how it was impossible for the defendants to kick a door in and that it was actually levered open by the police themselves. A doctor showed that a policeman's claims to have been injured by a machete were lies. The machete itself was never produced in court. It existed only in the imagination of the police. The price of innocence was nevertheless high. Derek spent 5 months on remand in Armley prison and was only released following the defence campaign.

Gordon

## Mashadimirza Family Support Campaign

The Mashadimirza Family Support Campaign (MFSC) was formed after the successful battle to prevent the immediate deportation of Rahim Mashadi, his wife Djamileh and their two year old son Ronad to Iran (see FRFI 63). Had they been deported, Rahim would have faced execution without trial for having harboured an opponent of the Khomeini regime. The Home Office has now been forced to reconsider the family's case.

The campaign will however continue until the family is granted political asylum. It is also fighting the impending deportation of Rahim's brother Kamran, who is an FRFI supporter. On 24 October the MFSC held a public meeting with speakers from Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!, Salford Council, Viraj Mendis, Manchester Churches, Iranian activists and the family itself. As a result World in Action featured the case in its programme on Iranian and Kurdish refugees in Britain which was shown on 10 November.

In addition to regular street meetings in Manchester, the campaign has started a speaking tour throughout the North West and held its first picket of the Home Office on Friday 14 November. It will continue until the whole family is granted political asylum.

For further details, leaflets and petitions contact the MFSC, South Manchester Law Centre, 584 Stockport Road, Longsight, Manchester M13 0RQ or phone (061-234 3168)



BOB GANNON

# Racist visas

**On 1 September 1986 the Tory Cabinet announced that visas were to be imposed on people entering Britain from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ghana and Nigeria. On 6 October 1986 a mere eight days' notice was given for their implementation for India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. From 14-16 October there were harrowing scenes at Heathrow's Terminal 3 of thousands of passengers, their relatives and friends waiting for days in the most appalling conditions without access to basic information or communication with each other.**

The British gutter press gleefully seized the opportunity to propagate their racist lies. With stories of 'floods' of 'illegal immigrants' and a 'mass invasion' of Asians, they dutifully provided the justification for the Tories' latest attack on black people. The publicity has fuelled a climate of ever increasing racism. On 22 October there was an arson attack on the offices of the Joint Council For The Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) following a string of abusive phone calls and letters.

The visa requirements mean that black and Asian people wanting to enter

this country will experience even greater delays and hardships. Another sinister aspect is the effect on black and Asian people seeking refuge from political persecution who are unlikely to be able to obtain visas before leaving their country. In addition, on 6 November the Home Office announced that the cost of a single entry visa was to be increased from £12 to £20, and the cost of a multiple entry visa from £24 to £40.

The visa requirements were quickly followed by the Home Office announcing that MPs would lose their right to intervene to stop the removal of people

refused entry from 71 named countries. Students and refugees are exempt from this, but the onus is on the MP to prove an exceptional circumstance. In addition, blood-tests are now to be introduced, initially on a 'voluntary' basis, to determine the authenticity of Asian people who have been waiting years to be reunited with their families.

British immigration controls are racist. Let us not forget why no visas are required from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United States, EEC countries, and South Africa.

## The role of the Immigration Service Union (ISU)

The ISU played a key role in ensuring the introduction of the visa require-

ments. It broke away from the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) after refusing to co-operate with the SCPS' decision to conduct its own inquiry into racism in immigration policy. The majority of immigration officers belong to the ISU, and 97% of officers at Terminal 3. Immigration officers are vested with immense arbitrary powers, and their racist practices in implementing these are well known. When a passenger is refused entry, there is no right of appeal. Removal can only be stopped, and temporary admission granted if that passenger's friends or relatives' constituency MP is prepared to intervene on their behalf. The ISU has campaigned long and hard to restrict visitors' rights, and for an end to MPs' interventions. The ISU has deliberately fed the media with misinformation and dubious statistics in order to paint a picture of hundreds of illegal immigrants 'sneaking' into Britain by abusing the use of MPs' intervention. 'Scandal of the Vanishing Immigrants' read the headline to the story supplied to the *Daily Express*. According to Rolf Toolin, the ISU Chairman and Senior Immigration Officer, 99% of people granted temporary admission because of an MP's appeal are intent on fiddling the system. In fact, of the 8,500 passengers granted temporary admission in 1985 all but 338 (4%) left at the end of the allotted time.

With an election looming the Labour Party has been eager to make plenty of anti-racist noises in a bid to win the black vote. Gerald Kaufman, the Labour Party's Shadow Home Secretary, has been loudly condemning the racist nature of the visa requirements. Yet recently at the Labour Party Conference he refused to support Viraj Mendis who faces death if deported to Sri Lanka. The Labour Party has refused to commit itself to abolishing these visa requirements and all immigration controls. Instead, Kaufman promises a 'non-racist immigration policy' - but there can be no such thing. Either a Labour government abolishes immigration controls and racist laws or it stands, as it has in the past, on the side of racism and against black people.

Now is the time for action and not fine words.

Ruby Khan

## Tamils die in fire-bombing

continued from page 1

The 14 November petrol bombing takes place against a background of increasingly vicious attacks on Asian families in East London. There has been no let-up since the murder of Mrs Shamira Kassam in July 1985 when her home was burnt by racists. Since January this year, the Newham Monitoring Project has at least 170 recorded cases of racist violence. We spoke to a local councillor, Conor McAuley, who told us that according to a recent Council survey, over the past year, one in four black people in the area had been victims of racist attacks. Even according to police figures there has been a 67% rise in such attacks since last year. Mr Roberts told us that the attacks that we know of are only a small proportion of the true total. An enormous number are not reported as the black community has no faith in the police and indeed are frightened to report attacks in case they themselves become subject to racist harassment by the police.

Local residents we spoke to were enraged that leading right-wing Tory

MP, Harvey Proctor, had spoken at Newham Town Hall on the Monday before the latest attack. There, he gave a green light to racist mobs, calling for voluntary repatriation and more pointedly stating:

'We are peaceful until our backs are to the wall and then you have to watch out.'

This advice to local racists was faithfully reported in the *Newham Recorder* whose reporter was invited to what was otherwise a secret meeting. When we asked local Labour Council leader, Fred Jones, what they intended to do, he told us that they would be considering withdrawing facilities from Proctor's hosts - the Newham North East Tories.

In addition to the racists and their Tory backers, the police are also waging war against the black community in East London. To pre-empt any popular outburst of anger against racists, they flood the area with riot police after every incident. On 11 October they used a helicopter, 150 police, some armed, with 500 more in reserve to raid a black pub in Canning Town. After we visited Burges Road again on Saturday morning, the area was still packed with police and riot vans. The police are clearly terrified that one day the black community is going to say 'enough is enough' and start dealing with local racist killers and thugs themselves. The area is seething with justified anger against both the racists and their allies, the police and the local Tories. And as Mr Roberts put it:

'We're not running away, we're settled here . . . We have got to put a stop to it.'

Gary Clapton and Ruby Khan

# Vicious sentences

In the seven Broadwater Farm trials to date, four young men have been sent to prison, two have been acquitted, one faces a retrial:

- Gary Potter (18): jury failed to reach a verdict on affray**
- Simon McMinn (19): convicted of affray and burglary; 7 years**
- Hassan Muller (17): acquitted of affray, throwing a petrol bomb and burglary**
- Steven Edwards (18): acquitted of affray and burglary**
- Clifton Donaldson (23): convicted of affray; 5 years**
- Nicky Jacobs (18): convicted of affray; 8 years**
- Paul Parker (18): convicted of affray and burglary; 7 years**

Detective Constable Rex Sargent, found by the Southwark County Court jury to be a liar and a thug (see FRFI 63), figured in four of these cases: Potter, McMinn, Muller and Edwards. In two cases the knowledge of Sargent's past and the evidence provided by the defendants was enough to secure acquittal.

Hassan Muller was arrested after being named in Howard Kerr's 250 page 'confession'. Howard Kerr's 'confession' was dismissed when he proved that he was in Windsor at the time of the rising on 6 October last year. Undeterred, Sargent and his cronies extracted a 150 page 'confession' from Hassan Muller (of which the defence only ever saw 83 pages).

Hassan 'confessed' to throwing a petrol bomb. A witness testified that the mark on the wall, supposedly made by the petrol bomb, had been there for four years. A young man, appearing as a prosecution witness, said that the police had forced him to give false evidence against Hassan Muller. As in all the cases, Hassan Muller had been denied access to

solicitors, subjected to lengthy interrogations and threatened. Hassan Muller spent 11 months in custody on remand.

Steven Edwards, like Hassan Muller, was treated to the Rex Sargent method of interrogation. He too 'confessed' to affray and burglary. Steven Edwards had just turned 17 when Sargent and DC McAllister (also involved in the Gary Potter case: see FRFI 63) got their hands on him. Fortunately, the jury rejected the methods of Sargent and McAllister, and acquitted Steven Edwards.

Out of seven trials, four youths have been condemned to a total of 27 years. There are 68 affray trials to come. Six defendants face murder charges. The vicious sentences imposed on the youths found guilty makes it clear what is in store for the Tottenham community.

Terry O'Halloran

Picket Old Bailey 24 November 12 noon-2pm.

\* National demonstration 10 January 1987 to mark the beginning of the murder trials on 14 January.



*The People's Republic of Mozambique was declared on 25 June 1975. Born out of ten years of FRELIMO's guerilla war it was the first expression of people's power in Southern Africa. The new republic's President, Comrade Samora Machel, was just 41 years old.*

Portugal first invaded the country 4 centuries before in pursuit of its slave trade – over 2 million Mozambicans were abducted. By the mid-20th century the colony had been turned into an engine for the exploitation of surplus labour. In the south, adult men were shipped to the British-owned mines in Rhodesia and the Transvaal – between 1900 and 1920 alone more than 63,000 died. The mineowners paid a portion of the wages in gold direct to Portugal: it was the colony's main source of income.

Portugal practised ruthless social discrimination to provide a buffer of privilege for the settlers. 95% of the population was kept illiterate. Eighty-five per cent lived in the countryside and there was little industrial development. The administrators, managers and the few skilled workers were Portuguese.

The colonial regime's suppression of all democratic rights was demonstrated in 1960 when the army massacred 600 unarmed peasants. The Mueda massacre was Mozambique's Sharpeville; it marked the turning point for the opponents of foreign rule.

#### FRELIMO

Dr Eduardo Mondlane united three exile groups and formed the Mozambique Liberation Front, FRELIMO, in Tanzania in 1962. Those wedded to constitutional methods departed when Mondlane began serious preparations for a military struggle.

Samora Machel had trained as a nurse. He left Mozambique, joined FRELIMO in Tanzania and volunteered for military training. Machel was soon in charge of training the volunteers. The first armed engagement was on 25 June 1964. FRELIMO established liberated areas in the northern provinces adjoining Tanzania.

A major schism opened up within the Front which paralysed its leadership between 1967-69. On one side were those who had gained control of the liberated zones, only to continue with the old forms of exploitation of the peasantry. They opposed the formation of units of women freedom fighters; fostered tribalism and regionalism; and encouraged anti-white sentiment to cover their own aspiration to become a new class of black exploiters. This embryonic bourgeois nationalist wing was trying to hold back the movement for its own selfish ends. On the other side Samora Machel and Marcelino dos Santos led the revolutionary caucus in FRELIMO asserting that people's power must be built in the liberated areas. For the revolutionaries the enemy was the colonial system and its agents. The war could not be won unless it was conducted as a people's war of liberation with the support of the masses. Eduardo Mondlane sided decisively with the revolutionaries, but he paid a heavy price. On 3 February 1969 Mondlane was murdered by a parcel bomb sent by colonial agents.

By 1970 FRELIMO emerged from its internal crisis with a clear ideology and strengthened leadership. Samora Machel was elected President. FRELIMO opened a new offensive in Tete province, the route to the south. Its starting point was the political mobilisation of the local population. FRELIMO introduced for the first time ever health care, education and popular democratic structures. Within two years FRELIMO was able to offer facilities to the Zimbabwean liberation movements, who had been bottled up in Zambia. Tete became the corridor for ZANU to infiltrate its freedom fighters into north eastern Rhodesia.

# SAMORA MACHEL

## Son of the Mozambican Revolution



#### BROTHER FROM THE WEST

*Brother from the West –  
(How can we explain that you are our brother?)*

*the world does not end at the threshold of your house nor at the stream which marks the border of your country*

*nor in the sea in whose vastness you sometimes think that you have discovered the meaning of the infinite.*

*Beyond your threshold, beyond the sea the great struggle continues. Men with warm eyes and hands as hard as the earth*

*at night embrace their children and depart before the dawn. Many will not return.*

*What does it matter? We are men tired of shackles. For us freedom is worth more than life.*

*From you, brother, we expect and to you we offer not the hand of charity which misleads and humiliates but the hand of comradeship committed, conscious, How can you refuse, brother from the West?*

FRELIMO, 1973

Portugal was enmeshed in similar protracted wars in Angola and Guinea Bissau. The combined impact of these wars sapped the morale of the Portuguese conscript army. Opposition to fascist-colonial rule broke into open rebellion in Portugal on 25 April 1974 when the democratic Armed Forces Movement deposed dictator Caetano. The freedom fighters in the African colonies had forced a crisis on Portugal's ruling class and provided an opening for the advance of the Portuguese working class.

The colonial administration in Mozambique crumbled. A transitional government was formed with Joaquim Chissano as Prime Minister. 90 per cent of the settlers fled, but not before they had systematically wrecked all machinery and farm implements. The commercial distribution system collapsed as the shopkeepers went too. But no sabotage could dampen the jubilation: FRELIMO had led Mozambique to independence!

#### PEOPLE'S POWER – THE FIRST 5 YEARS

FRELIMO immediately set about rehabilitating Mozambique from the ravages of colonial rule. In the first year there were only 80 doctors to serve a population of 12 million and skilled workers and technicians were scarce. FRELIMO implemented measures of immediate benefit to the peasantry and working class. It nationalised schools, the health service, legal practice and rented property. FRELIMO implemented UN sanctions and halted all trade with the racist Rhodesian regime. Smith's forces waged a campaign of raids and massacres of Zimbabweans and Mozambicans. The monetary cost in 1975-80 of Mozambique's solidarity with the Zimbabwean people is conservatively estimated at US\$556 million.

At the 3rd Congress held in 1977, FRELIMO changed itself from a liberation front to the 'vanguard party of the worker-peasant alliance'. The Congress addressed the problems of the transition to socialism by its emphasis on the fight to transform production. 'Dynamising groups' were set up in workplaces, plans made for communal villages and large state farms operating within an overall planned economy.

However, the initial economic indicators were misleading. Income from the migrant miners increased in the years immediately following independence, and revenues from the export of prawns and cashew nuts remained stable. In 1975 and 1976 the balance of trade was in surplus – exports greater than imports – not least because one consequence of the flight of the settlers was a drastic cut

in imports. But as production recovered and imports of machinery and specialised raw materials became necessary, Mozambique was hit by the dramatic reduction in the terms of trade inherent in the imperialist world economy. In 1975 five tons of cotton would pay for a lorry, but by 1980 13 tons were needed. From 1978 onwards the balance of trade went into permanent deficit and Mozambique became increasingly dependent on loans and aid to pay for imports. South Africa's power of economic leverage against the People's Republic loomed ever larger. Pretoria cut the numbers of miners, the value of its gold payments, and cut to a third the value of its exports through Maputo.

The liberation of Zimbabwe in 1980 once again engendered great enthusiasm. Within a month the nine independent black states in the region formed the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) with the aim of furthering co-operation to 'liberate our economies from their dependence on the Republic of South Africa'. Mozambique was the natural trade route for Zimbabwe, Zambia and parts of Zaire. Production increased in 1980-81 as Mozambique recovered from the Rhodesia war. It seemed that at last there was the chance to rebuild. Apartheid South Africa never gave Mozambique that chance.

#### APARTHEID'S DESTABILISATION 1980-84

PW Botha's ascendancy in Pretoria signalled a new wave of terror and economic sanctions designed to prevent the emergence of independent front line states. Apartheid's war cost the front line states over US\$10 billion from 1980 to 1985, some 35% of their aggregated Gross National Product. Mozambique was hit hard by the ravages of SADF special units and the counter revolutionary MNR.

Destabilisation has been effective because it compounded the multiplying difficulties imposed on FRELIMO. The internal class struggle did not end with independence. FRELIMO's leading cadres became immersed in the administration of the state, and political work with the masses through the party had fallen back. Most of the experienced comrades were concentrated in Maputo and the cities, with a corresponding neglect of the countryside. An emphasis on large projects and centralised control accelerated this process of detachment. Despite FRELIMO's exacting leadership code of sacrifice, elements who were already privileged in colonial society attached themselves to the state apparatus.

FRELIMO operated subsidies on basic foodstuffs, but the gaping hole in the distribution of goods had not been satisfactorily filled. A 'black market' economy was thriving with an aspiring commercial bourgeoisie thwarting FRELIMO's plans for redistributing wealth to the workers and peasants. Production was slashed by the MNR's disruption. Exports fell by 60 per cent between 1981 and 1984. Industrial output fell by 13.6 per cent in 1982 alone.

A series of natural disasters compounded the problems. The Zambesi, Limpopo and Incomati rivers flooded in 1977 and 1978. In 1979 Cyclone Justine hit the north. In 1981-83 drought hit Gaza, Inhambane and Tete provinces. FRELIMO had run a successful relief operation in 1979-80, but now food aid had become a weapon against them. In January 1983 Maputo issued an appeal for emergency food aid. The pledges from the capitalist world were reduced, and the MNR were stopping supplies getting through. 100,000 died from this man-made famine.

FRELIMO had sought foreign capital investment, particularly in the light producer and consumer goods sectors, provided that it was on the principle of non-interference and to Mozambique's benefit. But the Western multinationals followed the lead of their governments in holding back funds.

Samora Machel and the FRELIMO leaders did not bury the tensions. He told a mass rally in 1982:

*'After independence when we took off our guns, and exchanged our uniforms for suits and ties, we made a mistake. We looked elegant, but the bourgeoisie had the guns. Now we're putting our guns on once more, and we won't make the same mistake this time.'*

Matters were brought to a head at the 4th Congress in April 1983. Former combatants and ex-political prisoners were openly critical of the tendency to complacency and even corruption in the state. Out of the Congress came an enlarged Central Committee incorporating many long-serving comrades from the working class and peasantry. A new direction was given to 'overcome the most basic signs of hunger', to defeat the MNR and the black marketeers. The Congress also resolved that 'resources must be allocated with priority to small scale projects which have an immediate effect on people's living standards' and which would use local raw materials.

#### NKOMATI ACCORD AND AFTER

Samora Machel had always avoided the deadly embrace of the International Monetary Fund, having seen it impose

usterity measures on Tanzania and Zimbabwe. But interest and repayments on loans contracted in the 1970s fell due. With few exports from the war-torn economy to meet the repayments, Mozambique's credit rating collapsed. The Scandinavian countries withheld further loans and aid until an accommodation was made with the imperialist banks. In January 1984 Mozambique was forced to admit that it had defaulted on £145 million debts and entered negotiations to reschedule the £510 million due in 1984-86. Imperialism was turning the screw.

The South African regime used Mozambique's predicament to force Machel to the negotiating table. The Nkomati Accord – signed in March 1984 – was supposedly a non-aggression pact. Botha trumpeted the Accord as a major foreign policy coup and as the prelude to a series of bogus reforms to quell black resistance within South Africa. Machel was forced to concede that there would be no ANC military presence in Mozambique, but he made no concession on FRELIMO's political support for the ANC and the liberation of South Africa. In return, Machel secured a public commitment from South Africa to end its aggression and support for the MNR.

In fact the MNR's atrocities escalated, with at first covert and then increasingly open support from the South African military. The MNR had nearly brought Mozambique to its knees and Pretoria had no intention of giving away its advantage. The Nkomati Accord had been exposed as a fraud and Botha's 'reform' programme soon bit the dust when black anger exploded in South Africa in August 1984.

Over the next two years the struggle for the liberation of Southern Africa entered a new and even grimmer phase. Botha responded to black resistance with terror and repression, and the destabilisation of the Frontline States became ever more crucial in order to prevent ANC incursions and support for liberation. Mozambique became, once again, the primary target.

In the last year, with the failure of the Commonwealth to implement sanctions, the frontline states have become the spearhead for effective action against apartheid, outside South Africa itself. Zambia and Zimbabwe were outspoken in their criticism of the failure of Britain and the west to implement sanctions at the Commonwealth mini summit in August 1986. A few weeks later the Non-Aligned Movement Conference held in Harare confirmed that the frontline states would be leading the sanctions movement. The recolonisation of Mozambique is central to Botha's ability to crush the independence of the frontline states, especially Zimbabwe, and block their support for liberation forces. Samora Machel was nobody's silent victim. He entered a period of incessant activity to galvanise the frontline states into concerted defence. Zimbabwe and Tanzania increased their commitment to the war against the MNR. The frontline leaders put pressure on Hastings Banda, puppet chief of Malawi, to cease providing facilities to the counter revolutionaries. Samora went out to the people of Mozambique to rally and unite them. For all apartheid's sophisticated weapons, he used to say, we have the most sophisticated weapon – people's power.

Samora Machel's death on 19 October was no accident. It was an historical imperative for imperialism and racism. In the preceding two weeks apartheid Defence Minister Malan issued a stream of threats to Machel's personal safety. South African commando units and the MNR were increasingly active around Maputo. Days before the air disaster Samora confided that there had already been an assassination attempt:

*'They have already tried. In November 1985 they infiltrated bazookas to Mozambique in an effort to kill me.*

*'I'm in their way. I haven't sold out to anybody and my hands are clean.'*

In his life Samora Machel united the people of Mozambique and led them to independence. The circumstances of his death have united the oppressed throughout Southern Africa in their determination to destroy the system of apartheid oppression.

**Viva FRELIMO!**

**Andy Higginbottom**



## Nasser challenges imperialism

At the end of the Second World War, Britain and France had resumed their monopoly of influence in the Middle East. With Indian Independence in 1947 the post-war Labour government devised a scheme to transform the region into a bastion for British imperialism. Labour Foreign Minister Bevin put it thus: 'My whole aim has been to develop the Middle East as a producing area (in agriculture as well as oil) to help our own economy and take the place of India.'

In this scheme, control of the Middle East oil supply was of critical concern to British imperialism. The area held 75% of known oil stocks outside the socialist countries and supplied 77% of Europe's oil needs. British companies such as Shell and British Petroleum were amassing enormous fortunes in an industry oiling the wheels of capitalism and imperialism.

To secure and guarantee this oil, both from Arab nationalist movements, and US imperialism which was aggressively challenging British dominance, the British government signed a number of treaties with dependent and pro-imperialist governments in the region. The Baghdad Pact, the Transjordan Treaty and the Portsmouth Treaty all secured legitimacy for full scale British invasions in the event of war and instability.

Egypt, and the Suez Canal in particular, was of major strategic importance. The Suez Canal, 'co-owned' by the British, brought in at least £20m profit annually. Two thirds of all ships passing through it carried oil and one quarter of all British imports travelled through the

for the Algerian National Liberation Front and for the Mau Mau Freedom Fighters conducting armed struggle against British imperialism in Kenya. In 1955 Nasser turned to Czechoslovakia for arms after the US and the British refused to supply them.

Nasser's government also embarked on an ambitious economic development programme with its plan to build the Aswan Dam on the Nile river. It would expand cultivable land by 30% and double Egypt's hydro-electricity supply. In February 1956 the World Bank agreed to loan \$200m for the project on condition that Britain and the US supplied \$70m. But in July the US withdrew its funding. Nasser responded on 26 July by nationalising the Canal and declaring that its income would be used to finance the building of the dam. He declared that the Canal had been 'a source of exploitation and extortion... The Suez Canal was one of the facades of oppression, extortion and humiliation.'

## British imperialism responds with war

Britain immediately made war preparations. Eden declared that 'The Egyptian has his thumb on our wind-pipe' and called a secret meeting with French Prime Minister Guy Mollet and the Israeli government. They arrived at the secret Treaty of Sevres which planned for the Israelis to attack first. The British and French were then to move in under the pretence of keeping the two sides apart. They were to destroy the Egyptian air force, land troops in Egypt and take control of the Canal. They

sion. First the Canal was blocked so tankers had to be hired to take oil round the Cape, then Syrian soldiers severed the pipeline from Iraq to the Mediterranean, then serious anti-British demonstrations flared up across the Arab capitals and in Tehran. Suez jeopardised their position in the Middle East to the benefit of their US rivals.

Eden was, however, determined on war to teach Nasser a lesson and exercise British imperialist might. On 29 October, the Israeli military struck. On 1 November British and French planes bombed and immobilised the Egyptian airforce. Four days later their troops landed in Port Said to prepare for a final offensive.

Neither the British, the French nor the Israelis had reckoned on the resistance they experienced from the Egyptian and Arab masses. Imperialist ships in the Canal were sunk, blocking it off to any commercial or military use. Neither had the British reckoned with US opposition.

## US imperialism sabotages British war effort

US imperialism, while prepared to work for Nasser's downfall, was opposed to any military action against him. The US did not want to risk destabilising the area and risking its oil supplies. On 1 November it therefore mobilised the United Nations to vote for its call for a ceasefire. When Eden disregarded this, the US turned the economic screws. The US Federal Reserve Bank started selling sterling, and in a day one sixth of Britain's gold and dollar reserves vanished as the British government tried to

**'It is generally not very easy for the counter-revolutionaries to go before the people, because they do not proclaim their true aims. Not a single counter-revolutionary can say: dear Hungarian people, in the past I was one of the bourgeoisie, I had a large estate of 10,000 acres, or I was a mining shareholder, I had a grand life, I could fleece the people splendidly, so please be so kind as to vote me into power again. For this reason the counter-revolution always conceals, obscures, beclouds its aims and grasps some issue which it expects will be more or less sympathetic to the masses'** (Janos Kadar, speech of 2 February 1957, in: *Socialist Construction in Hungary Selected Speeches and Articles 1957-61 Budapest 1962 p11*)

2,700 people killed and a month long general strike in a socialist country – what did happen in Hungary in 1956? The events of that year have been variously described by the left as 'The Hungarian rising... finally smashed any myth that Russia was socialist' (*Socialist Worker* 25 October p8); a political revolution against Stalinist tyranny and domination (*the next step* 24 October p6; and *Workers Press* 25 October p15); and 'counter-revolution' (*Morning Star* 25 October).

The events of 1956 cannot be understood without an appreciation of the difficulties of building socialism in Hungary, difficulties which were greater than in any other East European country. The problems facing all socialist countries are immeasurably increased by the lack of a significant opposition by working class movements in the imperialist countries to imperialism's plan to subvert socialism by economic, political and military means. This fact is totally ignored by Trotskyist critics of the Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956.

## The potential strength of the counter-revolution

From 1919 to 1945 Hungary suffered under a fascist dictatorship. With the connivance of Britain and France, the 133 day Soviet Republic of 1919 was crushed by 150,000 Rumanian troops who occupied Hungary and restored capitalist rule, under Admiral Horthy. In the ensuing White Terror, 5,000 workers and peasants were massacred, there were widespread pogroms of Jews, and 70,000 people were thrown into concentration camps.

Horthy's government officially encouraged anti-semitism and rabid chauvinism. The legitimate national aspirations of the Hungarian people were flouted by the 1920 Treaty of Trianon, forced on them by Britain and France, by which the historic boundaries of Hungary were completely redrawn. 58 per cent of its population and 67 per cent of its area were absorbed into the neighbouring countries. Under Horthy, all parties bar the Communists fanned the flames of chauvinism as a way of distracting the population from its grievances.

Under such intense repression, the illegal Communist Party could not succeed in building an organisation in Hungary. Until 1945 it never had more than about 1,000 members. It faced the regime completely alone, its isolation secured by the collaborationist policy of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), which Horthy allowed to exist legally, in return for not attempting to organise among the peasantry or to work with the Communist Party.

During the second world war Hungary was, according to Hitler, 'my best friend'. It was an invaluable source of food, oil (over half of Hungary's production) and men (300,000 in all mobilised). On 15 March 1944 Hitler installed a native fascist party, the Arrow Cross, which then deported the entire Jewish population of Budapest. In all 205,000 Hungarian Jews died in concentration camps.

## The construction of socialism in Hungary

The liberation of Hungary from fascist rule was almost entirely the work of the Red Army. Unlike other other East European countries, especially Poland, where a broad democratic political and military opposition to fascism had formed in the underground, the anti-fascist movement was quite narrowly based.

Leading fascists were executed, but because of the long rule of fascism, about 400,000 families which had depended for their privileges on the fascist apparatus continued to live in Hungary, while losing their privileges. This

# Hungary

# The

## Suez 1956

# A blow against British imperialism



Tito and Nasser: founders of the non-aligned movement

Canal. At the beginning of the 1950s Britain still had 80,000 troops in Egypt and more than 60,000 British troops passed through the Canal annually.

The Egyptian people were not, however, prepared forever to tolerate British dominance and plunder. Since the end of the Second World War the nationalist movement had consistently grown stronger. In 1952, the pliant and pro-British King Faroukh was overthrown in a popular coup organised by Gamal Abdul Nasser and his Free Officers Society.

Nasser set about immediately challenging British power in the country. He demanded the removal of British troops and Egyptian control of the Canal. By 1954 most British troops were withdrawn to the Canal zone. In addition, Nasser refused to sign the Baghdad Pact. Instead, along with President Tito of Yugoslavia and others, he became a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1955 and opened diplomatic relations with China in 1956. Egyptian radio regularly broadcast its support

would then move on to remove Nasser.

The Labour opposition joined in the anti-Nasser campaign, whipping up a tide of racist chauvinism. Labour leader Gaitskell 'deplored this high handed and totally unjustifiable step by the Egyptian government' and stated: 'it's all very familiar. It's exactly the same as we encountered from Mussolini and Hitler in those years before the war.'

The TUC-controlled *Labour Herald* ran banner headlines screaming 'No More Hitlers'. The Labour Party, however, unlike Eden's Conservatives, were conscious of the frailty of Britain's imperial pretensions. Their experience in Palestine had taught them that without US backing, British imperialism was no longer capable of acting an independent world role. They therefore opposed any military action against Nasser unless it was sanctioned by the US dominated United Nations.

There was opposition also from within the ruling class that was reflected inside the Tory Party. Many heads of Shell and BP were appalled by the inva-

defend the pound. In addition, the US blocked British access to IMF funds and refused to supply any oil. The US Treasury Secretary declared, as if talking to a servant: 'You will not get a dime from the US government until you have gotten out of Suez.'

As a result, and humiliatingly, Britain was forced to declare a ceasefire the day after its troops landed in Port Said for its major offensive. By the end of December, British and French troops were forced to leave Egypt and in January 1957 Eden resigned as Prime Minister. The Suez Canal remained nationalised and Nasser continued in office until his death in 1970.

Suez 1956 marked the decisive eclipse of British imperialism as the dominant power in the Middle East. While continuing to play a counter-revolutionary role in the region – in Jordan, Kuwait, Cyprus, Oman, and elsewhere – it is as second fiddle to the US.

Eddie Abrahams  
Trevor Rayne



Communist texts burn in Budapest

meant that the counter-revolutionary forces were potentially stronger in Hungary than in any other East European country.

Between 1945-48 the Hungarian Communist Party began to win the people's confidence by its leading role in the suppression of fascists and collaborators, in repairing the extensive war damage and controlling inflation. The land reform decreed by a Communist Minister of Agriculture ended the most unequal land system in eastern Europe by confiscating outright the large estates and distributing them to the landless peasant families.



During this period there was a very marked rise in real wages and in the standard of living of the poor peasants. Before 1939 Hungary was known as the country of the 3m beggars (out of a population of 7.6m) – the landless labourers and their families permanently on the edge of starvation. Now for the first time they ate wheat bread and had sugar in their coffee.

By the second general election (August 1947) the Communist Party (CP) had increased its share of the vote from 17% in the first general election (November 1945) to 22%; and the parties which accepted the need for a radical transformation of Hungarian society gained 51%. Up to this point Hungary enjoyed relative freedom from the pressure of imperialism because of the presence of the Red Army and the withdrawal of large numbers of British and US forces from elsewhere in Europe.

This situation was rapidly transformed with the beginning of the Cold War. The Marshall Plan (1948) and the formation of NATO (1949) were the instruments of the economic and military subversion of the socialist countries. From 1950 a military invasion by

the USSR, and make Hungary a predominantly industrial rather than agricultural economy. As Hungary had only tiny deposits of coal and iron ore, the entire economic plan depended on integration with other socialist countries, in particular the USSR, which supplied virtually 100% of the iron ore.

From the very beginning, the ability to plan was continually undermined by the necessity to defend the socialist countries. Half the expenditure was to be military; and in 1951 the overall targets had to be revised upward as a result of the rearmament necessary because of the Korean war.

There were considerable successes – between 1949 and 1953 industrial production expanded by 210%, a considerably higher figure than any other socialist country during this period. The social position of the workers and peasants did improve considerably in some areas, notably health and education.

But in the circumstances of imperialist encirclement, and given the low starting point of the Hungarian economy, consumption could not be allowed to rise dramatically. In every revolution the standard of living falls as the people

movement of students and workers making a justified protest against the harshness of the conditions they had endured and in support of the legitimate national aspirations of the Hungarian people. But with the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Budapest on 29 October, the character of the movement began to change.

A Soviet Government statement of 30 October 1956 warned of the dangers: '... the workers of Hungary have, after achieving great progress on the basis of the people's democratic order, justifiably raised the questions of the need for eliminating the serious inadequacies of the economic system, of the need for further improving the material well-being of the people, and of the need for furthering the battle against bureaucratic excesses in the state apparatus. However, the forces of reaction and of counter-revolution have quickly joined in this just and progressive movement of the workers to undermine the foundations of the people's democratic system in Hungary and to restore to power the landlords and the capitalists.' (quoted in Tibor Meray, *Thirteen Days that Shook the Kremlin* 1959 p147)

the support of imperialism, faced a weak, irresolute new government formed on 27 October by Imre Nagy. It legalised non-communist parties and 4 days later included 3 representatives of the Smallholders Party in the cabinet. Trotskyists usually make much of the fact that the popular Smallholders leader included in the cabinet, Bela Kovacs, declared that 'No one must dream of going back to the world of counts, bankers and capitalists; that world is definitely over.' No doubt Kovacs himself was sincerely committed to maintaining the socialist achievements of the 1945-56 period, but the other two leaders in the cabinet were not and behind them stood a party which in 1945 had provided the political cover for former fascists. There is no doubt that it could have played the same role again. Outside the government, reactionary parties, including the Arrow Cross, began to re-form openly.

On 1 November the cabinet of the Hungarian Government sent a telegram to the Secretary General of the United Nations informing him that the Hungarian Government was withdrawing from the Warsaw pact, the military alliance

formed on 24 October, but it was not until after the second Soviet intervention that Councils became prominent. They were instrumental in organising the widespread strikes which lasted until the middle of December.

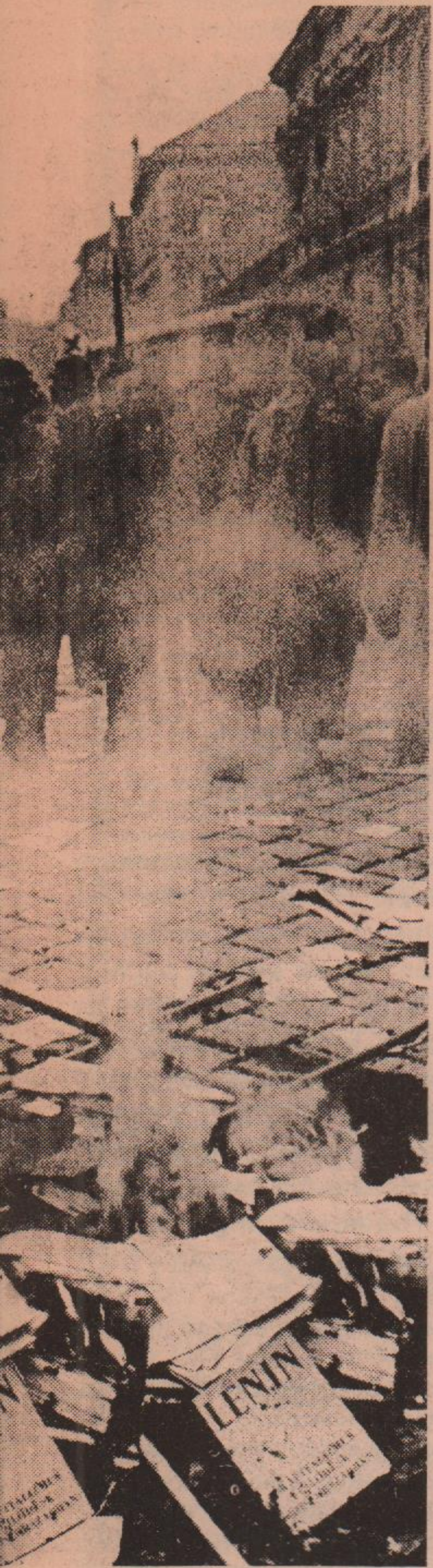
Many socialists have seen the emergence of the Workers' Councils as a sign that a genuine workers revolution was taking place. Undoubtedly they were supported by the majority of the workers in the factories, but an analysis of their political positions tells a different story.

The programme fought for by the Workers' Councils contains two main elements. The first is a justifiable set of demands for an end to economic abuses by the factory management and greater involvement of the workers in running the factories. These demands were increasingly overshadowed by the more wide-reaching demands which would in effect have undermined any system of socialist planning.

For example, the 31 October programme of the Central Workers' Councils, later adopted by many Councils, argued that the Workers' Council had the right to decide on the use to which

1956

# defence of socialism



are called to make sacrifices, in order to secure their ultimate power. But in Hungary in this period these sacrifices were borne unequally.

Instead of rising by 50 per cent in line with the reckless promises of the plan, real wages fell by 20 per cent between 1950-55. At the same time, to meet the new targets, the work norms for each worker were constantly being raised. The system of forced deliveries of food from the countryside affected even the poorer peasants. While the workers and peasants were making sacrifices, the party officials and factory managers enjoyed substantial privileges – they lived in the former bourgeois districts, travelled in expensive limousines, and had access to private hospitals, special discount shops and even private beaches.

This system was enforced by the State Security Police, the AVH. An elite force, isolated from the people, its members received 10 times the wage of the average worker, in addition to all the usual privileges. Repression of political opposition extended well beyond recalcitrant members of the former ruling class. It also fell hard on ordinary workers and peasants, and was more brutal than anywhere else in eastern Europe; in no other country were the communists, who had fought against fascism or in the difficult days of the first stages of the struggle for a people's democracy, so consistently eliminated from public positions of prestige and power, even imprisoned and tortured.

## Which way for Hungary?

In 1953 the HWPP initiated a New Course, which brought some slight improvements in the conditions of the workers and peasants. But they were not enough and open opposition first began among students and intellectuals, with the formation of the Petofi Circle in the winter of 1954.

The rebellion began with a mass meeting of students in Budapest on 22 October 1956, followed by a huge demonstration of workers and students the next day. The HWPP, led by Erno Gero, showed its distrust of the masses by denouncing the demonstrators as enemies of the people, and by calling in Soviet tanks on 24 October. These actions reinforced the unpopularity of the government, and enabled counter-revolutionaries to equate communism with repression.

The AVH also responded with repression – it fired on unarmed crowds at the radio station on the evening of 23 October and at Parliament Square on 25 October. In this case, the snipers firing from the roof-top were put out of action by Soviet forces.

Up to this point, this was a mass

On the very same day, despite the fact that a ceasefire had been in operation since the 28th, armed gangs besieged the Budapest City Headquarters of the HWPP, defended by communists and conscript soldiers. The defenders had to surrender – as they emerged under a white flag, the acting First Secretary of Budapest City HWPP, a veteran communist was, along with 12 others, shot down in cold blood; the dead bodies were sadistically mutilated, and the mob kicked and spat upon the corpses.

The gang undoubtedly included former fascists. In the preceding days, some 3,000 counter-revolutionaries, including two former Arrow Cross Ministers and the largest landowner, Count Esterhazy (*The Counter-Revolutionary*



Red stars smashed

*Forces in the October Events in Hungary* Hungarian Government publication 1957 p143), had been released from prison.

To what extent were these forces aided by western agents? In October 1951 the US Congress had voted \$100m for the subversion of the socialist countries; and some 11,000 Hungarian fascists had military training camps in France, Spain and Western Germany. Doubtless as many as possible made their way into Hungary, and arms were smuggled into the country. However, at this stage, the Hungarian Government's investigation into the subject concludes that 'it was not the elements that came in from the West that played the decisive role ...' (Bill Lomax, *Hungary 1956, 1975*, p129).

Nonetheless the trend was unmistakable. Even Reuter's press agency reported on 1 November: 'The uprising supported at first only by weak groups of Right-wing elements, has now reached the stage at which the victory of those calling for the restoration of the Horthy regime is no longer impossible ... All over the country scenes reminiscent of the return of the "Whites" in 1919 are being enacted.'

A growing counter-revolution, with

between socialist countries, and requesting help from the UN. This opened the door to imperialist intervention – an intervention which, it was clear, could occur without any serious opposition from the labour movement in the west.

There were other ominous signs on the international level. On the same day British and French air forces attacked Egypt, as a preliminary to the Suez invasion. If the imperialists were prepared to launch an armed invasion of a country fighting for national liberation, would they not also seize the opportunity offered by Hungary's difficulties?

These dangers were clearly understood by some sections of the Hungarian WPP, notably Janos Kadar, an old



Janos Kadar

communist who had fought in the underground and been imprisoned between 1951-53 for opposing the HWPP's disastrous course. They re-formed the party (now called the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party) and called for fraternal assistance from the USSR. On 4 November the tragic but necessary military intervention by Soviet forces began.

In a speech on 2 February 1957 Kadar correctly countered the criticism that these were 'foreign troops': 'These are the soldiers of a fraternal socialist country's army, the sons and daughters of the October Socialist Revolution, our brothers and helpers. To us they are not foreign troops. As to what the presence of foreign troops means, those duped students would have found out if the 23 October had continued for two or three more weeks and the troops of really foreign, imperialist countries and governments had come here' (*Socialist Construction in Hungary Selected Speeches and Articles 1957-61* Budapest 1962 p11).

Fighting continued from 5-11 November, but with the suppression of the armed struggle the political struggle then centred around the Workers Councils. The first Workers' Council was

the profits are to be put (point 8, quoted in Lomax p141). But under socialist planning such a decision has to be taken for the benefit of society as a whole, and not just for the benefit of the workers in a particular factory. Such a system could open up divisions between workers in branches of the same industry, as those who worked in a factory operating under favourable material or technical conditions could award themselves much higher wages than workers in other branches of the same industry.

A more direct blow at socialist planning was represented by point 6(c), that the Workers' Council had the right to decide on all matters concerning foreign contracts (*ibid* p141). This would open the door to one factory negotiating directly with foreign capital, completely outside the control of the socialist state. The state's monopoly over foreign trade is one of its strongest guarantees against the penetration of capitalism.

In some factories, the leadership of the Workers' Council went much further than adopting programmes which potentially undermined the system of socialist planning. They prevented communists from getting rooms or carrying out agitation in the factories, and dismissed and persecuted communists. In a small number of cases, the leadership was also infiltrated by former factory managers and landowners. But after a lengthy struggle by communists, assisted by Soviet forces, the threat to the socialist system was overcome.

## Achievements

Despite the enormous material damage suffered in the uprising, the Hungarian economy was on course within a year. At that time the standard of living was considerably below that of the British worker, but while the capitalist countries have seen the re-emergence of mass unemployment, Hungary, like other socialist countries, has been able to guarantee full employment.

In other, but not all, respects the standard of living of the average Hungarian worker is now higher than that of a British counterpart. Free medical care, with low prescription charges, is continually being improved; and there has been a staggering increase in the provision of education, especially for the children of workers and peasants. Without the intervention of Soviet forces in 1956 and the consequent guarantee of the building of socialism, the Hungarian people would have sunk back into the poverty they had previously known as an oppressed nation.

## Patrick Newman

FRFI invites readers' views on this analysis.



## Basque victories French and Spanish reaction

On 25 October ETA executed the Spanish military governor of Guipuzcoa, part of a deadly accurate escalation of attacks on Spanish state targets since the June election victories of Herri Batasuna (see FRFI 61/62). On the same day over 25,000 demonstrated in Bilbao demanding that Madrid negotiate peace with ETA.

Following the devastating attacks in Madrid in July, on the Civil Guard and then the Ministry of Defence, it is clear that after over 4 years of intense repression by the 'socialist' Government of Spain, the Basque people are strongly behind a major military challenge to the Spanish state.

In Euskadi, the PNV (bourgeois Basque National Party) has split under the strain of attempting to reconcile even the Basque middle class with Madrid's measures. The political polarisation occurs as the latest attempts to 'Ulsterise' Euskadi are made by Spain. The four-year-old 'Basque' police force of 3,300 now compose one third of the total police in Euskadi, and last month engaged in military operations against ETA for the first time. President Gonzalez's refusal to negotiate a peace whilst bourgeois leaders in Euskadi want negotiation indicates the malaise in which the Spanish establishment finds itself. There can be no 'peace' imposed on Euskadi. State violence will not succeed in the face of a powerful Nationalist movement led by the revolutionary socialists of Herri Batasuna.

Paul Banks

## Philippines

# Left defends democracy

In the first week of November the National Democratic Front (NDF), which includes the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New Peoples Army (NPA), proposed a 100 day ceasefire to the Aquino government. Having herself repeatedly demanded a ceasefire, President Aquino instructed her negotiators to try and reach a rapid agreement. Though no deal has yet been signed, the NDF proposals sparked off yet another crisis in Aquino's cabinet. To Defence Minister Juan Ponce Enrile the proposals were like a red rag to a bull. 'My boys won't like this' he threatened, and explained that the communists would only use the ceasefire to further consolidate their positions. So as Aquino departed for her four day visit to Japan on 10 November Manila was once again rife with rumours of an impending military coup.

Bending to Enrile's pressure Aquino has tried hard to assure him that her strategy of negotiating with the CPP and NPA is no concession to the revolutionary forces. In speeches she declared the CPP to be a disease which 'if incurable like cancer... must be removed by the more drastic surgery of warfare.' The communists, she claimed, were trying to: 'exploit the democratic process we have created in order to destroy the democracy we have restored'. And she

threatened that the 'hand of peace' will soon be 'clenched in the fist of war'. Indeed she greeted the army's arrest of Rodolfo Salas, the NPA leader, as a 'commendable act' and as she left for Japan her currently loyal Chief of Staff Ramos ordered an intensified military offensive against the NPA.

US imperialism, which last month offered Enrile tacit support, has this month changed tack. In a statement expressing 'complete and unequivocal support' for Aquino, Charles Redmond from the State Department added:

'We believe that the Aquino government and the Filipino people have made substantial progress in developing an effective programme for dealing with the threat of communist insurgency.'

The Reagan Administration has recognised that Enrile at the moment remains too isolated even from military circles, let alone the Filipino ruling class as a whole. An attempted coup could revive mass popular mobilisations in which the NDF, CPP and NPA will play a much more decisive role than in the 'people power' movement which overthrew Marcos in February. Aquino herself has already threatened that: 'If it should be necessary I shall once more ask you, the Filipino people, to take to the streets.'

It is precisely this spectre that has convinced the US to try to restrain Enrile. His preferred 'fist of war' to deal with the revolutionary forces is at the moment a dangerous option. Aquino came to power and sustains her support, particularly among the urban petit-bourgeoisie, through her promises of peace, democracy and reform. Having delivered none of these, an immediate repressive military offensive against the revolutionaries can only strengthen the latter, driving Aquino's supporters further to the left. So she must persevere

damage to its interests resulting from the 1979 revolution. Finally, the longer Iran and Iraq proceed with their mutual destruction, the greater will be the dependence of both countries on the West for their post-war reconstruction.

Kamran Mashadimirza

## India turns on Tamil militants

Over the weekend of 8-9 November police of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu raided the homes and offices of militants in the Tamil liberation movement. Leaders of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam were arrested, detained for seven hours and then placed under house arrest. In a heavy blow to their struggle the police seized Tamil armaments, including rocket launchers, machine guns and two surface-to-air missiles.

Buoyed by the Indian police action, Jayewardene's forces have launched a sustained aerial bombardment of the liberated areas of Tamil Eelam. His troops are trying to break out of their camps in the north. Jayewardene launched the bombardment after circulating the rumour that the Tigers were going to declare independence unilaterally in the New Year. The Tigers have denied the authenticity of these rumours. They are designed to put pressure on the Indian government to take action against the liberation forces. Jayewardene knows full well that his forces cannot defeat or disarm the liberation forces.

Meanwhile, the Sri Lankan government has ordered 8 more Israeli-built Super Dvora fast-attack boats costing £1.25 million each to accompany the 5 Congar Cheverton British-made craft it already operates to patrol the straits between Tamil Nadu and Tamil Eelam. These weapons are bought with US and British funds.

No firm news has emerged about the Tamil hunger strikers held in Sri Lankan army camps (see FRFI 63). While it is thought that the strike has ended there are no new details on further fatalities beyond the one Tamil dead.

Trevor Rayne



Left-wing students demonstrate against US bases

with her chosen strategy of splitting and defeating the revolutionaries through 'negotiations' and promises of reforms.

While Aquino 'negotiates', Enrile is conducting a bloody assassination campaign against the working class and peasantry. On the day the President returned from Japan, popular working class leader Rolando Olalia was found dead having been tortured and then shot. Olalia was president of the communist influenced May First Movement, the largest trade union organisation in the Philippines with 500,000 members. He was also chairperson of the newly founded left wing Peoples Party (see FRFI 63). The popular response was immediate. NDF negotiation called off a session of ceasefire talks and 5,000 workers and students marched to Enrile's offices demanding his resignation. The May First Movement is planning a general strike and Olalia's funeral is being prepared as a major demonstra-

tion of mass unity against the fascist military. Aquino, while expressing outrage and horror has appointed a commission to investigate the murder which includes members of the military.

The murder of Rolando Olalia has set the stage for new and more determined battles between the democratic revolutionary forces and the fascist military. Pressed from the left and the right, Aquino will soon have to show her true hand. Her own supporters within the mass movement will not forever tolerate appeasement with Enrile and his fascist gangsters whose intentions are clear to everyone. The choice of thoroughgoing democratic revolution, fundamental land reform and the purging of fascists, as advocated by the NDF, CPP and NPA, or a bloody counter-revolution will soon become the stark reality facing the overwhelming majority of the people.

Eddie Abrahams

## Britain imposes sanctions on Syria

On 24 October, the British government broke off diplomatic relations with Syria following the sentencing of Nezar Hindawi at the Old Bailey. Claiming 'overwhelming and conclusive evidence of Syrian involvement' in the alleged plot to blow up an 'Israeli' airliner packed with passengers, the British government is taking the initiative in imperialist efforts to isolate the Assad regime. With the pretense of fighting 'terrorism', Thatcher and Foreign Secretary Howe have urged Reagan and the EEC to join them in imposing sanctions against Syria. After initial opposition, the EEC agreed to sign an 'anti-terrorist' pledge and imposed some token sanctions. The US went slightly further a week later, more to appease Thatcher's anger at the exposure of Reagan's secret dealings with the Khomeini regime than to show solidarity with Britain.

The US and French governments in particular, while sharing imperialism's long-term ambition to remove President Assad do not at the moment wish to dramatically disturb relations with the Syrian government. For domestic political reasons, both require Syrian assistance for the release of their hostages held in Lebanon. In addition both France and the USA recognise Assad's key role in holding back the revolutionary forces in Lebanon. In the absence of a more reliable, counter-revolutionary force, they do not want to seriously undermine Syrian power and influence in the Lebanon.

While imperialism is conducting a diplomatic and propaganda campaign against Assad, he continues to incite his surrogates in Lebanon to conduct counter-revolutionary war against the Palestinian movement in Lebanon. For the past month, Palestinian camps near Sidon, Tyre and Beirut have been subjected to systematic military assault by the bourgeois Amal militias. While the

Syrian grip over Lebanon has been somewhat loosened, it remains the only power capable of holding back the revival of the Lebanese and Palestinian revolutionary movement.

The British government's campaign against Syria, though not totally in tune with immediate US and French interests, will no doubt be used by them when they decide it opportune to make a decisive move against Assad, or instruct 'Israel' to do so. Britain's role meanwhile, has also exposed Thatcher's lurid hypocrisy. Sanctions against Syria for an incident which killed no one, but none against butcher Botha murdering thousands of black people. Of course there will also be no sanctions against 'Israel' whose agents, defying international law, kidnapped Mordechai Vanunu from London and are holding him in a Zionist prison. He had honourably leaked information about 'Israeli' manufacture of nuclear weapons capable of killing millions.

Eddie Abrahams

# US supplies Iran with arms

'A confederation of criminal governments... run by the strangest collection of misfits, Looney Tunes, and squalid criminals since the advent of the Third Reich'. Thus Ronald Reagan on Iran, Libya, Cuba, Nicaragua and North Korea in July 1985. 'For 18 months we have had underway a secret diplomatic initiative to Iran'. The same Ronald Reagan in November 1986, explaining why his government supplies arms to Iran. This astonishing feat of hypocrisy and sheer deceit is spectacular even for the biggest 'sponsor of state terrorism in the world today'. The same traits are shared by his number one partner in crime, Margaret Thatcher. Her government and that of the USA are sponsoring and profiting from the Iran-Iraq war. They are arming even those whom they themselves describe as terrorists.

In a written reply in the House of Commons, Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, stated: 'The UK has been strictly impartial in the conflict between Iran and Iraq in order to reinforce our policy of doing everything possible to see this tragic conflict brought to the earliest possible end'. Damning evidence disproving this 'neutrality' has been accumulating rapidly over the last two years, especially Britain's key role in supplying arms and training military personnel.

Equipment supplied to Iran has included anti-aircraft missiles, naval combat vessels from the Yarrow and Tyne shipyards and Chieftain tanks. A report from *The Observer* showed that 'Top Iranian officers were trained in the use of "Sky Guard" anti-aircraft weapons at a British manufacture and training establishment at the former RAF base at Faldingworth near Lincoln'. At the same time 'Flight International' reports 'Britain is giving specialist training to Iraqi air force pilots in Carlisle'. The imperialist interests are obvious. They are training one side to fly their warplanes effectively, and the other side to shoot them down. Britain is doing everything possible to ensure the war continues. Furthermore London has become Iran's leading trading centre, particularly for their arms deals with other NATO countries. It was recently revealed that US imperialism was smuggling \$2.5 billion of arms to Iran, through an American resident in London.

The oil companies are also benefiting; Iran made a payment of £120 million to British Petroleum in compensation for



# US OBJECTIVE SUPREMACY AT ANY COST

October's Reykjavik summit saw the US President stripped of any credibility he may have had in the arms control negotiations. With a master-stroke of statecraft Mikhail Gorbachev called the US bluff; he offered Reagan his so-called 'zero-option' for the removal of all medium range missiles in Europe, and made concrete and unprecedented proposals for the removal of all nuclear weapons in the future. Reagan intransigently stood by his Star Wars plan, effectively blocking the path to any agreement.

Desperate to recuperate their position the Reagan team turned reality upside

## TREATIES

### 1963 The Partial Test Ban Treaty

Signed by the US, Britain and the Soviet Union this treaty sought to prevent nuclear weapons being tested anywhere except underground. The proposed Star Wars tests will wipe it out.

### 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABM) Treaty

The ABM Treaty is of unlimited duration and states that the two sides should not 'develop, test, or deploy ABM systems or components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based or mobile land-based' (Article V). It was recognised by both sides as necessary to restrain the escalation of the arms race. In crude mechanical logic, if an anti-ballistic missile system is even 90 per cent effective against incoming weapons the other side must raise its armoury ten fold to have the same effectiveness. Alternatively, it must devise new weapons against which there is no defence. US Defence Secretary Weinberger has made no secret of his opposition to the Treaty, 'I have never been a proponent of the ABM Treaty, and the sooner we can get to it (an anti-ballistic missile system: TR) the better I like it.'

### 1976 Threshold Test Ban Treaty

This restricts nuclear tests to less than 150 kilotons. However, to be of sufficient power to be useful, explosions in space necessary for the Star Wars technology would have to be much bigger.

### 1979 SALT II Agreement

This treaty restricts the growth of long range, strategic nuclear weapons. Reagan has never ratified it, has called it 'absolutely unacceptable' and 'perilously evil' and has defied it by planning the deployment of two new types of MX and Midgetman missiles, and the equipping of B-52 bombers with cruise missiles.

## The US Military-Industrial Complex

Commenting upon the failure of the Reykjavik talks Gorbachev remarked that 'The US Administration is being held captive by this complex (the military-industrial complex) and thus the President is not free to take such a decision'. To the US military-industrial complex Reagan and Star Wars are the modern equivalent of the Golden Calf.

The average rate of return on investments in US civilian industries is between 8-12 per cent, but Pentagon contracts provide profits of 30-40 per cent. A recent US Senate Commission which investigated the finances of 169 arms industry corporations found that the net profits of 94 of them amounted to 50 per cent, of 49 to more than 100 per cent, of 22 to over 200 per cent, of 3 to about 500 per cent, and that one corporation was making profits of nearly 2000 per cent on its invested capital.

down and claimed that all the proposals on arms reductions were their own. Seriously alarmed, Mrs Thatcher announced that she would be seeking assurances from Reagan that he had no intention at all of reducing nuclear weapons. She can rest assured that Reagan has no such intentions: for US imperialism the arms negotiations are a necessary formality which serves as a cover for escalating the arms race.

During the first six years of Reagan's presidency US military spending almost tripled on the previous six years. In 1981 the White House intended to spend \$1.5 trillion on the military over the period 1982-86, in fact it has spent \$1.64 trillion: an amount greater than the combined military expenditures of NATO countries throughout the 1970s.

Neither in Reykjavik, Geneva or anywhere else has imperialism accepted 'peaceful coexistence' or parity with the socialist countries. No sooner had the first socialist state come into being than the imperialist powers had launched a war against it, albeit, as Churchill put, an 'undeclared war'. As long ago as 1919 Lenin had denounced the imperialists' pretext for arms build-up and bellicosity, 'Some foolish people are shouting about red militarism. These are political crooks who pretend that they believe this absurdity and throw charges of this kind right and left, exercising their lawyers' skill in concocting plausible arguments and in throwing dust in the eyes of the masses'. At the very moment that the myth of the Soviet menace was invented, US and British troops were marching through Arkhangel'sk and Murmansk, Japanese and US forces were occupying Vladivostok, and French and British soldiers were rounding up and executing communists in Odessa.

Reagan's strategy in Reykjavik in support of Star Wars (the Strategic Defence Initiative) is to use the arms build-up to wear the Soviet economy down in the hope of provoking discontent with the Communist Party leadership. At the same time it aims to throw the socialist countries onto the defensive and so reduce their ability to give economic and

Behind them stand the banking oligarchy that commands the transnationals whose tentacles span the globe.

The Morgan group, the largest financial consortium in the US, holds capital in the weapons producers Lockheed, General Dynamics, United Technologies, Martin-Marietta, Boeing, Rockwell-International and many others. Chase Manhattan Bank, whose leading stockholders are the Rockefellers, is a financial pivot for McDonnell Douglas, Westinghouse, Boeing, IBM, and United Technologies. Bank of America owns shares in and directs the policy of Rockwell-International and Lockheed. The Mellons cartel owns a substantial part of Martin-Marietta.

Thus far about \$30 billion has been allocated to Star Wars research. Conservative estimates put the total cost of testing at \$90 billion, but the real spending will start with deployment: more than ten times the research costs. For Reagan and his backers a very good reason indeed why Star Wars research should not be confined to the laboratories.

military assistance to the struggling movements in the oppressed nations, and weaken their resolve in defence of the newly liberated nations: Cuba, Angola, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Ethiopia etc.

Reagan is gambling upon a belief that the Soviet Union wants an arms agreement at any price. That it will trade its internationalist commitments for the sake of a deal which allows it to divert more of its resources into modernising and restructuring the Soviet economy. Following the summit, Gorbachev was

at pains to disabuse Reagan of these 'dangerous delusions'. But five hundred years of capitalism and colonial plunder have taught the world that it understands nothing other than force, and what it deems necessary to continue to amass profits. Ultimately, that means its survival depends upon the destruction of the socialist states themselves.

Compiled by Trevor Rayne



## Burden of militarism

Type of weapon	When developed	
	in the USA	in the USSR
Atomic bomb	1946	1949
Hydrogen bomb	1953	1954
Long-range bombers	1953	1957
Medium-range missiles	1954	1959
Tactical missiles	1955	1956
Intercontinental missiles	1955	1957
Nuclear-powered submarines	1956	1962
Antimissile systems	1960	1961
Missiles with multiple war-heads	1964	1972
New systems of missiles with multiple war-heads	1970	1975
Cruise missiles	1983-1984	—

Taken from Gennady Nikolaev, *The Heavy Burden of Militarism*, Profizdat Publishers, Moscow, 1986

## Before the Summit

From the atomic bomb and the hydrogen bomb to nuclear submarines and Star Wars (SDI) US imperialism has led the arms race, and tried to gain a military advantage over the Soviet Union. At no time in the arms negotiations held with the Soviet Union has the US shown itself ready to accept anything other than an agreement which would seriously weaken the ability of the socialist countries to defend themselves. Arms negotiations were broken off in November 1983 when the Soviet leader Yuri Andropov said it was impossible to continue while the US was going ahead and installing 572 cruise missiles in Western Europe. These missiles have the capacity to reach Moscow ten minutes after launch from their bases in Britain and West Germany. The socialist countries responded and stationed SS20 missiles in the German Democratic Republic and Czechoslovakia.

In March 1985 negotiations were resumed in Geneva. Deployment of Soviet medium range (SS20) missiles was suspended. The US continued to ferry cruise and Pershing 2 missiles across the

## The Soviet Proposals

During the course of the Reykjavik discussions General Secretary Gorbachev made the following proposals to the US.

1. A 50 per cent reduction in long range, strategic arms, with a view to eliminating all these weapons by the end of the century. This cut would include submarine launched, land-based and aircraft borne bombs and missiles, all to be cut by half. The Soviet Union dropped its demand that the medium range cruise and Pershing-2 missiles be included in this category, even though Soviet territory is within their reach.

2. All Soviet and US medium range missiles, that is SS20s and cruise and Pershings, to be removed from Europe. The so-called 'zero-option' which Reagan himself was espousing in 1981 — at the very time that the US was preparing to install cruise and Pershings in Europe. French and British missiles were to be exempted from this deal. The Soviet Union and the USA would each keep 100 of these missiles based in Asia.

3. The Soviet Union proposed a freeze on all short range missiles with a range of under 1000 km, and talks on their future with a view to phasing them out.

4. Nuclear tests to be phased out with nuclear weapons.

There were also proposals on verification procedures, and adherence to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty.

Reagan seized upon the terms of the ABM Treaty to stall any agreement on any of the Soviet proposals. He refused to agree to the Soviet proposal that Star Wars research be confined to the laboratory for ten years. Given that it will take more than ten years to perfect the SDI weaponry it was hardly a very demanding request. However, Reagan and his military-industrial complex backers are aware that the US public will want still more showy stunts if they are to pay more dollars into the armaments industry, (and dispel doubts sown by the Challenger fiasco).

Reagan's Star Wars stance is a preposterous position for any Soviet leader to accept: negotiating their weapons down while SDI progressively renders the remainder impotent, and the US goes on to develop a whole new set of weapons to be based in space! Like a fool Reagan offered to share the results of SDI research with the Soviet Union. This evidently aroused some mirth in Gorbachev, he replied 'Mr President, I do not take this idea seriously... You do not even want to share with us oil equipment or equipment for the dairy industry, and still you expect us to believe your promise to share the research developments in the SDI project. That would be something like a 'Second American Revolution', and revolutions do not occur that often.'

Atlantic. On 6 August 1985 the Soviet Union announced a complete halt to all its nuclear tests. This unilateral moratorium is still in force. The US has continued with its programme of underground nuclear explosions. In January 1986, two months after his first meeting with Reagan in Geneva, Gorbachev announced a three-stage plan for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons by the year 2000. He further proposed the destruction of all chemical weapon stockpiles and industrial capacities for their production.

The Reagan administration threw all that it could in the path of the summit. They ordered a succession of Soviet diplomats out of the US in an attempt to sour the atmosphere between the two countries. They used the arrest of the US journalist Daniloff for spying as an excuse to whip up tensions and break off preliminary talks. Daniloff has since been proven to have engaged in spying. In the end, the US government only agreed to a summit as a means of keeping face. The day before he arrived in Iceland, Reagan forced out a Congressional motion that would have placed a one year ban on US nuclear tests, restricted Star Wars spending and forbidden him from violating the 1979 Salt II treaty. Reagan duly thanked Congress for backing-off and said this would strengthen his arm in the forthcoming negotiations. The same cynical logic was used to account for the Soviet proposals at Reykjavik: US military strength was to be thanked for forcing the Soviet arms reductions offers. By that same logic Star Wars is trumpeted as a marvellous instrument for drawing even more offers from the Soviet Union, and must, therefore, be supported.



# Baby deaths in Holloway Natural causes?

Last month an inquest jury returned a verdict of death by natural causes on a baby born to Lynne Marsland, a prisoner in Holloway. Chris Tchaikovsky of Women in Prison, visited Lynne 24 hours after she had lost her baby and has been closely involved in publicising and preparing the case. She gave FRFI the details of the events leading to the baby's death which show that pregnant women in prison face serious dangers to themselves and their babies.

Lynne was 8½ months pregnant when she was sent to prison for 7 months for £250 worth of credit card fraud. Her baby was due on 27 June. On 28 June at 2.45am she told prison nurses that she was in labour and was taken from a dormitory with four other women and locked in a single cell for the next 15 hours. The nurses didn't believe she was in labour and had ignored the fact that on the Thursday before, Lynne suffered a discharge of meconium (a sign of foetal distress). Lynne was removed to a single cell in breach of prison rules which state that a pregnant woman must be kept with other women in case she needs help. Neither the prison doctor, midwife or nurses checked on her cen-

tral medical records which showed that in 1980 she had a baby by caesarian section with no labour. Dr Hollingsworth of the Whittington Hospital where Lynne was eventually taken, showed that the clinical management (nursing care) in Lynne's case had been lacking. The fact that she was 'high risk' and having problems should have ensured she be immediately transferred to hospital.

Throughout the time she was held in the cell, Lynne was in pain, had hot flushes, back ache and a discharge. At 4pm over 12 hours later, the prison nurses decided she was in labour and by 5.45pm Lynne was admitted to the Whittington. It has since emerged that

the prison dialled 999 for an ambulance rather than go through the usual hospital admissions - an indication that by now even they recognised Lynne's dangerous condition. On arrival at hospital the baby's heart beat was decelerating rapidly. Lynne was taken for caesarian section at 6.40pm and at 7.03pm the baby was delivered. Anne Louise Marsland lived for 30 minutes.

In court Dr Hollingsworth said that the baby was very anaemic-looking and that the meconium surrounding the baby was 'odd and old looking'. The pathologists could not ascertain the cause of death and said they would need to look at the clinical management. This was ignored by the coroner who directed the jury to bring a verdict of death by natural causes. Lynne Marsland is now bringing a case of negligence against Holloway - this could take years to be heard.

Five babies have died in Holloway over the last 12 months. Three from miscarriages, one to a woman who carried her dead baby inside her for six weeks, and Lynne's. Chris emphasised that one of the most serious elements involved is that the 'prisoner is always believed to be malingering, crying wolf'. The screws think women have a vested interest in saying they're pregnant in the first place to get extra milk, or are in pain so as to get out of the prison. Also dangerous is the fact that, as with all prisoners, the woman's medical records don't go into the prison with her and inter prison transfers of records are very slow.

Chris said that the only answer is for magistrates to stop sending pregnant women or mothers with babies to prison. But judging from the attitudes of magistrates this is highly unlikely. In 1983 Judge Graham Neville sentenced a 22 year old woman with one child and expecting her second to prison for stealing food worth £16.70 and a magistrate was reported in the *South London Press* as saying to a woman, 'I do not care if you bring a whole host of babies - a whole orphanage - because it is not going to stop me sending you to prison if necessary.'

happened to me, happened in there. Generosity of spirit of some of the other prisoners. People who've got nothing, people who've had everything taken off them can still find the time to give you information and encouragement, cigarettes and sweets - things that are really important to them. My instinct tells me that they (the authorities) are just containing the situation... nothing is changing for those people. I went in frightened and I've come out really angry.'

Alexa Byrne

Auriel Fermo

# Risley remand centre erupts

On Monday 20 October men and women prisoners on remand in Risley staged a major protest against the overcrowding and appalling conditions in the jail. Nineteen prisoners and six prison officers were injured during the protest and 44 prisoners, 18 women and 26 men, face disciplinary proceedings.

Conditions at Risley have been highlighted several times over the last six months. Earlier in October, 18 prisoners staged a roof-top protest against the over-crowding and during the summer women prison officers stopped work for the same reason. Risley has cells for 556 men and 94 women. Current figures show there are 798 men and 125 women locked up in 8ft square cells for at least 20 hours a day. Association, all education and work facilities are denied the prisoners, many of whom are hundreds of miles from their families and friends.

The protest on 20 October began after tea when women prisoners barricaded themselves in the dining room and got into the kitchens. From there the action spread to the rest of the jail.

Mrs Pat Wilson, a 44 year old woman with 3 children, who was held for four days in Risley for non payment of fine, was released on the morning after the protest. On BBC Radio 4 she said the conditions were horrific. The food was bad, the over-crowding horrendous. 'Very young prisoners - kids of 16 and 17 are held there. Some women have been in there for 15 months and are still waiting to go to court'. She said, 'I think that perhaps one of the things that ought to be part of the training for magistrates, judges, probation officers and social workers is that they go and spend a weekend in a place like that as a prisoner and find out what it's like. I don't think they'd be so keen to send people down.'

Major Sydney Hulme, chairman of Risley Board of Visitors (BOV) and in charge of the disciplinary hearings, would be a prime candidate for such an experience. He is pro-capital punishment and as a magistrate, responsible for sending hundreds of people to Risley. He said, 'When someone is remanded in custody or put in prison, unless it is a six-star hotel they always find fault with it'. His view of the protest is that 'we must toughen up on sentencing and bring these people to heel - otherwise they will get away with it...'

He insists that the role of BOVs is to act as parents and punish 'their children when they are naughty'. He doesn't consider legal representation necessary in roof-top protest cases where the issues are 'not sufficiently complicated'.

Despite the experience Pat went through in Risley she was not depressed. 'Some of the nicest things that have ever

## Ulterior motive

On 20 October Mark Leech was abruptly released from prison, at least two months ahead of his expected date of release. The reason for this unusual generosity soon became clear.

Ever since the Court of Appeal decision in the King case, British courts have refused to intervene in Governors' adjudications on the grounds that these are administrative decisions.

Recently, however, the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal ruled, in the McKearnon judgement, that the courts could intervene in Governors' adjudications. Mark Leech brought a case, using this discrepancy, to force the House of Lords to overturn the King decision. The request for leave to appeal to the House of Lords was heard on 6 November.

Hence, Mark's release. The Home Office released Mark and then turned up at the House of Lords to argue that the issue was now academic. However, the Law Lords, for once, rejected this shabby manoeuvre and granted Mark leave to appeal.

This decision opens up the possibility of overturning the King ruling and giving prisoners a new legal front in the battle against the kangaroo-court internal prison disciplinary system. Terry O'Halloran

## Prisoners' rights

The NCCL has issued a factsheet on prisoners' rights. The four page factsheet covers Remand, Convicted and Youth Custody prisoners. It is simply written and clearly laid out. Naturally, it bears little relationship to what actually goes on in British prisons. It is, however, a very useful document for prisoners and their supporters to have by them.

Copies can be obtained, price 40p, from: NCCL, 21 Tabard Street, London, SE1 4LA (tel: 01 403 3888).

## POWs News and Birthdays

The following POWs have been moved recently: Vince Donnelly from Albany to the Scrubs to Wandsworth; Stevie Nordonne from Albany to Gartree; Paul Norney from Wakefield to Parkhurst. Donal Craig is in the Scrubs. Our greetings go to these and all the POWs.

Special greetings to the following POWs whose birthdays are coming soon. We ask our readers to send cards to these comrades, preferably recorded delivery to ensure arrival.



# Peterhead burns

continued from page 1

protest by a violent attack on the prisoners. Armed police were in position. MUFTI squad prison officers were massing carrying riot shields, batons and high pressure hoses. The media had been cleared away. However, it soon became public that the prisoners had demanded to see a reporter. Meeting such a demand had ended the Saughton protest on 31 October. The governor and the prison authorities were forced to grant it.

After three meetings with the reporter, Ian Cameron from the *Daily Record* the prisoners released the prison officer as they had promised. They also burned down A Hall. The protest was disciplined and orderly throughout. The prison officer was released unharmed.

The Peterhead rising was the second major prison protest in Scotland in the last month. On 27 October prisoners at Saughton prison, Edinburgh, took prison officer, Keith Stewart, hostage and broke through to the roof. Their banner read 'Brutality. We need help.'

The Saughton protest was also about Peterhead. The prisoners ended the action after 87 hours when the *Daily Record* published a statement about Peterhead. Prisoners Tony Kinnon, Gordon Smith, James Gardner and Colin Revie signed the statement describing themselves as the ringleaders and exonerating other prisoners of involvement in the siege. They were

demanding a public inquiry into conditions at Peterhead. They got beatings and transfer to the infamous Inverness cages.

Keith Stewart, like John Crossan, suffered no physical injury whatever whilst in the hands of prisoners. According to Raymond Smith, brother of Gordon Smith, however, Gordon Smith and Tony Kinnon were both assaulted after coming off the protest. They are now on dirty protest in the Inverness cages. Raymond Smith believed that news of their treatment sparked off the Peterhead rising.

Three of the Peterhead prisoners were picked out from the beginning as ringleaders: Andrew Walker, William Ballantyre and John Smith. Selected lurid details of their convictions were fed to the press. Andrew Walker ceased to be a human being fighting for his rights and became 'three-times killer' etc. There is no doubt the government and the Scottish prison authorities will seek revenge against these men who had the courage to draw attention to the brutal conditions at Peterhead in the only way open to them.

## Lifting the lid

Peterhead houses about 170 prisoners in conditions of great brutality. B Hall is used as an unofficial punishment block. Prisoners spend long periods of time in solitary confinement under Rule 36 (Scottish equivalent to Rule 43b). They are subjected to a modified control unit regime in the 10 cell special unit built at a cost of £500,000. Work consists of washing floors and other menial tasks. Visits are restricted and subject to great emotional strain suffered by relatives who travel up to eight hours, only to shout at their loved ones through reinforced glass.

This grim inhuman Victorian dustbin stands on the east coast of Scotland some 200 miles north of Glasgow. Most of the prisoners come from Glasgow. The Scottish Home and Health Department is planning to build a new prison to be opened in 1990 at a cost of £13m. Guess where? In Peterhead. One of the prisoners' demands is that any new prison be sited near Glasgow.

The prisoners at Peterhead have an honourable record of fighting back: August 1979; January 1984; March 1985; November 1986. These were the major protests. There have also been fire-raising campaigns, dirty protests, hunger strikes, hostage takings, smash-ups - every conceivable form of prison protest. They have consistently demanded a public inquiry ever since a prisoner smuggled out a letter to a Scottish newspaper in 1979. The letter was headed 'Is anyone out there?'

Their demands have been ignored. Their protests met with violence, solitary confinement, mental and physical assault, and additional sentences doled out in show trials. The Saughton prisoners said: 'What we have set out to do is bring forward the corruption and brutality in the prisons.'

FRFI fully supports the demand for an independent public inquiry and urges prisoners not to cooperate with any internal inquiry. Prisoners and their supporters should campaign for immunity against prosecution in any public inquiry and against any victimisation of the prisoners involved. Finally, we urge those who have information on the conditions in the prisons and any attacks on the prisoners, to get that information to us. We will use it.

Terry O'Halloran, Rhian Jones, Graham Johnson

## Scottish prisons

There are 24 prisons in Scotland: 21 male; 3 female. In 1983 there were on average 5,052 prisoners: 1 in every 1,000 of the Scottish population.

Scottish adult male prisoners were 9 times more likely to commit suicide than the population at large; young offenders were 18 times more likely; inmates at the notorious Glenochil centre were 48 times more likely to commit suicide.

22.6% of Scottish male prisoners have no work to do. Only 4.6% are classified as doing work of a 'trade and vocational' character. The only work available at Peterhead is described as 'general constructional skills'. During the year to 31 March 1985, 15,286 people were sent to prison - 1 in every 327 of the Scottish population.

Read *Scottish Prisons: Lift the Lid for a detailed exposure of Scotland's brutal prisons. Banned in Peterhead. 50p (35p p&p) from Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London, WC1N 3XX; or from Edinburgh FRFI, Box 40, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.*

Brendan Dowd, 758662, HM Prison Frankland, Finchale Ave, Brasside, Durham DH1 5SB. 17 November  
Andy Mulryan, 461576, HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 5TZ. 18 November  
James Bennett, 464989, also HMP Long Lartin. 4 December  
Liam Baker, 464984, also HMP Long Lartin. 6 December  
Hugh Doherty, 338636, HM Prison Love Lane, Wakefield, Yorkshire, WF2 9AG. 7 December  
Noel Gibson, 879225, HM Prison Parkhurst, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5NX. 11 December





Twenty Six Counties

# FitzGerald staves off crisis

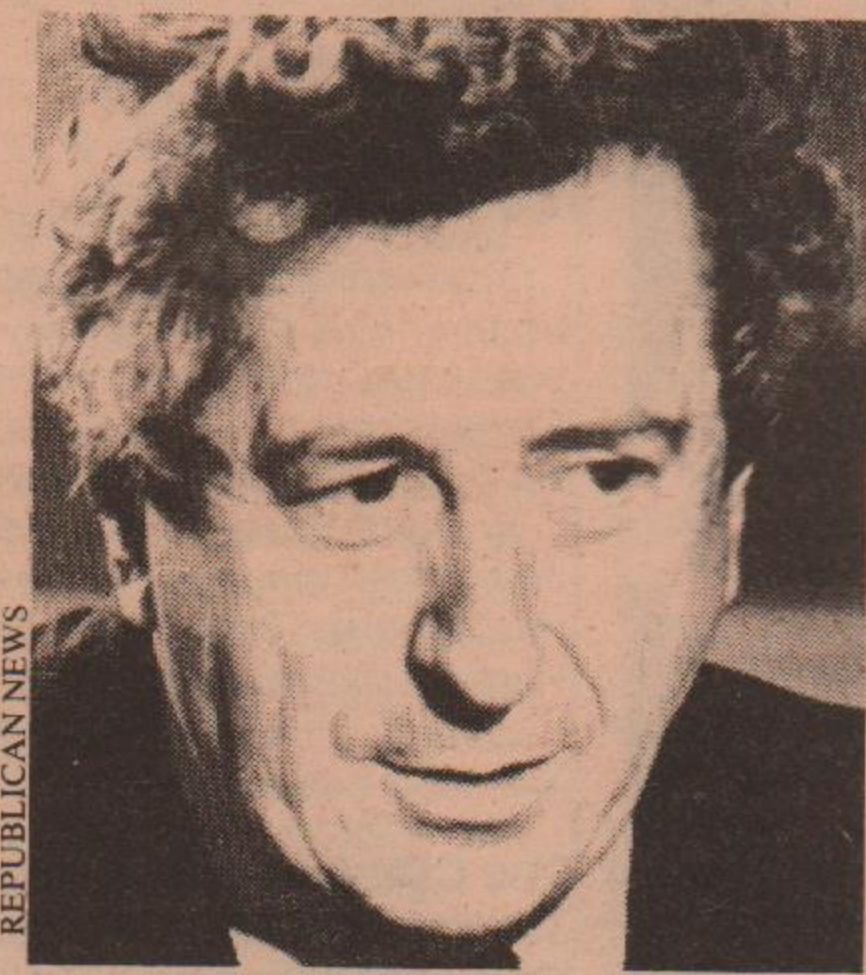
The Twenty Six Counties' Fine Gael/Labour coalition government managed to keep itself in power by surviving a no confidence motion by a mere two votes on 23 October. This has however brought it only temporary respite and an election cannot be far away.

The political instability in the South is hardly surprising. The Irish economy is in the grip of an unparalleled crisis. Ireland's debt to imperialist banks is now over \$10bn and per head of the population it ranks fourth in the league of debtor nations, higher even than Mexico and Brazil. In order to repay the debt and safeguard profits the government has savagely attacked working class living standards, forcing down wages and public expenditure on services. Unemployment was a record 232,700 in October and thousands of people are forced to emigrate to get work.

If re-elected FitzGerald has promised more of the same - cuts in wages, benefits and services. Nor is Haughey's Fianna Fail any better. Industry Minister Michael Noonan spoke a rare truth to a recent US audience when he said that the Twenty Six Counties 'has a pro-business government and a pro-business opposition'.

Meanwhile FitzGerald hopes that the Anglo-Irish deal will gain him support. The reactionary thinking behind the deal was revealed in a recent interview by FitzGerald. He said:

'We have no desire to be involved in the process of Northern Ireland any more than is necessary to tackle the



Garret FitzGerald

problem of the IRA and eliminate it. That is our only interest in the matter . . .'

Exactly. The Southern ruling class has no desire to see justice for Northern nationalists any more than it cares about the fate of the working class in the South. To secure its profits the Twenty Six Counties ruling class continues to collaborate with British imperialism which divides Ireland and devastates the economy North and South.

Jim O'Rourke

# Cold blooded murder

An elite RUC death squad, the Southern Region Headquarters Mobile Support Unit (HQMSU) planned and carried out the murder of six unarmed nationalists in Co Armagh between 11 November and 12 December 1982. HQMSU's brief was to wipe out Republican suspects and their shoot-to-kill operations were approved at the highest level. Immediately after the murders the RUC began systematically to cover up its role. When John Stalker and his team got too close to the truth they were removed from the inquiry into these events.

The Observer has now published the fullest account of these events so far. In a report on 12 October it argues that HQMSU went on a bloody trail of revenge after the IRA executed three RUC officers at Kinigo in October 1982. Within a month they had killed the six nationalists.

- Two of those murdered, Eugene Toman and Sean Burns, were set up by an informer who was paid £20,000 by the RUC. Martin McAuley, who was also named, survived an ambush but Michael Tighe, 17 years old and without any political record, died when he walked into a trap. The others who died, Seamus Grew, Roddy Carroll and Gervaise McKerr, were Republicans who the RUC wanted dead.

- The HQMSU was organised on strictly military lines; many of its members were ex-Army. The Observer describes them as resembling 'infantrymen trained to kill in wars. All were ordered to conceal what they did behind the Official Secrets Act.' Units of three men operated from armoured Cortinas. They were heavily armed with Sterling sub-machine guns, Ruger high velocity rifles and handguns. An eyewitness likens their attack on Seamus Grew's car to something out of the Wild West. All three policemen were leaning out of the car windows and firing wildly. A total of

109 bullets were fired.

- An MI5 bug recorded the stake-out at the hay byre in Ballyneery where Michael Tighe died. A Special Branch officer at Gough Barracks ordered the HQMSU 'In! Now!'

- After each killing the RUC issued a false cover story, removed witnesses and destroyed forensic evidence. A forged RUC report was compiled after Michael Tighe's death to implicate him. After the shootings at Lurgan and Armagh City the RUC falsely claimed that the murdered men's cars had crashed through road blocks.

RUC Chief Constable Sir John Hermon and Trevor Forbes, Head of Special Branch are directly responsible for the HQMSUs. They deny all knowledge, claiming they were out of the country at the time of the murders. In fact Hermon deliberately withheld evidence from the Stalker inquiry. Stalker had produced an interim report recommending the prosecution of 12 RUC officers when he was removed from the inquiry in very suspicious circumstances. Sampson, his replacement, has now filed his report. But a Parliamentary answer has already made clear that this report will never be made public. By these means murder is concealed.

Jim O'Rourke

## Anglo Irish Agreement

# One year on: No change

Local demonstrations, culminating in a huge Loyalist rally in Belfast marked the first anniversary of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The Loyalists are now threatening to escalate their campaign of sectarian terror. On 10 November 1986 2,000 Loyalists including DUP leaders Paisley and Robinson met in Belfast to form yet another loyalist paramilitary organisation. 'Ulster Resistance' claims that it will engage in 'direct action' to bring down the Agreement. For 'direct action' read murder and terror. Already this year loyalist death squads have claimed 12 lives. Their latest victims were 75-year-old Kathleen Mullan and her son who were gunned down in the hallway of their isolated farmhouse.

The sectarian campaign by loyalists has also resulted in hundreds of Catholic families being petrol bombed out of their homes. This has been the main result of the Agreement despite FitzGerald and the SDLP's absurd claims that the Agreement has improved the situation for the nationalists. Nothing could be further from the truth. Even the tiny reforms proposed, such as increasing the number of Judges in Diplock courts from 1 to 3, have been rejected by the British government. Instead they have proposed even more meaningless 'reforms' such as an 'increase in the rights of suspects in police custody'.

Such rights are well illustrated by the case of four Derry men arrested in Octo-

ber and held in Strand Road Barracks and subjected to torture. They were stripped, put in boiler suits, beaten, one was forced to stand for long periods and another was hooded. So much for suspects' rights. Yet Alan Dukes, Minister for Justice in the Twenty Six Counties, has expressed satisfaction that their concerns are being taken seriously by the British government.

Alongside Loyalist terror and state repression has also gone an increase in poverty and unemployment. The September unemployment figures for the Six Counties were a record: 134,988 people, 23.1% of the workforce were out of work.

Maxine Williams

# New boost for framed prisoners

The publication of the book on the Guildford Four and Maguire Family frame-ups (*Trial and Error* by Robert Kee, reviewed in FRFI) has led to a new wave of interest in the press, television and radio. Further publicity followed public statements of disquiet about the convictions from Lord Devlin, Lord Scarman and Cardinal Hume, head of the Catholic Church in England. These important boosts to the campaign are testimony to the tireless work of the Four's solicitor, Alastair Logan. As yet, however, there is still no sign that the Home Office will budge an inch.

Utterances that they are reviewing the Guildford and Maguire cases following the Kee book must be seen in the light of similar empty statements from the Home Office on the Birmingham Six issued repeatedly since the TV documentary on this frame-up on 28 October 1985.

In this situation added pressure on the Home Office from strong campaigning for the framed prisoners will undoubtedly be crucial. If growing numbers of people and organisations from all walks of British life start to take an interest in these cases, that will surely be a danger signal to the British Government. For ever since the introduction of the PTA in 1974, the harassment and terrorising of the Irish community and the attacks on Sinn Fein in Britain, Irish people have felt very vulnerable and isolated in opposing British policy on Ireland. Allies amongst the British working class have been few.

This is no excuse however for the recent stance of the Federation of Irish Societies, who, in the *Irish Post* publicly endorsed Fr Denis Faul's call for the campaign on the innocent prisoners not to be a:

'dramatic, headline-grabbing one of marches, banners, rallies and sit-downs. No government will yield to this type of pressure, least of all the British Government.'

The reality is the exact opposite. The Government is acutely sensitive to such

pressure, as was shown by the successful and historic acquittal of Maire O'Shea in February of this year. The effect of the position of Fr Faul and the Federation is to narrow rather than broaden the appeal for potential support.

The Free the Guildford Four Campaign has sadly been called to an end in recent days, having begun to build a very successful body of support for the Guildford Four. It was wound up as a result of some of the relatives involved wanting to restrict the campaign to lobbying prominent individuals in Ireland and Britain. They have set up a new support committee with the Federation and members of the IBRG and the Catholic Church. The ISM and FRFI disagree with this approach, which, in line with the views of Fr Faul and the Federation, has excluded active campaigning work especially amongst the working class and has led to the effective exclusion of the very socialist organisations which were instrumental in forging the initial success of the campaign.

An enormous amount of support exists in the Irish working class community, the British left and sections of the trade union movement. The Free the Guildford Four Campaign began to tap that support. FRFI and the ISM will continue to campaign, in cooperation with anyone willing, to demand freedom for the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four.

Tony Sheridan

## IN BRIEF

### March for POWs

On 8 November 400 marched from Frankland jail to Durham jail demanding repatriation for Irish POWs. It was organised by the West of Scotland Bands Association, Irish POW Committee with the help of Clydeside Troops Out Movement, FRFI, Ireland's and the WRP. FRFI and ISC supporters attended from Scotland and Manchester. Through Newcastle's centre to march, led by prisoners' relatives, we to Frankland jail where four Irish POWs are incarcerated. Then on to Durham jail again via the City centre. At the prison, where Ella O'Dwyer, Martina Anderson and Judith Ward are held, prisoners' relatives stood at the prison door while Republican bands played. Speakers at the rally included Isobel Anderson who spoke of the ordeal of strip searching; Annmar Keenan for the Prisoners Relative Committee who stressed the importance of the demand for repatriation and Dave Temple of the NUM who drew parallels between state repression against the miners and the Irish people. All were agreed on the need for campaigning for the rights of Irish POWs. Demonstrations like this should be more frequent.

Gerry Martin and Graham Johnson

### Extradition

Following a 5 year legal fight, Irish Republican Liam Quinn was finally extradited to Britain on 21 October. The UK Courts whilst admitting that a 'political uprising' was taking place in the Six Counties refused to recognise Quinn's alleged offence as political on the spurious grounds that it took place in England rather than the Six Counties. Following this decision Quinn was effectively smuggled out of San Francisco on a British military aircraft. His family was not allowed even a farewell visit. He now faces the normal frame-up trial that Irish Republicans face in British courts. Increased co-operation of the extradition of Republicans, including a new Extradition Treaty, is Thatcher's reward for supporting Reagan's bombing of Libya.

Maxine Williams

### Frame-Up Fails

Three men walked free from the O'Connell Bailey in October after the juries in two separate trials refused to accept evidence based on the fabrications of a supergrass and his police masters. Thomas Maguire was acquitted of conspiracy to bomb a pub used by soldiers from the nearby Weeton army camp, Lancashire. The sole evidence against him was compiled by police with the aid of Maguire's 'supergrass' stepfather, a self-confessed liar.

Later in October, two other Irish men James Murray and Joseph Calvey were also acquitted of 'perverting the course of justice' and failing to disclose information under the PTA. The police failed to prove that they knew anything at all about the alleged plot to bomb the pub.

Marie Hughes

### Sinn Fein tour

The tour in October of Sinn Fein councillors around English councils caused predictable uproar. Mainly organised by the Labour Committee on Ireland, the tour came under ferocious attack from Tories, Liberals, SDP and, of course, from the just as anti-Irish Kinnockites. In Haringey and Hackney Tory and Liberal councillors, determined to deny Sinn Fein a voice, tried to wreck the meetings. In Haringey, Tories threw sugar and pillows, banged on desks with shoes and marched around. In Hackney, a Liberal councillor fired blank shots from a starting pistol. So much for the 'democratic' principles of these reactionaries.

Marie Hughes



**Red Alert by Judith Cook, 331pp, New English Library, £8.95 pbk.**

'Plutonium is an extremely potent cancer-producing agent appropriately named after Pluto, god of the dead and ruler of the underworld... radiation from man-made plutonium will exist for at least half a million years... there are no safe methods of disposal and storage available at this point in time.'

Judith Cook's book is about nuclear safety, or rather the lack of it.

One of the most stunning examples from the chapters dealing with nuclear waste, describes the event at Canonsburg, near Pittsburgh in the US. Here, 4,500 tons of waste from a uranium processing plant which shut down in 1960 was buried right beside the town. The land was eventually made into a local playing field. 22 boys out of a high school class of 385 died of cancer before their mid-20s. In one street there were 67 cases of cancer in 45 houses. One woman said 'Trees grew in a strange way and leaves were brown instead of green; paint wouldn't stay on door or window frames, and after rain, puddles turned vivid scarlet and purple one day, yellow and green the next.'

Nuclear power is always held up by its supporters to be cheap and safe. However, Judith Cook's catalogue of incidents at Britain's nuclear power stations tell a different story.

In Bradwell, Dungeness, Sizewell, Hinkley Point, Trawsfynydd, Heysham and Hartlepool reactors have had to be closed down because of cracks in their cooling systems, operating mistakes, weak concrete and welding. Each one of these could have developed into a major Chernobyl-style disaster with much greater consequences because of the more densely populated areas around them.

Cook dismisses the British government's pathetic preparations in case of nuclear accident. The instruction to GPs cited is laughable:

'They (the public) should be reassured that they are in no immediate danger and that the police will tell them if they need to take any action. If they are worried they can be told they should remain indoors with windows and doors shut if living within a few miles of the plant. Those caught outside should take simple decontamination measures to wash off any fallout, like taking a shower...'

Red Alert is well worth reading, both for those opposed to nuclear power and for those who remain unconvinced.

Olivia Adamson

# Trial and error

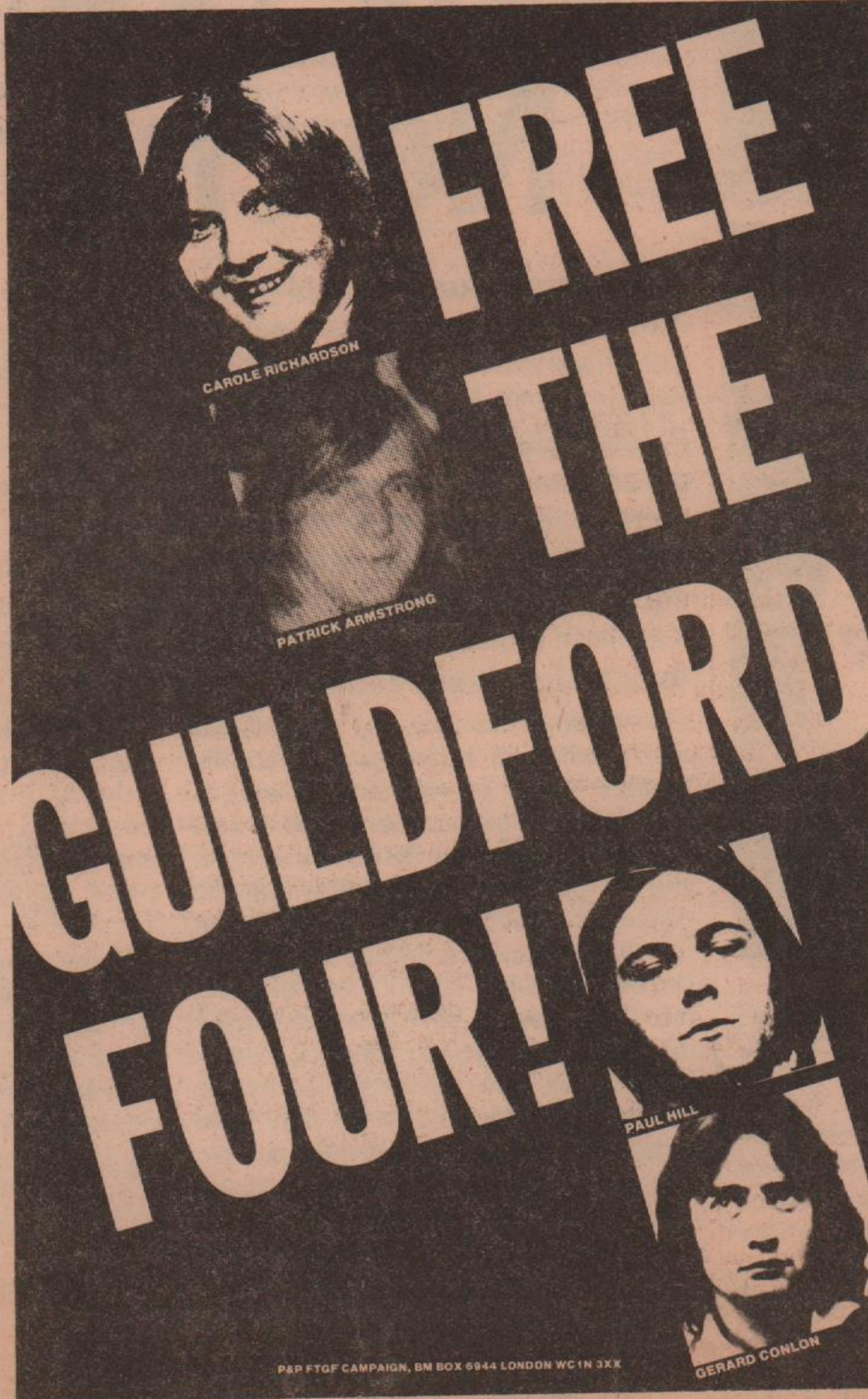
**Trial and Error by Robert Kee, Hamish Hamilton, 283pp, £10.95.**

Robert Kee's book is a full account of the process which led to the wrongful conviction and imprisonment of eleven people, most of them Irish, in two separate but connected trials in 1974. Four of those people are still in prison, serving life sentences which have no expected end in sight. They were convicted of carrying out the bombings of pubs in Guildford and Woolwich. The other seven, the Maguire family and a friend, were convicted on the strength of statements signed under duress by the Guildford Four.

Kee is able to refrain from what would be justifiable dramatism and denunciation because of the sheer weight of the evidence he presents that, firstly, the eleven people were wrongly convicted and, secondly, this injustice was knowingly perpetrated by key figures involved in the trial. Two of these key figures, Sir Michael Havers and Lord Chief Justice Donaldson, have now reached the highest positions in the country in their respective areas.

*Trial and Error* recounts the intimidation of witnesses, the disappearance and deliberate removal of all evidence which pointed to the eleven's innocence, and shows how at the end of this process, the summings up of the trial judge, Donaldson, delivered the coup de grace to any hope of an informed and free decision by the juries. These summings up, large parts of which are reproduced in the book, are a standing indictment of Donaldson's determined bid for a guilty verdict in both trials. Donaldson insisted on presiding over both trials, insisting that they were not connected. In fact, the Maguire Seven were only detained and charged as a result of statements incriminating Mrs Maguire which were made, or rather signed, by her nephew and one other convicted in the Guildford case. The convictions of these four were crucial in securing convictions in the Maguire trial where the defendants, despite threats and blows, did not make any admissions of guilt.

The manner in which the convictions of the Guildford Four were obtained—through psychological and physical brutality—is therefore



crucial. Kee describes all four as young, without friends or influence, and three at least of them as being involved in petty crime and drug-taking because of their insecure existence. The only evidence against them was their own signed statements, all of which contradicted one another on points of fact—except for the main fact of 'admitting' to having carried out the bombings.

Importantly, Kee pays tribute to Alistair Logan, the defence solicitor for Paddy Armstrong in the Guildford case. He has been one of the main forces pushing for the reopening of the case and it is mainly his work which has amassed the volume

of evidence and uncovered new evidence and loopholes in the prosecution.

It can only be seen as a tragedy that the work done by Alistair Logan and others in getting this publicity stands vulnerable to being crushed by the official inaction and cowardice in pursuing the issue.

As Alistair Logan said at a public meeting on the case earlier this year, the truth is not capable of itself of bursting through the concrete cover-up which has been deliberately maintained. It can only be broken by the organisation of all those forces who have an interest in seeing justice done.



Defence solicitor Alistair Logan

The current publicity is testimony to the work maintained over the years by those like the Prisoners Aid Committee (now defunct) and by the RCG in keeping the issue alive.

Rather than rest on the mere fact of the truth being exposed, now is the time to strike home with the most vigorous campaign possible.

Maggie Mellon

**The CIA: A forgotten history. William Blum. Zed Press. £8.95 pb. 428pp.**

Well researched and written account of US involvement in wars, destabilisation and destruction in over 49 countries since 1945.

**The Irish hungerstrike. Tom Collins. White Island Press. £6.95 pb. 626pp.**

Committed, moving and very detailed account of the individual histories of the ten hunger strikers who died in 1981. Very limited availability now although there may be a reprint. Larkin Publications have a few copies (add £1.40 p&p).

**Squatters Handbook. Advisory Service for Squatters. 50p.**

Essential handbook for anyone forced to squat to find somewhere to live. Explains all relevant laws, rights and welfare benefits.

**Death and Disorder. Tony Ward. Inquest. £1.75 pb.**

Deals with the deaths of Kevin Gately, Blair Peach and Cynthia Jarrett to show the reality of 'public order' policing: people get killed. Very important in the context of the new Public Order Act.

**A Savage Enquiry - Who controls childbirth? Wendy Savage. Virago, 189pp, £2.95 pbk.**

'Pregnancy is not an illness... women need help to achieve the kind of birth they want...' (p177)

Seventeen months after her suspension for alleged incompetence from the London Hospital on 24 April 1985 Wendy Savage, consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist, is back at work. Now the same people who brought about her suspension, led by Professor Geddis Grudzinskas, are trying to stop her from resuming her teaching duties.

In her book Wendy Savage tells the story of her suspension and fight back. It is written like a diary, with details of her career and the experiences which led to her views on the care of women and childbirth.

Wendy has always worked in the poorest parts of London, particularly Tower Hamlets... one of the most deprived areas in the country. Half of all households live below the official poverty line... it has the highest proportion of single old people, of children in care, the highest rate of tuberculosis and of infant mortality. She has never taken on private patients. A high percentage of the women Wendy Savage cares for are black and Asians and nearly half the babies born annually in Tower Hamlets are to Bengali women. One of her concerns has been to provide interpreters for the women who can't speak English.

It is not surprising that the mainly white, male traditionalists of the department of obstetrics and gynaecology would be hostile. There were lies and rumours spread by doctors she had worked with for 15 and 20 years: '... personal smears passed on in conversation by some of the most senior people in medicine and accepted unquestioned by others as evidence for the prosecution in the court of gossip...'

Then followed the attack on her abilities as a teacher and doctor, accusations of 'mental instability' and failure to communicate with junior doctors.

But within 48 hours of her suspension local GPs and midwives gathered to form a committee which was the basis for the Wendy Savage Support Group and 68 of the 83 GPs in Tower Hamlets signed that first rushed petition which the GP Committee presented to the Chairman of the District Health Authority. Women petitioned in the local markets and marched on demonstrations demanding her reinstatement. The campaign, and Wendy Savage's years of dedicated and good care, won. An inspiration for the battles to come.

Auriel Fermo



## UNDERSTANDING MARXISM

### Marx's Critique of Political Economy

#### 7 THE FALLING RATE OF PROFIT

So far we have examined the capitalist system through an analysis of what Marx called its 'invisible and unknown essence'. Surplus value and the rate of surplus value appear to us in the form of profit and the rate of profit. Surplus value and profit are actually the same thing and numerically equal. While the rate of profit, the ratio of surplus value produced to the total capital invested ( $s/c + v$ ), differs numerically from the rate of surplus value, the ratio of surplus value to variable capital alone ( $s/v$ ), nevertheless profit is a converted form of surplus value,

'a form in which its origin and the secret of its existence are obscured and extinguished. In ef-

fect, profit is the form in which surplus value presents itself to view, and must be initially stripped by analysis to disclose the latter.' (*Capital* Vol III)

Under capitalist conditions of production natural resources are only utilised, the social productivity of labour only developed, labour is only employed if it serves the expansion of capital, that is, returns the capital invested with a profit. A crisis of the capitalist system begins when the rate of profit on investment falls too low. Capitalists rapidly cut back their investments in industry, unemployment grows and living standards fall. The present crisis of world capitalism is essentially a crisis of profitability. The rate of profit for industrial and commercial companies (excluding North Sea Oil) in Britain, for example, fell from over 13 per cent in 1960 to a low point of just over 3 per cent in 1981. The Thatcher government's assault on the working class through massive unemployment and cut-backs in the growth of state spend-

ing has, however, started to reverse this fall and profit rates have recently reached 8½ per cent, the highest level since 1973 but still well below the 1960s level.

That there is an inherent tendency for the rate of profit to fall as capital accumulation takes place was regarded by Marx 'as the most important law of modern political economy'. This tendency of the rate of profit to fall is an expression of the contradictory nature of the capital accumulation process.

The aim of the capitalist is to make the largest amount of profit possible with a given amount of wealth produced by the workers employed. To do this, and survive in the face of other competitors, the capitalist has to continually raise the productivity of labour through investment in labour-saving machinery. More and more capital has to be invested in machinery, raw materials etc relative to that paid out as wages for workers. There will be a rise in the organic composition of capital ( $c/v$ ). If the rate of exploitation, that is the rate of surplus value ( $s/v$ ), remained the same, there would be a fall in the rate of profit. This is because profits only arise from the exploitation of workers; for it is only the variable part of capital that yields surplus value (profits), while the rate of profit is measured on total investments, that is on both constant and variable capital.

The law, however, does not ex-

press itself in absolute form. Since the increase in the organic composition of capital represents an increase in the social productivity of labour, the rate of surplus value will not remain constant but will be increased because the value of the mass of products constituting the equivalent of the workers' means of subsistence, the necessary labour-time, is cheapened.

'The tendency of the rate of profit to fall is bound up with a tendency of the rate of surplus value to rise, hence with a tendency of labour exploitation to rise... Both the rise in the rate of surplus value and the fall in the rate of profit are but specific forms through which growing productivity of labour is expressed under capitalism.' (*Capital* Vol III)

However, the tendency, inherent in the accumulation process, for the rate of surplus value to rise cannot prevent the fall in the rate of profit. With the rise of the organic composition of capital fewer workers are employed by a given amount of capital. And, as Marx argues, 'the compensation of the reduction of labourers by means of an increase of exploitation has certain insurmountable limits'. Those limits are physical and social ones.

'Two labourers, each working 12 hours daily, cannot produce the

same mass of surplus value as 24 who work only 2 hours, even if they could live on air and hence did not have to work for themselves at all' (*Capital* Vol III)

Although Marx has not said what the surplus labour time of the 24 labourers is, the point being made is clear. While the means of production per worker employed has no limits theoretically the mass of surplus value produced by a worker has an impassable limit—namely the duration of the working day. Further, as capitalism develops it becomes increasingly more difficult to shorten the necessary labour time by an increase in productivity. The larger the surplus value produced, or the smaller the fractional part of the working day which expresses necessary labour, before the increase in productivity, the smaller is the increase in surplus value which capital obtains from a further increase in productivity. The tendency of the rate of profit to fall is an expression of the increasing difficulty in raising the rate of exploitation sufficiently in order to satisfy the self-expansion requirements of capital as capitalism progresses.

The accumulation of capital therefore involves a rise in the organic composition of capital, a rise in the productivity of labour and a relative decrease (an absolute increase) in the labour employed. These express themselves in a tendency of the rate

of profit to fall, although the mass of profits or surplus value increases and the rate of exploitation increases. The rate of profit falls not because labour becomes less productive, but because it becomes more productive, not because the worker is less exploited but because the worker is more exploited. Nothing more clearly expresses the revolutionary implications of Marx's analysis of capitalism.

Besides the imminent tendency within the accumulation process to check the tendency of the rate of profit to fall by a rise in the rate of exploitation, there are a number of other counteracting tendencies which can apply temporarily. Marx lists the following: the increase in the rate of surplus value by lengthening the working day, or intensification of labour; the pushing down of wages below their value—an attack on the living standards of the working class; cheapening of the elements of constant capital; and foreign trade. Finally it should be said here that imperialism, through the export of capital to oppressed nations where the organic composition of capital is low, wages are low and people are brutally exploited under the yoke of viciously repressive regimes, gives rise to massive super profits, which can hold in check the fall in the rate of profit in the imperialist countries themselves.

David Reid



## Irish POWs face extradition

Dear FRFI,  
As you will see by the address I am now in Amsterdam and Bik (Brendan MacFarlane) is in Maastricht. It was an improvement for me but an equal worsening in Bik's situation of course. The restrictions remain but the atmosphere is more relaxed. It may not be for too long anyway.

You'll probably know our situation roughly but the reports on the Supreme Court decision were mostly erroneous in certain points. I cannot be extradited on the original 1973 charges and out of the 20 escape charges I can be extradited on one charge of attempted murder and seven charges of illegal imprisonment of screws (7 screws). Although the latter appear like minor charges they hold a maximum sentence of 'life'. In Bik's case he can only be

extradited on the 7 illegal imprisonment charges (not attempted murder) but can be returned to continue the 5 life sentences on his original case. (This was reported wrong in the press). The 'political exemption' was dismissed in the escape charges - something to do with the goal being too far in the future! In the 1973 charges they did not have to deal with it as they found another method (deliberately I imagine). They did take the surprise step of producing a letter for the Dutch Justice Minister in which they requested him to get firm guarantees off the Brit Home Secretary to do with our safety in 6 County jails. They said they (the Supreme Court) were worried about harsh treatment. They also mentioned the 'Davison case' and assumed that the Brits would stick by treaty agreement. Davison was extradited from Germany on certain charges in '77 (I think) but was charged with other

## Leeds Labour and 'left' censors VMDC

Dear FRFI,  
The ruling class has always tried to silence or censor communists and progressives. Its allies in the working class movement try and do the same - the Labour Party expels and censors Militant and Black Sections; the AAM tries to silence City AA and other minority trends. The politics of censorship is also alive and kicking in Leeds.

FRFI supporters in Leeds recently organised a public meeting for Viraj Mendis. Over 200 posters were painted over by council workers on instruction from the Labour controlled Leeds City Council. All posters from progressive and socialist organisations have suffered the same fate over the last year. During the Council's own week of action against apartheid even posters from the local AA Group were blotted out. Using its policy of painting out all posters the council is actually censoring progressive political activity. Racist graffiti however is left untouched and it is forces like Anti-Fascist Action who have cleaned up

this filth. FRFI will support the forthcoming delegation to the Council by the AFA to point out the hypocrisy of the Council's actions.

To further publicise the Viraj Mendis meeting, FRFI approached the Publicity Officer of Leeds University Union. It has always been the union's policy to put up several posters from non-student organisations. Paul Braman of Leeds University Union Executive, and member of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, intervened to rip down 2 posters. Waving his fist he mumbled something about bye-laws and told FRFI comrades to leave the building.

Finally, in Wakefield, where Leeds FRFI supporters often go, we were handing out leaflets for the Viraj meeting on an anti-apartheid demonstration. 'You must be fucking joking, get out of my way' was the welcome we received from Clive Haswell of the Sheffield Anti-Apartheid Group. This man then proceeded to give a speech professing how much he was opposed to racism.

The local representatives of the British labour movement continue its traditions - censorship, arrogance, attacks on democracy, sectarianism and racism. **Gordon**

## Protest saves creche

Dear FRFI,  
5 November one usually associates with bonfires and fireworks. Well, we employees of Salford Area Health Authority let off our own fireworks. Two coaches, every seat filled with NUPE and COHSE members from Prestwich Hospital, set off for Peel House where the Salford Area Health Authority work and make their wonderful decisions. These so-called decisions are in line with what the Government wishes and that wish, my friends is to cripple the National Health Service and privatise.

We went to make our voices heard on two issues. Firstly, the closure of Prestwich Hospital, selling it and the land it stands on, the plan being to have a leisure centre and hypermarket, this of course would take three to five years to achieve. Also, next June, they propose to close the hospital creche, thereby rendering many nurses unable to work because they would have to stay home to look after the children.

We all went into this big conference room and stood round the table where the official sat and I can tell you the atmosphere was one of extreme anger. Posters and placards were everywhere and every space in the room was filled with people ready to make their point. I don't think the officials expected so many people but I can tell you to some degree it worked, which goes to prove if only people would stick together and protest as we did, this country could win against our oppressors. We didn't of course settle everything but the creche is not closing. Dr Beswick says he wants a panel of three people from the creche to meet with officials and discuss ways of changing the running of the creche. This could I suppose, mean higher fees, but if this is so we will cross that bridge when we come to it. But the nursery is not closing and only a fortnight ago the mothers and nursery nurses received a letter to say it was closing next June.

The determination was amazing. Those mothers were prepared to sit

in if necessary to prevent their creche being taken off them and the kitchen staff would have fed them. As to the sell off of the hospital the following happened. Dr Beswick said that the patients would be rehoused in the community in small groups with nurses and staff to look after them. This is ridiculous and we told him so. Many of our patients have been in Prestwich since before motor cars and the idea of coming out scares them to death. A lot of them would probably commit suicide. Also I told Dr Beswick that elderly, demented patients, very confused, incontinent, sometimes aggressive, need to be in a hospital.

Of course, with modern drugs, a lot of new and younger patients can live in the community but for those who can't we should be looking to improve our hospitals. For instance build smaller wards, make it cosy and homely instead of large cold Victorian style wards. The staff are very demoralised and fed up with this totally unsatisfactory way of handling people. Also Dr Beswick was asked why does he do what the government says when he knows it is wrong. (At this point I said to myself if Mrs Thatcher said jump in the Irwell river he would do so. I kept the thought to myself however.)

Dr Beswick said SAHA have carried out the government's orders and the waiting lists for hospitals are very long so we are now in a good strong position for bargaining. How naive can you get? The government could not care less for anyone, sick or healthy. All they care about is their capitalistic gains because if this isn't so, why did they propose a sell off like this in the first place. The meeting was good. We did achieve something and we will go again when the time comes but in bigger numbers next time. COHSE and NUPE joining together. Here is something amusing to end my letter. We were asked at the end of the meeting, are you happy now and we answered in one voice 'No'. They were so taken aback they thought we should be happy, but all of us at Prestwich are not being sweet talked into anything. We are determined to see it through. **S Bailey**  
Nursing Assistant  
Prestwich Hospital

offences. His case went to appeal where the judges said that Brit law superseded the international treaty.

Anyway, to me obviously such 'guarantees' become meaningless once they have us, but it is a slap in the face for the Brits. If they give guarantees they admit harsh treatment so they will not be pleased. Neither will they be amused at the limitation on charges imposed. In their usual vindictive way they have charged every single person they can identify with the escape with every single possible charge! The eventual trial should be interesting if nothing else. The lawyer has said he believes there will be protracted negotiations between the Brit and Dutch governments over guarantees that may last months. I think it will be more like weeks with guarantees quietly given.

## Control units

Dear FRFI

I found 'Island in Chains' very good reading. I stayed up all night reading it. Going back to FRFI, I would like to say this prison (Wakefield) as well as Frankland and Albany are using control units in everything but the name. They put one of the lads in an empty cell the other day with only a pot to urinate in. The screws refused the lad water to have a wash or any books. I pulled the governor and he said it was nothing to do with me. After I had spoken to the governor they gave the lad some water to wash.

The screws here have been trying to stop us speaking. When we are talking to each other at night they will come banging on our doors telling us to be quiet. When we blank them they turn on the fans so we can't hear each other. We cannot stand still talking on the exercise yard to the people in their cells. We have to keep moving round the yard or they bring us in. Just like Frankland, the screws check our bars and bolts every night, the bells go at 6.15am and the screws make as much noise as they can. Nobody is allowed to go to church from down the block so most of the lads on the wing don't know what's going on down here.

I am going to sign off here. Thanks again for the book. Please send my good wishes to the non-stop picket and keep up the good work.

**John Schofield**  
F Wing, Wakefield Prison

## Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign

The campaign is organising a National Demonstration on Saturday 10 January 1987 to mark the beginning of the trials of those charged with the killing of PC Blakelock. Further details to be announced.

There is no limit on the time the Justice Minister takes. The whole case took bizarre twists and turns but it's too long to go into more detail, and the result remains the same. It's a bit like internment now - waiting, without knowing a day. No problem though. We'll see how things develop.

Nothing much to say about day to day things. I'm in good spirits and health. Spend most of the time reading papers or writing letters. I'm sort've glad the whole thing is coming to an end even though the end is not pleasant. I will be a remand prisoner again. ha! Well, another experience I suppose.

Yours in struggle  
**Gerry Kelly**  
Irish POW  
Amsterdam Jail

## FRFI FUND DRIVE

The October Fund Drive raised £525. This is just over the £500 we need every month to subsidise the unwaged rate of FRFI. Again, the bulk of this was raised by the collective effort of our FRFI Supporter Groups around the country and only £20 received from individual readers.

Have YOU thought about giving money to FRFI? If you support the political stand we take, don't just think about it, do it. No matter how much, it all adds up. We use it to produce a paper which for once tells people the truth about what is going on. We use it to help build a movement able to fight for the interests of the oppressed. Help us in the fightback. Make a regular pledge. Join one of our supporter groups to raise money collectively. Or send us a one-off donation.

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Special offer... treat yourself and your friends to the single 'We are here till Mandela is free' and the cassette of 4 songs of the 'Long march from Manchester to London, July 1986' for the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign.

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**MANCHESTER**  
Public Meeting  
Close Down the Racist  
South African Embassy!  
Sanctions Now!

Support the Non-Stop Picket!  
with FRFI video 'Non-Stop for Mandela'  
Speaker from the Non-Stop Picket  
Thursday 27 November, 7.00pm  
Longsight Library, Stockport Road,  
Manchester  
Organised by Manchester FRFI

**LIVERPOOL**  
Public Meeting

Britain out of apartheid!  
Sanctions now!  
Close down the apartheid embassy!  
with FRFI video 'Non-Stop for Mandela'  
Speaker from the Non-Stop Picket  
Wednesday 26 November, 7.30pm  
AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool  
Called by Liverpool FRFI

**LONDON**

**FRFI Forums on Ireland**  
Series of monthly forums on the political situation in Ireland  
Next one:  
**From civil rights to national liberation struggle**  
Friday 5 December, 7.30pm  
Camden Irish Centre, Murray Street,  
London NW1 (off Camden Road, nearest tube Camden Town)  
Organised by London FRFI

**Support Viraj Mendis!**  
**Picket the Home Office!**  
**No Deportations!**  
**Viraj Mendis must stay!**  
Every Friday lunchtime, 1-2pm  
Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate,  
London SW1 (nearest tube St James' Park)  
Organised by Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign, London Support Group

## LETTERS

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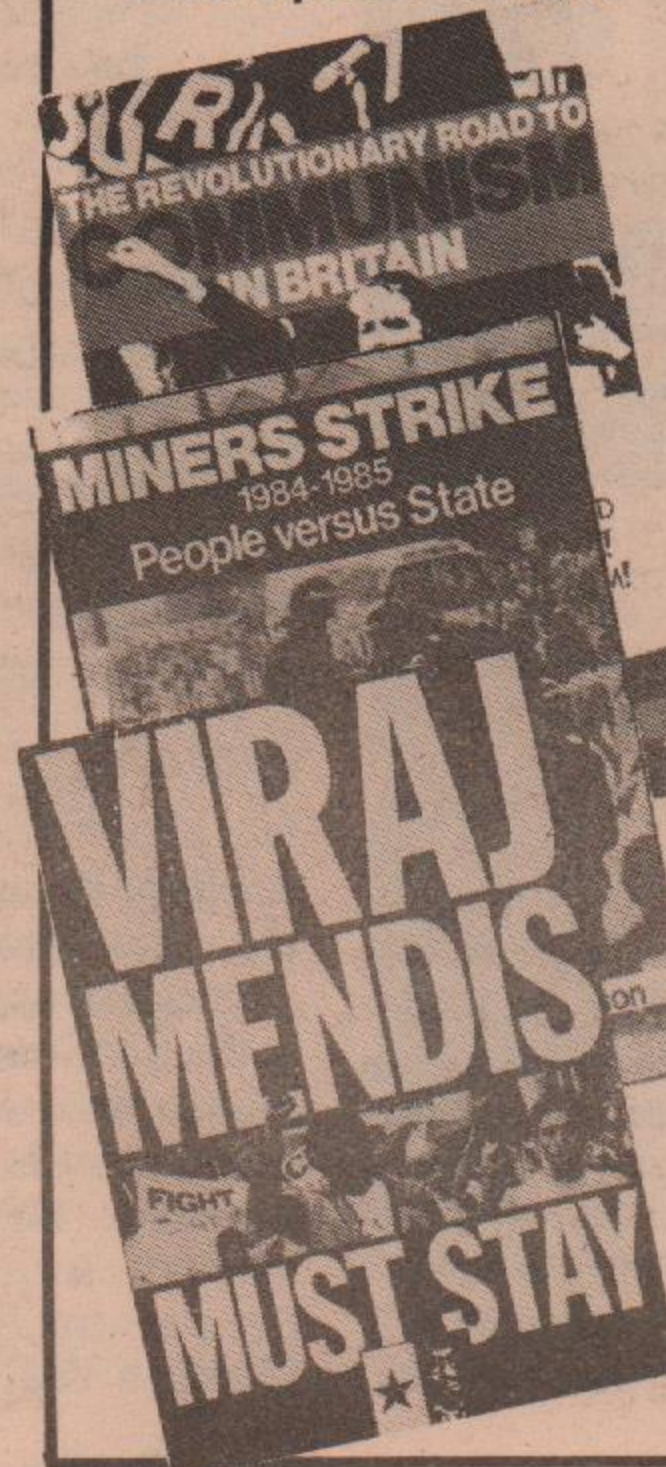
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**The revolutionary road to communism in Britain (Manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist Group)** 175pp. £1.50. (30p p&p)

**South Africa: Britain out of Apartheid! Apartheid out of Britain!** by Carol Brickley, Terry O'Halloran and David Reed. 64pp. 95p (30p p&p).

**Viraj Mendis Must Stay!** Published by VMDC (edited by Terry O'Halloran). 32pp. 75p (30p p&p).

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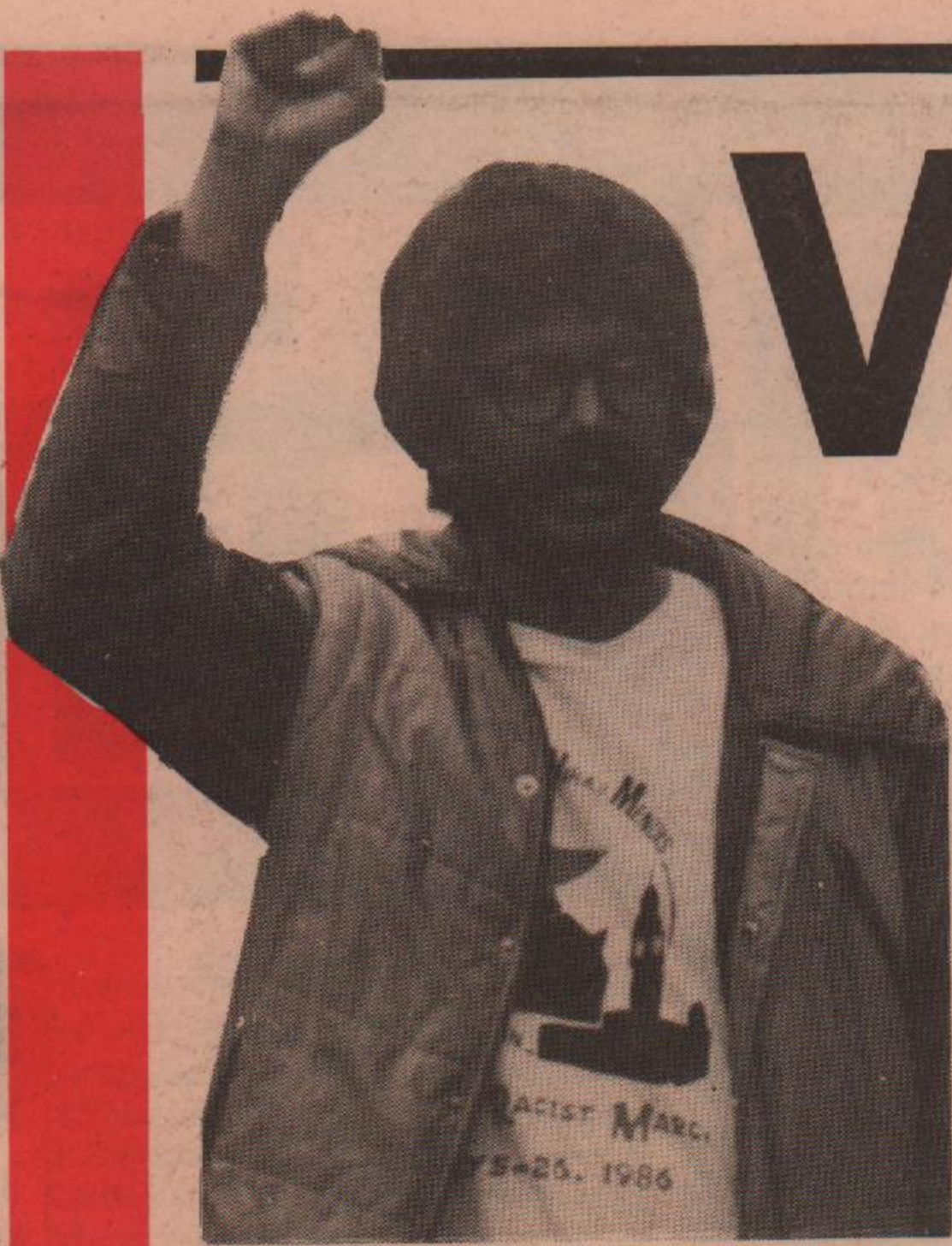
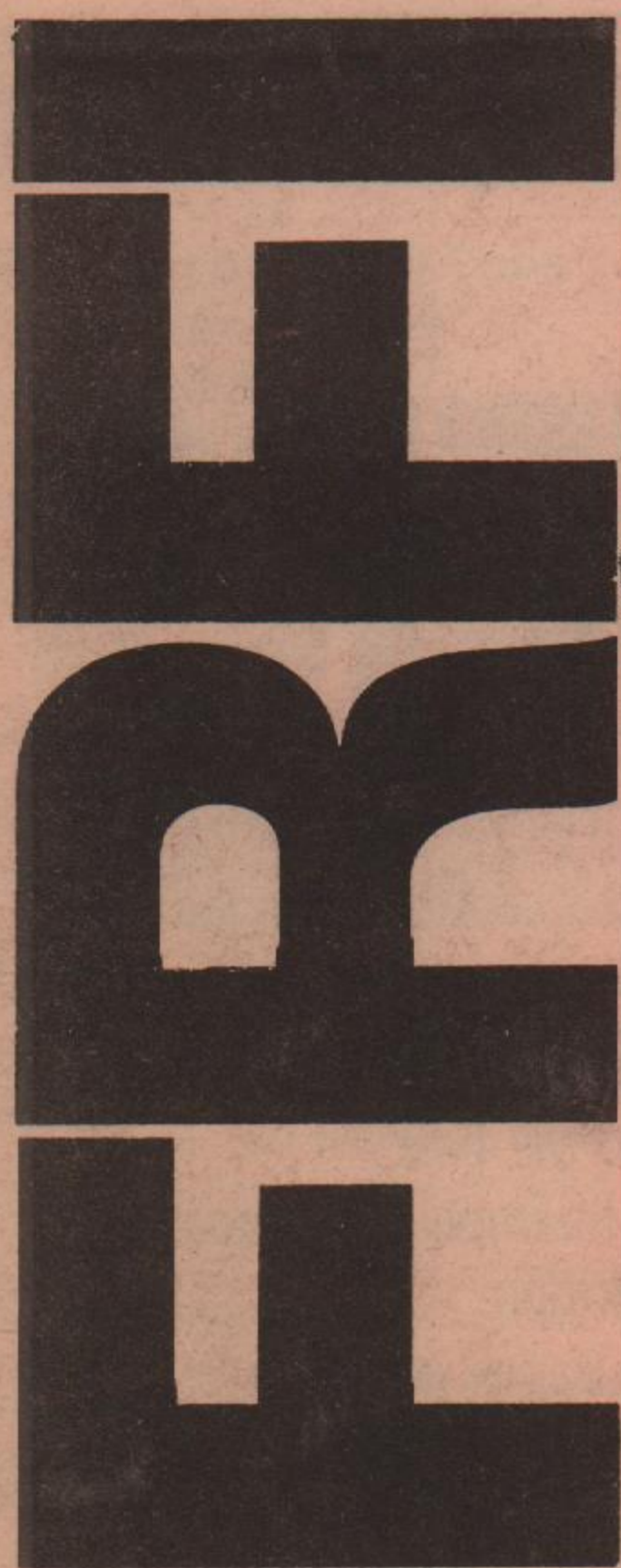
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# VIRAJ MENDIS MUST STAY

After 2¼ years, the campaign to stop the deportation of FRFI supporter Viraj Mendis to Sri Lanka has assumed national significance. All over the country anti-racists are looking to the final decision on Viraj's case and working towards his victory. To demobilise this work, the Home Office is playing a cat-and-mouse game refusing to give any indication of when Immigration Minister Waddington will meet Viraj's MP Bob Litherland to decide our comrade's fate.

VMDC pamphlet launch in Manchester. The London Support Group meanwhile has increased its network of activists by regular street events and now the Friday lunchtime protests outside the Home Office. CPSA members working there have joined the protests and have issued a press statement expressing solidarity with Viraj. In addition, a new support group has been formed in the Northeast.

## STOP PRESS

Manda Kunda, who faces deportation to Zambia, thereby losing custody of her three children, was told by the Home Office that being allowed to stay was conditional on her getting a work permit. The Department of Employment has refused her a permit saying it is conditional on her right to stay!

Please right in protest to David Waddington, Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1.

The VMDC has responded in the last month by stepping up the pressure. A nationwide postcard campaign has been launched to bombard the Home Office with messages supporting Viraj. Hundreds of these have already been sent. Postmen and sorting offices from Dundee to Brighton are now handling these cards. In the coming weeks thousands more have to land on Waddington's desk.

In the past four weeks Viraj has travelled round the country speaking to dozens of meetings organised by Benwell Law Centre, Bradford University, Coventry Anti-Racist Action Group, Glasgow FRFI, Immigration Wives and Fiances (Manchester), Lancaster University, Leeds FRFI, Leyton Sikh Temple (London), London VMDC Support Group, Mashadimirza Family Support Group, Newcastle CPSA, Durham Mechanics, Workers Against Racism (Birmingham) and a

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# Ard Fheis 1986-Sinn Fein drops abstentionism

In a significant decision this year's Sinn Fein Ard Fheis reversed the Republican Movement's long-held policy of opposition to taking seats in the Dail (Twenty Six Counties Parliament). After lengthy debate the Ard Fheis vote was 429-161, 10 more than the two thirds majority needed to reverse the abstentionist policy. The vote was followed by a walk out by about 40 delegates led by Ruairi O Bradaigh, a former Sinn Fein President, who later announced the setting up of a new organisation 'Republican Sinn Fein'. Earlier Gerry Adams had strongly appealed to the delegates not to walk out but to remain united. He pointed out the danger of a walk-out being used by British assassination squads as an opportunity to kill Republicans and blame it on 'internal feuding'.

poor, the youth - do not bother to vote and have no illusions in the Dail or the institutions of the state. Those who do have the illusions are those who presumably have a stake in Twenty Six County society. How will Sinn Fein appeal to these sections electorally whilst simultaneously retaining its anti-imperialist programme? Would not the attainment of significant electoral support in present conditions require a turn to 'respectability' with all that this entails? Moreover, given the reactionary character of the Twenty Six Counties state, even a struggle on a bread and butter issue, if it achieved significant support from the people of no property, would almost inevitably come into conflict with the institutions of the state - the garda, the Army. What would Sinn Fein's attitude to this be?

Perhaps some of those who successfully argued for a reversal of Sinn Fein's 'woman's right to choose' position on abortion were already calculating the electoral liability of such a policy. Last year's Ard Fheis had courageously backed a progressive policy on abortion. This year the Ard Fheis voted against this policy despite many cogent arguments from Republican women about the necessity of the right to abortion. Sinn Fein's policy is now that women can only have abortion when their lives are at risk. One speaker argued that the 'women's right to choose' policy had given 'a propaganda present to our political enemies'; another said that Sinn Fein election canvassers had been attacked because of the policy. There is no doubt that Sinn Fein's enemies would have used a progressive and non-sectarian (ie non-Catholic) policy on abortion against them. But equally they will use Sinn Fein's defence of the armed struggle as a weapon to drive voters away. Once it seriously contests elections in the South Sinn Fein will face far greater pressure than it has so far faced from reactionaries in the South.

The collaborators in the Twenty Six Counties and their imperialist masters fear above all else the linking together by the Republican Movement of the growing social unrest in the South with the national struggle at present being waged in the Six Counties. They recognise that it is through this explosive combination that British imperialism will be defeated. This year's Ard Fheis has made the issue of the Twenty Six Counties a central one. Maxine Williams

## Public appeal

The campaign's nationwide profile was emphasised when scores of people responded to the Public Appeal in the *Guardian* on 14 October, expressing support and offering financial assistance. Incensed, the Sri Lankan High Commission wrote to all MEPs who had signed the appeal saying they had been duped! As if to refute the High Commission, Sri Lankan fascists responded by phoning the VMDC with statements such as 'Viraj Mendis is a killer and a terrorist. He should be punished in his own country.' Granada TV's *World in Action* also responded to the *Guardian* appeal, but eventually decided not to make a programme on the grounds that 'to be brutally frank, a communist being deported to Sri Lanka is unlikely to win much public sympathy.'

The work of the campaign is clearly refuting such views. The VMDC has over 30,000 names to its petition and is already reprinting its pamphlet on Viraj's case which has nearly sold out.

## Prepare to demonstrate

The VMDC is planning a national demonstration in Manchester on the Saturday before the Bob Litherland meeting. We ask all our supporters to keep in touch, to mobilise maximum support and be ready to come to Manchester as soon as we find out the date of the meeting.

For information, leaflets, posters, pamphlets and postcards contact VMDC, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5AL or phone 061-234-3168. The London Support Group can be contacted at BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX or phone 01-837 1688.

Chris Procter and Virman Man

## Northeast speaking tour

With the assistance of the WRP (Workers Press) Viraj did a successful speaking tour of the Northeast. Newcastle CPSA pledged to ask each of its 10,000 members to write to Waddington. The Durham Mechanics donated £40 and pledged to raise the issue at the NUM executive. The Benwell Law Centre, together with others agreed to organise a coach for the VMDC demonstration in Manchester. Viraj also spoke at meetings of UCATT, Justice for Mineworkers, Unemployed Forum and Durham AA Group. As a result of the tour a new support group has been established and can be contacted at VMDC, c/o Gateshead Law Centre, 13 Walker Terrace, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.

## Norman Willis refuses to sign VMDC petition

On 8 November, Viraj spoke at the 500 strong Manchester AA demonstration. Other speakers included the ANC, SWAPO and Norman Willis of the TUC. In his speech Viraj appealed to everyone, including Willis, to fight against racism in Britain and sign his petition. When he asked Willis to do so, Willis refused saying he didn't sign petitions!



'We also have a duty to represent our people outside the war zone in matters affecting their daily lives even while partition remains.'

Few contributions took up the question of how this struggle on everyday issues in the South was to be connected with the fight to drive British imperialism out of Ireland and defeat its local agents. Yet this is likely to be a central issue facing the Republican Movement in the period ahead.

Taking seats in bourgeois parliaments is, in general, seen by revolutionaries as a tactical question. Despite its unique

history Ireland is no exception to this. However the Ard Fheis decision will raise many new questions and problems for the Republican Movement and its supporters. For example, does the Republican Movement believe that it can eventually attain power through the bourgeois democratic process rather than the revolutionary mobilisation of the oppressed and working class? From which section of the population does Sinn Fein aim to gain its electoral support? While many delegates said that abstentionism was 'out of step' with popular thinking it is also true that a growing section of the population - the

It is not surprising that strong feelings were generated by the debate. Abstentionism has long been held to be a principle central to the Republican Movement. Indeed in 1969 this was a major issue in the split between the Official and Provisional IRA. It was on such historical grounds that many of those opposing an end to abstentionism based their arguments at the 1986 Ard Fheis. Ruairi O Bradaigh, for example, declared abstentionism to be a principle which was 'inalienable, immutable and absolute'. To abandon it was seen by this section as a betrayal of Republican ideals and as running the risk of corruption. This section pointed out that every previous movement which has entered the Dail has abandoned its opposition to partition and imperialism. They could cite Fianna Fail in the 1920s, Clann na Poblachta in the 1940s and the Officials (now the Workers Party) in 1969. Against this the Sinn Fein leadership (with the support of the recent IRA Convention as well as many letters from Irish POWs) argued that what was at stake was a tactic and not a principle. Gerry Adams argued that as the majority of people in the South recognised the legitimacy of the Dail then Republicans were isolating themselves by abstention:

'... our struggle ... cannot be built merely on the republican perception of things. We have had to consistently pitch our struggle at the level of people's understanding.'

In order to break out of its isolation Sinn Fein had to campaign politically in the South and get:

'... among people in the basic ways which the people accept.'

The view that popular political struggle in the South consists of everyday 'bread and butter issues' was common amongst anti-abstentionists writing to *An Phoblacht/Republican News*. Irish POW Gerry Kelly, writing from prison in Amsterdam, expressed this view:

REPUBLICAN NEWS