

# FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Anti-imperialist paper of the Revolutionary Communist Group

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*'I will not voluntarily return to my death in Sri Lanka'*

## Viraj Mendis in sanctuary

### Final appeal turned down

Viraj Mendis' final appeal against deportation has been rejected. Viraj Mendis is now threatened with death in Sri Lanka. On 20 December he went into sanctuary in the Church of the Ascension, Hulme, Manchester.

From the steps of the church Viraj told the 500-strong emergency demonstration:

'I will not voluntarily return to my death in Sri Lanka.'

'David Waddington is determined to send me to my death in Sri Lanka. I am determined to continue fighting. I have no alternative but to take public refuge. The Church of the Ascension here in Hulme fully supports my decision and is giving me sanctuary. At the same time my lawyers are starting judicial review proceedings.'

'The campaign is at a higher level than ever before. Waddington must be forced to reverse his decision or resign. It is time for the leadership of the Labour Party and the Alliance to openly support me. In order to succeed, the activities of the campaign must intensify. I appeal to all organisations and individuals to rise to that challenge.'

Viraj Mendis is a black communist who has fought to defend his own rights and those of all people facing oppression. The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign has fought for 2½ years, winning support from a wide range of organisations and individuals. The VMDC has established itself as one of the most organised and politically effective anti-deportation campaigns. Waddington wants to defeat Viraj in order to deter everyone else from resisting his racist immigration controls. Defeat for Viraj would not only mean his life, it would be a very serious defeat for all anti-deportation campaigners.

Viraj Mendis is a supporter of the RCG, part of the left and progressive movement in Britain. If the Home Office succeeds in its plot to have Viraj killed in Sri Lanka, it will be a very serious defeat for the whole left and progressive movement in Britain.

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### The Irangate scandal

## Reagan unmasked

Ronald Reagan and the CIA command the biggest terror network in history. The hands that shipped weapons to Iran and money to the contras, the 'Irangate' scandal, are the hands that orchestrated wholesale slaughter from El Salvador to Lebanon, financed mercenary gangs from Kampuchea to Angola. Their fingerprints are on the doors of the cathedral in San Salvador where Archbishop Romero was slain, they are there on the gates to Sabra and Chatila.

US imperialism's guilt, like the President's compulsion to lie, is unquestionable, but why did Reagan's gang devise such a contrived plot to sell arms through Israel to Iran, and then recycle the income through a Swiss bank to the contras? Why, when he has been doing this sort of thing for years, does the US ruling class now turn on its great crusader?

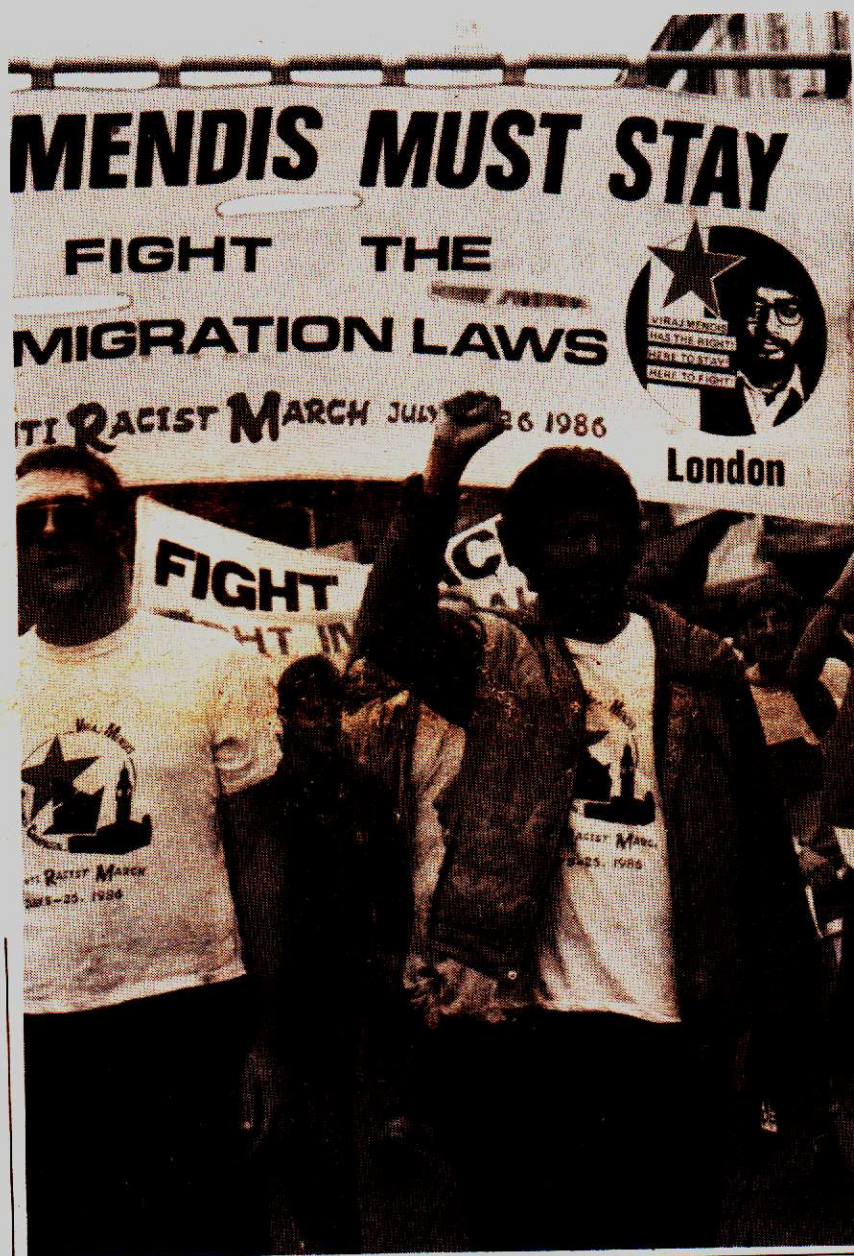
Reagan's global counter-revolutionary offensive has stalled, unable to achieve more than the pathetic victory over Grenada and facing the prospects of serious setbacks in the Philippines, Haiti and Latin America. To retain its credibility Reagan's policy badly needed a new success. The April attack on Libya produced nothing. Only Nicaragua, Reagan's chosen proving ground, could provide the administration with what it needed. But Nicaragua can only be taken with the outright use of US forces. The US ruling class is united in

the objective of destroying the Nicaraguan revolution, but divided over tactics. Reagan's crusade was in danger of running out of control, threatening to precipitate a crisis in the US ruling class. He had to be reined in.

### Plausibly deniable operations

On 5 December 1981 Reagan signed the Executive Order on US Intelligence Activities. It removed restrictions placed on the CIA in the aftermath of Watergate, allowing the CIA to continue 'special activities'. These are 'activities conducted in support of national foreign policy objectives abroad which are planned and executed so that the role of the US government is not apparent or acknowledged publicly'; covert 'plausibly deniable' operations. This year's official CIA allocation is \$800 million, the high-

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## News clampdown — apartheid terror

On 11 December the South African regime gave itself sweeping new powers to censor news of the movement against apartheid. Within hours of the clampdown the regime had launched a new wave of detentions and a raid against alleged ANC activists in neighbouring Swaziland, killing two people and kidnapping five. They are desperate to conceal the escalating resistance to apartheid and the savage repression they are using against it. With new campaigns planned by both the UDF and the ANC from 16 December, and the black community simmering with anger, Botha has cast all illusions of reform to the wind in his attempt to keep the crisis at bay.

The new measures include bans on all reports on detainees, their treatment in detention, boycott action, illegal strikes, street committees, 'restricted' meetings, attacks on compulsory military service, and even blank spaces in newspapers where reports have been censored. Articles relating to unrest of any other sort must be submitted for censorship before publication. No action of the security forces may be reported, and journalists may not even be present at any 'scene of unrest'. Breaches of the censorship are punishable by fines of up to £7,000 or imprisonment for up to ten years. In the first few days, the Johannesburg Star submitted eleven articles for censorship - seven were rejected, and no response received to another four. These draconian measures make the South African press the most heavily censored in the world - yet

## Iranian family win right to stay

On 16 December 1986, news came through of a great victory for the Mashadimirza family. The Home Office has given in and withdrawn deportation orders against Rahim, his wife Djamileh their 2 year old son Ronad and Rahim's brother Kamran. Kamran, an RCG member explains how the victory was obtained.

'My brother's family and myself were refused political asylum by the Home Office in 1986. Despite all the evidence, they claimed that we did not have a well founded fear of persecution should we return to Khomeini's Iran. Knowing however what awaited us if forced to return to Iran - my brother Rahim would definitely have been executed (see FRFI 63 and 64) - we challenged the Home Office. We organised a political campaign against its decision.'

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South Africa's imperialist backers continue to call it a 'democracy'.

The attack on the press was not limited to censorship. One of the first victims of the wave of detentions it was intended to conceal was Zwelakhe Sisulu, editor of the radical black paper *The New Nation* and son of gaoled ANC leader Walter Sisulu. Only a few days before, an American journalist was expelled because his paper's editorials were too hostile to the Botha regime.

But Botha's main target is the organisations of the people themselves. Though few details have yet emerged of the latest detentions, there can be little doubt that the leadership of the UDF will have been decimated once again. Along with the trade union federation COSATU and other organisations, the UDF has called for a ten day 'Christmas

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JOHN COLE/NETWORK

Candlelight vigil for AIDS victims in Trafalgar Square 26 May 1986

# AIDS - rightwing on the offensive

In Africa an estimated 5 million people carry the AIDS virus and hundreds of thousands have died of the disease. In the US, 1.5 million people have contracted the virus and 9,000 are expected to die this year. In this country, there have been 599 known cases and 298 deaths. However, it is estimated that up to 30,000 carry the virus and may be expected to show symptoms of AIDS within 5 years. As yet there is no cure for the virus but its spread can be severely limited by adopting certain sexual practices. Why has so little been done to alert the public to the dangers of contracting AIDS and to the search for a cure? The answer is simple - until recently it was thought that the disease only affected the oppressed - black people, homosexuals and intravenous drug users.

The campaign in the media to victimise and isolate AIDS sufferers has obscured the reality of the rapid spread of the virus to the entire population. While the newspapers were indulging in a hysterical diatribe of anti-gay abuse, vital time was being lost in the battle to prevent the spread of the virus. AIDS is not a contagious disease: it is very fragile

outside the human body and can only be transmitted in an exchange of body fluids. A successful AIDS campaign must advocate safe sex, not by inferring things we get up to in bed, by half truths and euphemisms, but in the sort of language people themselves use to describe the sex act.

Politicians of the far right have seized the AIDS issue to gain support among the more reactionary elements in the imperialist nations: racism, xenophobia and anti-gay prejudice are their stock in trade. In New York, New Jersey and California, school boards have banned infected children and teachers from schools. The right in America have called for quarantine, the branding of AIDS patients in their private parts and the institution of criminal offences for AIDS patients who have sex. Lyndon La Rouche, a far right politician is now running for a presidential nomination on the strength of such demands.

In Britain the Scottish Health minister John Mackay has said that AIDS is a 'straightforward moral issue' and that he does not think the public would expect him to make extra resources available to combat AIDS. Sir Gerard Vaughan MP, former Health minister, proposed the testing of all immigrants for the AIDS virus, using the fear that people have of contracting the virus to create racial divisions. Most vicious of all has been James Anderton, chief constable of Greater Manchester, member of the fanatical right wing crusade 'Festival of Light' and president of the Association of Chief Police Officers. Anderton attacked 'the obnoxious practices of homosexuals' stating that AIDS is a 'self-inflicted scourge'. A poll carried out by LBC radio in London showed that 74% of people phoning in supported Anderton's vile statements.

The way is open for the police, with the requisite increased powers, to terrorise the gay community. The advent of AIDS satisfies the criteria of a section of the ruling class calling for increased power for the 'forces of law and order'. Thatcher has used the deaths of gay people to build on her electoral support by championing the morals of Victorian times. The practical results of a return to Victorian values would be a rapid

spread of the AIDS virus as sex once more becomes taboo. Syphilis was widespread when Victorian gentlemen visited prostitutes regularly and secretly as a matter of course.

In Africa the disease is transmitted heterosexually and sufferers are spread equally among women and men. While black people were dying of curable diseases, the West remained unconcerned. One million children in Africa die of whooping cough, measles and tetanus every year. Last year 5 million died of diarrhoea and related conditions. AIDS was just another killer among many and as it reached epidemic proportions the imperialist nations took no notice. There is an underlying belief that disease acts as a check on population growth in oppressed nations and as such is not altogether a bad thing.

In the last few weeks the British government has at last been forced to spend some money on AIDS prevention - £20 million in all as they have woken up to the severity of the problem. At the same time they have spent the same amount on advertising British gas shares. In the vital area of research the Thatcher government has cut the budget of the Public Health Laboratory Service by £3.8 million. This is the body responsible for plotting the progress of AIDS and reporting on its findings to government ministries. The government are holding out for a cure to be discovered in America or France while they hold on to their money.

The only body which has actively and consistently combatted the spread of the virus and addressed itself to the needs of AIDS sufferers is the Terence Higgins Trust which is funded entirely by voluntary donations. Although the trust attempts to avoid the label of a gay organisation, its roots are in the gay community: it is named after the first victim of AIDS in this country. Whenever the oppressed organise the British state sees it as a threat. A closely-knit gay community would be a threat to the interests of British imperialism, so politics is often kept out of the AIDS issue.

The reality is that AIDS is here, anyone and everyone can get it, and there is as yet no cure. While gays, black people and drug users are affected we can hardly expect Edwina Curry and Margaret Thatcher to devote resources to prevent the spread of the disease. What is needed is a massive public information campaign, multi-million pound funding for research into a cure, availability of free condoms, new syringes for drug users and facilities for the care of AIDS sufferers.

Richard Roques

For more information contact the Terence Higgins Trust Limited, BM AIDS, London WC1N 3XX. Telephone 01-833-2971.

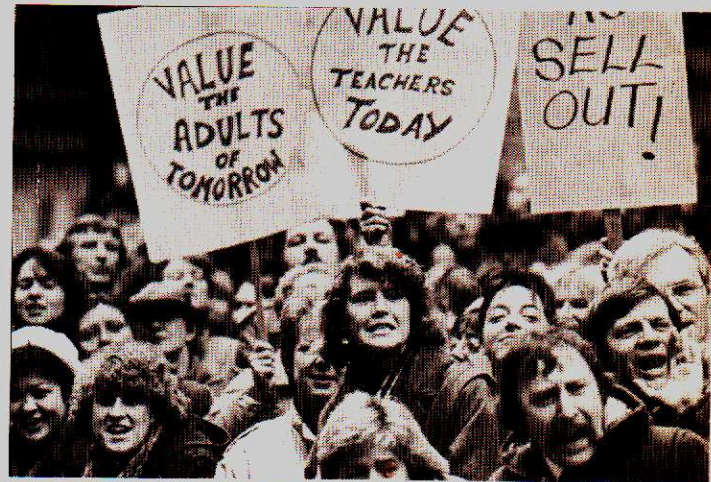
# Baker throws down gauntlet to the teachers

The biggest teachers' union, the NUT, has just balloted on the ACAS deal reached last month. The poll was a meagre 55%, of which 58% (60,912) were in favour of the deal and 42% (44,216) against. Teachers' unions in England and Wales remain divided over the deal. The NUT, having caved in to Education Secretary Baker's threat to impose a deal if none was reached, signed the agreement which fell far short of what teachers are asking for. By doing so, NUT leaders not only now face a divided union - as the ballot result shows - but the ensuring divisions among the six unions involved have strengthened Baker's hand.

Baker does not want the ACAS deal as it does not contain big enough differentials weighted towards 'good' teachers and is too expensive. He is now determined to go ahead with a new Education Bill which will not only impose a deal if necessary, but which seeks to prevent teachers' unions from taking part in future pay negotiations - replacing them with a government appointed committee - an outrageous attack on union rights.

Areas like Inner London are strongly against the ACAS deal, particularly in relation to teachers' conditions. The deal actually increases the working year by 5 days; the crucial issue of supply cover for sick teachers is still left far too wide open; the maximum class size is put at 33 instead of 27 as union policy demands. As far as pay is concerned, only a small proportion of classroom teachers get a rise of 20% over 2 years. Most teachers will get either 10% over 2 years, or 6.5% over 2 years - a far cry from the sums being talked of in the press.

The second largest union, the



NAS/UWT, has voted against the deal all along, together with one of the heads' unions, the NAHT which wants even bigger differentials for heads. Now two more unions, the Secondary Heads Association and the Professional Association of Teachers (two right wing groupings) have also pulled out, leaving only the NUT and the Assistant Masters and

Mistresses Association in favour of the deal. (The AMMA ballot of its members in state schools resulted in a 2-1 vote in favour of the deal, on a 55% turnout.)

The NUT leaders' capitulation and failure of the unions to agree a common line has left Baker much more cocky than when he was faced with a united front. Despite opposition from teachers' unions and an all-night filibuster from Labour MPs, including the putting of 251 amendments, Baker has declared himself determined to go through with the Bill, which has now gone to the House of Lords.

Despite the NUT vote in favour of the deal, Baker looks unlikely to accept it in its current form - that is without major concessions. But notwithstanding the outcome of the ballot, a speedy and militant campaign now needs to be built at the beginning of next term in opposition to

Baker's arrogant attack on teachers' rights. The Inner London Teachers Association have called a demonstration on 13 January. The NUT national leaders have refused their official backing and yet immediate, effective and united action must be organised if the teachers dispute is not to end in a rout.

Olivia Adamson

# Print worker gaoled

On Friday 5 December Judge Anwyl-Davies jailed print leader Mike Hicks for 12 months (eight months suspended). Mike Hicks, member of SOGAT executive and chair of the Communist Campaign Group steering committee, was convicted of assaulting a police inspector in April.

Everyone who has taken part in the demonstrations at Wapping knows that Hicks has never been involved in fighting with the police. Indeed he has attacked so-called 'outsiders' for coming to the defence of the printworkers.

The police and courts have decided to attack a well-known leader of the Wapping demonstrations in an attempt to destroy the last remaining public pressure on Murdoch. Printworkers and supporters responded to the jailing by a mass demonstration outside Brixton prison on Wednesday 10 December. The demonstrations at Wapping have continued despite the jailing.

Terry O'Halloran  
(Secretary, London Freelance Branch, NUJ)

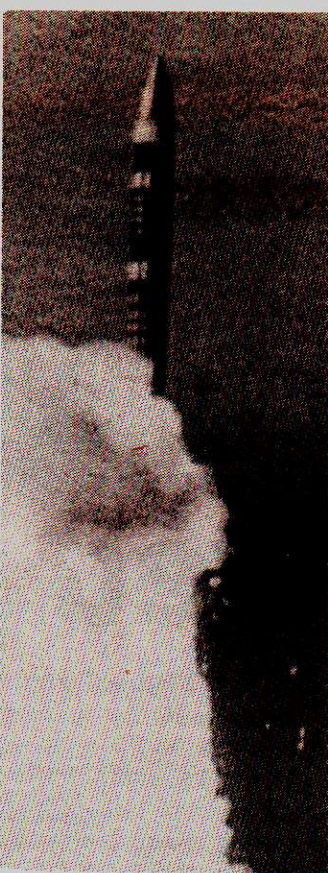
Messages of support should be sent to: Mike Hicks, HMP Camp Hill, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5PB



# Labour non-nuclear defence policy

Fresh back from his US tour, Kinnock has unveiled Labour's new defence document *Modern Britain in a Modern World*. The new policy calls for unilateral nuclear disarmament by Britain, including the cancellation of Trident, the dismantling of US nuclear weapons and closure of US nuclear bases. Money saved from this, argues Kinnock, who wants to appear even more ultra-patriotic than the Tories, would go to building up the 'neglected' conventional forces. 'A choice between nuclear pretence and real defence' argues Kinnock. 'We stand for strong national defence' he stated to critics in the USA.

Kinnock also stresses Labour's commitment to NATO - Britain's contribution to NATO this year was



POPPEROTO

£18.6 billion. Kinnock is already beginning to experience the pressures which even talking about nuclear disarmament can bring. NATO supreme commander General Rogers has threatened that all US forces will be pulled out of Europe if Kinnock's policy is implemented. He was strongly supported by US Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger and Secretary of State George Shultz. Kinnock, however, is determined that going non-nuclear could be achieved through 'careful discussion'. He should take warning from the response of the US to the comparatively trifling matter of New Zealand's refusal to allow US nuclear armed ships to use its ports. Economic sanctions were implemented. It is obvious that the US will do everything in their power to prevent such a policy from coming about - including preventing the election of Kinnock.

Previous Labour governments

have not kept their promises on nuclear issues. In 1964 Wilson promised to renegotiate the Nassau Agreement to buy Polaris but in the end only cancelled the fifth boat which was unnecessary anyway. In 1974, the Labour government promised that there would be no new generation of nuclear weapons but then went ahead with the Chevaline programme which cost £1 billion. The same government also failed to keep its promise to reduce Britain's contribution to NATO to the level of other European NATO members.

Can Kinnock keep his promise? On each and every occasion when Kinnock has come under pressure from the right he has caved in - as seen from his vicious attack on the left in the Labour Party, on the councils fighting ratecapping, on the striking miners. The pressure he has experienced so far would be nothing compared to the hysteria of the British and US ruling classes over nuclear disarmament. One of Kinnock's arguments is that a non-nuclear policy would release more money for conventional forces. But by 1987, US contracts for Trident will be well advanced and cancellation charges could run into millions. Kinnock does not even want the money (if it existed) for schools and hospitals - he wants to build up Britain's 'conventional' defences. And where are these 'conventional' defences employed at present but protecting British imperialism's interests around the world, especially in the North of Ireland.

Kinnock's stand has nothing to do with real disarmament and he has no intention of pulling out of imperialism's war machine. As such, there is nothing for socialists and communists to support. His stand is equally baffling for those on the right of the Labour Party: if he is committed to patriotism and defence why should he risk losing the election over nuclear weapons? Unease is already spreading. *New Statesman* editor John Lloyd has appealed for Kinnock to drop the non-nuclear policy. It remains to be seen how long Kinnock holds out, caught between the desire to keep the Labour Party united and the growing pressure from all quarters to overturn Labour's policy.

Olivia Adamson



# A fault on the line

Two years after British Telecom was privatised, BT unions have produced a report, 'A fault on the line', detailing the effects of privatisation. The report clearly shows that the only people to gain from privatisation, have been big business and BT's board. BT's half-year profits have risen this year by 11% to a record £1 billion. Ordinary phone users and BT workers have been forced to pay the price of BT's drive for profits.

Before privatisation, profits made from long distance calls (mainly business users) were used to subsidise local calls (mainly domestic users) and customer services. Now, BT management has split the industry up into different sections, known as profit centres, and stopped cross section subsidies. The effect of this, backed up by recent price increases, has been to force up the cost of local calls by 6.4% and to actually reduce the cost of calls on some busy long distance routes by 14%. After the price rises in 1985, the government's own committee concluded that ordinary phone users would see their bills rise by 7% whilst business users would see their bills rise by only 1%.

Since 1983, over 20,000 jobs have been lost in the industry, and in 1986 only 37 apprentices were recruited. The report concludes that these job losses are not just the result of technical change in the industry, but part of a sustained campaign by management to reduce staff and boost profits. BT has just announced that

it wants a further 24,000 jobs cut in the next four years. That is something BT engineers are experiencing more and more as BT management increases the pressure on us, and tries to increase our workload.

However, not all BT employees have suffered. The salary bill for the BT board of directors has more than doubled since privatisation to £1.1 million, and the salary of BT's chairman Sir George Jefferson rose last year from £111,399 to £172,206. In contrast BT engineers have been offered 5.1% on condition we accept new working practices and an end to job demarcation. We have rejected the 'offer' and at present are balloting on taking industrial action.

It has to be pointed out that one of the reasons why the Tories have got away with their privatisation of BT, is because the trade unions in BT have backed out of any confrontation with management and the government. All their hopes have been pinned on the election of a Labour government, which would re-nationalise BT. However, the report doesn't say that Kinnock has stated that the re-nationalisation of BT isn't high on his list of priorities. Then the report doesn't say anything about fighting to defend the interest of BT workers.

The interests of BT workers are not going to be defended by waiting for Kinnock. We have to fight back now against management's attempts to end job demarcation, and link up with those sections of the working-class willing to stand up against the Tories.

Bob Shepherd

# Stink over MI5 cesspit

'Everywhere I go I see increasing evidence of people swirling about in a human cesspit of their own making.'

It's very rare to find oneself in agreement with James Anderton, Greater Manchester's born-again (when will he die?) Chief Constable. But he couldn't be more right – the circles he mixes in are, indeed, a cesspit... several cesspits. Throughout 1986 scandals rocked the British establishment – its government (Westlands), its police force (Stalker and the intimidation of Manchester students, Steven Shaw and Sarah Hollis), and the year closed with another tawdry internecine squabble, this time involving the security services – the Peter Wright affair. The prospect of various spies, ex-spies and government ministers taking swipes at one another promises to enliven the first few months of 1987.

The latest scandal revolves around the memoirs of 71-year-old pensioned-off MI5 spy, Peter Wright and the British government's attempts to stop their publication in the Australian courts. It has already stopped publication in Britain on the grounds of 'national interest'.

The trial opened with both sides flexing their muscles: 'Mrs Thatcher's frightened of me – I know that Parliament was lied to', said Wright; 'Wright will get no quarter or consideration because of his health' said Treasury Solicitor John Bailey, advising Wright to get medical advice before thinking of entering the court room. But the only person in need of 'advice' before giving evidence turned out to be Sir Robert Armstrong, British Cabinet Secretary, who was repeatedly mauled in the witness box by Wright's upstart Aussie solicitor, Malcolm Turnbull (my god, he's not even a barrister).

After weeks of what the rather endearing Australian judge, Mr Justice Powell, described as 'serpentine weavings of the plaintiff (the British)', the British government was forced to hand over various documents to the court and Sir Robert 'economical-with-the-truth' Armstrong was forced to admit that he had lied to the court.

The lie concerned the publication of right-wing Chapman Pincher's book *Their Trade is Treachery* which

2.1 million to 1.69 million in the first six months, and now stand at 1.57 million. TSB shareholders have fallen by ½ million – 1 million since the sale. Despite all the rhetoric and advertising campaigns the fact is that Thatcher's 'people's capitalism' is only for those who can afford it.

The total cost of the sale was £141 million and may rise to £300 million according to a *World in Action* survey. The same sources indicate that taxpayers have lost £2½ billion on privatisations so far – due to deliberate underpricing of shares by the government. Underpricing has allowed instant massive profits to be made as shares rise rapidly to their 'proper' level. Even the *Economist* has described the government's pricing policy as 'theft disguised as generosity'.

The large scale beneficiaries of Thatcher's privatisation bonanza are, of course, the City. Rothschilds merchant bank made a cool £100 million out of handling the British Gas sale; Lazard Brothers alone made £50 million out of handling the TSB, out of a total of £226 million paid out to the City, and Kleinwort Benson made £100 million out of British Telecom, out of a total of £263 million going to the City.

The real message for 'Sid' is that the Thatcher government is robbing him on an almost unimaginable scale. Not only are nationalised industries being sold off on the cheap in order to buy votes for Thatcher and to line the pockets of her City pals, but consumers will suffer as prices rise. Gas as a privately owned monopoly will be subject to even less control than as a public utility. 40,000 people had their gas cut off this year alone due to inability to meet rising prices. British Gas chairman Sir Denis Rooke won't have to worry though – his salary is going up by £75,000 – on top of the £100,000 he already earns.

Olivia Adamson

was published in Britain in 1981. In 1980 Wright, encouraged by Lord Rothschild, sold his story to Pincher, alleging that Sir Roger Hollis, former head of MI5, was a Russian spy (the Fifth Man). The Thatcher government 'got hold of' a copy of the manuscript but made no attempt to stop publication. In his evidence to the court, Sir Robert Armstrong claimed that Sir Michael Havers, Attorney-General, had advised the Cabinet that there were no legal grounds to stop publication of Pincher's book and that he only became aware of the book in February 1981, six weeks before publication. The British government's 'serpentine weavings' have been designed to stop the court seeing documents which reveal that the Pincher book was published with government connivance and approval. If this is the case then they can scarcely claim that Wright's own book should not be published.

Following Sir Robert Armstrong's somewhat clumsy attempts at perjury, Sir Michael Havers decided to get out while the going was good and forced Armstrong to admit to the court that Havers was not involved in any decisions about Pincher's book. Meanwhile Lord Rothschild decided to follow suit and Mrs Thatcher was forced to proclaim that Rothschild is not a Russian spy... as far as we know. By the end of November, the British had no alternative but to hand over some of the documents to the court.

The court case has given rise to various speculations about what it is in Wright's memoirs which the government really wants to suppress. Did the self-styled 'Young Turks' of MI5, among them Peter Wright (it was a long time ago), launch a smear campaign against Edward Heath in order to get Mrs Thatcher elected Prime Minister? Did MI5 bug Harold Wilson's phone and burgle his houses while he was Prime Minister? Is Mrs Thatcher the Fifth Man? Who cares? The impression we are left with, and it is a false one, is that MI5 and MI6 consist of upper class buffoons called spies, each solely concerned with proving that the others are Russian spies.

More revealing than any of this, is that Wright has not included any account of his or MI5's activities in the north of Ireland (remember the shoot-to-kill tapes) or MI5's surveillance of 2 million British people who 'the security services' keep files on. Buried under a welter of press coverage about government manoeuvres and Fifth Men, is Gough Whitlam's evidence to the court that MI5 planned to assassinate Nasser in 1956 and Colonel Grivas in Cyprus in the late 1950s. MI5 and MI6 are deadly serious. Peter Wright's book, if it is ever published, is unlikely to tell us any useful truths.

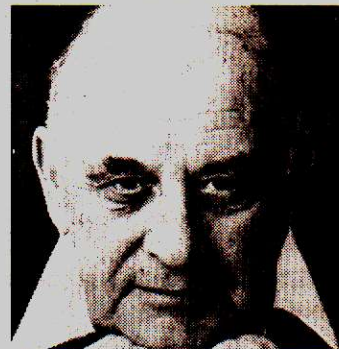
The court case has also led to various suggestions that the security services should become accountable to Parliament. At the moment they are accountable only to the Prime Minister and various senior Cabinet Ministers. Officially they do not exist apart from their annual budget of £30m. Labour spokesmen in particular have made holier-than-thou statements by the score. Tony Benn even went so far as to phone a Radio 4 phone-in programme to reveal that MI5 really spends its time spying on the British labour movement, as he knows full well from his time as a cabinet minister under Wilson and Callaghan. In the Alice-in-Wonder-



Armstrong

land world of spies, Benn is undoubtedly the Dormouse who wakes up occasionally, never at the right time, to tell us what really goes on – uranium deals with Namibia, armed UKAEA police, MI5 surveillance. Go back to sleep, Tony!

In the 12 December issue of *New Statesman*, Robin Cook MP offers what is, perhaps, Labour's real sol-



Rothschild



Pincher

ution to the MI5 problem:

'The police force could prove no worse in detecting espionage and might be more difficult for the other side to penetrate'.

Over to you Mr Anderton and Mr Newman. Back to the cesspit...

Carol Brickley

# Stalker resigns

Four years after the murder of six nationalists in a series of shoot-to-kill operations in Ireland, the British government has told the Twenty Six Counties government that 8 RUC men up to the rank of Chief Superintendent will face charges next year. The killings were the work of undercover RUC death squads. So blatant were their murderous deeds that when Manchester's Assistant Chief Constable John Stalker began investigating the affair he unearthed evidence of murder and of a large scale cover up. Stalker himself then fell victim to the conspiracy to protect the RUC, was smeared and removed from the Inquiry. He has now announced his early retirement, saying that he has had difficulty, since his reinstatement, in 'reestablishing his authority'. Effectively, he has been squeezed out.

The Stalker affair however backfired disastrously for the British government and the RUC by creating huge publicity and interest in the shoot-to-kill policy. Even with the Inquiry in the safe hands of Yorkshire Chief Constable Colin Sampson something had to be done. A total whitewash would not have been believed and would have led to a further erosion of credibility for the Twenty Six Counties government which has been lobbying hard for some action on this issue. The FitzGerald government's life hangs on a thread and its hopes of re-election are pinned on the Anglo-Irish Agreement winning some concessions, however paltry. The British assurance that RUC men will face prosecution comes as a great relief to FitzGerald and Co.

By choosing 8 RUC officers to put in the dock Britain also hopes to head off further scrutiny of the shoot-to-kill policy. Whilst giving the appearance of doing something – rooting out the 'culprits' – there is no guarantee that any of the 8 will be found guilty or that the trials will be anything other than an extension of the cover-up. One problem does however exist – some of the officers to be charged have threatened to 'talk' if proceedings go ahead. If they do then the real extent of the shoot-to-kill policy may become plain.

Stalker was removed from the Inquiry when he came too close to confronting one of the shoot-to-kill policy makers – RUC Chief Constable Hermon. He is still being protected by the British government. Part of the deal between Britain and the Twenty Six Counties is that both deny the existence of an officially sanctioned shoot-to-kill policy. Thus a few expendable RUC men may be used to continue protecting the real culprits – Hermon, MI5, the Army and the politicians who direct British rule in Ireland.

Jim O'Rourke

# Gaoled youth fight for justice

When Raymond Moran (19) was arrested and kicked to death by Southport police no-one had any illusion about the course British 'justice' would take – the usual enquiry and whitewash routine. But the youth of Southport weren't interested in these hired liars – there were three nights of rioting in Southport and the local police station was petrol bombed.

All this happened over a year ago now and the killers of Raymond Moran are free to carry on their murderous work.

The same courts of law which failed to bring the murderers of Raymond Moran to justice found no problem in sending his friends to prison for allegedly bombing the police station. Sean Woods (21) 2½ years; Keith Shornington (19) 2½ years; and Andrew Moorcroft 15 months. Others are to be sentenced later.

When are Raymond Moran's killers to be sentenced?

Brendan

BRITISH GAS PROSPECTUS WILL BE PUBLISHED ON NOVEMBER 25TH.

If you see Sid tell him he already owns it. NATIONALISATION

# British Gas not such a great sale

The government expected 7-9 million people to buy British Gas shares. The reality was that only 4.5 million people were taken in by the repulsive 'Tell Sid' advertising campaign – half a million fewer than applied for shares in the much smaller, less advertised Trustee Savings Bank sale. The average application for British Gas was for £1,300 – £1,400 worth of shares, indicating that sales were mainly to middle class people.

Desperate for the flotation to be a success, Walker astounded the City by announcing a few days after the sale that an extra half a million applications had 'been found'. This allowed him to claim that the government's target (now revised down-

wards) of 5 million had been reached (that is if you take into account that some applications were made on behalf of more than one person...). Such tortuous accounting cannot disguise that the flotation fell short of the Tories' expectations.

The limitations of Thatcher's 'people's capitalism' are becoming obvious. When there is a quick killing to be made those who have the money, mainly middle class people, will buy shares. British Gas shares were not as underpriced as some previous share issues and people were less eager to take them up. Despite the fact that millions of people bought shares for the first time in these massive flotations, evidence shows that millions of these shares are sold quickly to make a profit, and are mopped up by large financial institutions. British Telecom share buyers dropped from



# FIGHT FOR VIRAJ MENDIS

## VMDC responds to Waddington's sly manoeuvre

VMDC supporters were informed on 12 December that the meeting between Waddington and Viraj's MP would take place in six days' time on 18 December. Waddington clearly hoped that, meeting so near Christmas, he could escape publicity and condemnation of his brutal decision. The VMDC dashed any such hopes. It immediately launched a nationally coordinated response to Waddington's sly and brutal manoeuvre.

### RAILA SIDDIQUI

'We cannot say we have won until we have won every deportation and immigration case, and especially Viraj's, who gives support to every single campaign.'

Within hours of hearing that the meeting was to take place, the VMDC in London and in Manchester had already printed thousands of leaflets announcing the emergency national demonstration for Saturday 20 December in Manchester. Within days, transport had been fixed from Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Bradford, Liverpool, London and elsewhere as RCG branches and other VMDC supporters fought to mobilise for the demonstration.

### WORKERS PRESS

'The question of sanctuary must be taken to the trade union branches, to the Labour Party and to all the organisations of the labour movement. We say to the Labour Party: "Which side are you on? Are you for or against this deportation?"'

Throughout the week intensive work was done to publicise the campaign for Viraj.

● **15-19 December** The London VMDC Support Group picketed the Home Office every day from 12-2pm

● **Tuesday 16 December** Two young VMDC supporters raised the matter in the House of Commons when they unfurled a banner in the Public Gallery and scattered leaflets into the debating chamber. They were arrested, but released without charge

● **Thursday 18 December** Glasgow VMDC Support Group and Dundee RCG organised pickets of the Tory Party HQ and a street event in the city centre

● **Wednesday 17-Thursday 18 December** The London VMDC Support Group organised a 24 hour picket of the Home Office. It was supported by the RCG/FRFI, Kings Cross Women's Centre, WRP (Workers Press), WAR, Marian Gaima (herself threatened with deportation), Payday, City AA, Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign and CPSA members based in the Home Office itself. It was also attended by Kamran Mashadimirza who had just won his fight against deportation to Iran. As usual, the police harassed the picket, trying to arrest comrades for using the megaphone. They had mounted police ready to move in.

### DELE (CITY AA)

'We believe that the immigration laws are a form of apartheid in Britain. The people in South Africa are fighting back... I'm black. I'm here and I'm fighting back.'

As a result of this campaigning and an enormous effort to contact the press, publicity on Viraj's case appeared in *The Guardian*, *The Morning Star*, *Newsline*, *BBC Radio 4*, *Granada TV*, *Piccadilly Radio* and elsewhere.

This work has set the basis for a determined national campaign to ensure that Viraj remains in Britain.

### KAREN

'We are not going to stop until Waddington backs down or Waddington resigns. We're not having any more of this.'



## Viraj goes into sanctuary

continued from page 1

500 people responded to the call for an emergency demonstration in Manchester on 20 December. They came from Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Bradford, Crewe, Leeds, Newcastle, Manchester and London. FRFI/RCG, City AA, Manchester City Councillors, NALGO members, Kings Cross Women's Centre, Manchester SWP, Workers Against Racism, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Moss Side Labour Party, Manchester AA Group, Workers Press/WRP, Rose Alaso Defence Campaign, rallied to Viraj's support. This same rallying of all forces must be repeated throughout the coun-

**GRAHAM STRINGER (Labour Leader, Manchester City Council)**

'We must respond in a very clear way to the message Viraj gave us earlier. We as the Labour Party in Manchester have made it clear that we don't believe in breaking the law for the sake of it. But it may sometimes be necessary to act above and beyond the law.'

try until Waddington is forced to reverse his decision. Only a massive public movement can force Waddington to eat his words.

If we are to save Viraj's life and defend the rights of all anti-deportation, left and progressive activists in Britain then we must:

- demand of all opposition parties, MPs, councillors and prospective parliamentary candidates, especially the Labour Party, that they now publicly call for Viraj to be granted the right to stay in Britain; to affiliate to the VMDC and support local support groups; and to use their influence, organisations and funds to win this right.

### Statement by leading supporter of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam based in Britain

Already the progressive Sinhala political activists and trade unionists have been arrested in Sri Lanka, many are in hiding. Viraj Mendis, who has supported the Tamil cause and participated in marches against the Sri Lankan government, will find his life in danger. Viraj has won a lot of publicity in Britain and obviously it is embarrassing to the Sri Lankan government. There have been articles in the Sri Lankan press about him. This magnifies the danger to him.

If Viraj is deported it will be a blow to the immigrant communities who are fighting deportations in Europe and in Britain in particular.

- Bombard Waddington and the Home Office with immediate protests. Bombard local and national media with letters, phone calls etc on Viraj's case.
- Invite VMDC speakers to your trade union, student group, political group, community organisation etc. Organise public meetings on the case.
- Organise delegations to meet Viraj in sanctuary.
- Mobilise for the 17 January demonstration at Waddington's constituency

surgery.  
● Demand of all anti-racist, left and progressive organisations that they affiliate to the VMDC; join existing local support groups or set one up where none exists; use their newspapers to publicise Viraj's case; raise funds for the VMDC; mobilise support in whatever areas they work in - trade unions, colleges, community organisations and others.

We are calling on everyone to act now. Send money immediately to VMDC. The emergency demonstration raised more than £500. In two days the campaign raised nearly £2,000. But much more is needed. The Home Office has millions to spend on deporting black people. Viraj is no longer receiving any state benefit. His food and other needs have to be paid for by you.



Viraj's life and your own democratic rights are in your hands. Whether Viraj lives or dies is up to us. We must not allow Viraj to die at the hands of racist Waddington and the Sri Lankan regime.

We won't give up.  
We won't give in.  
We will fight until we win.

## Viraj Mendis needs YOUR help

### Viraj Mendis tours Scotland

The Glasgow Viraj Mendis Support Group organised a highly successful speaking tour of Scotland for Viraj. Between 8 and 11 December he addressed 9 meetings in Stirling, Dundee, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Polmaise.

**GLASGOW**  
VMDC Glasgow Support Group, c/o Box 10, 340 West Princes Street, Glasgow

### Viraj Speaks in Brighton - new support group

On 28 November Viraj addressed a 50 strong public meeting in Brighton organised by the Black Students Group at Sussex University. As a result, yet another support group has been established

**BRIGHTON**  
VMDC Support Group, c/o External Affairs, University of Sussex SU, Falmer House, Falmer, Brighton

### VMDC Support Groups

We urge you to help the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign in its work. You can contact the VMDC or its support groups in the following areas:

**MANCHESTER**  
Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester M15 5AL (phone 061-234-2870)

**LONDON**  
VMDC London Support Group, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX (phone 01-837 1688)

**TYNE & WEAR**  
VMDC Support Group, c/o Gateshead Law Centre, 13 Walker Terrace, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear

We are told that so many VMDC postcards have gone into the Home Office that Waddington has now instructed staff to throw them away. We advise readers to put their postcards into envelopes in future.

### Anti-deportation conference

The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign is calling a major national conference on 11/12 April. The conference will draw together all who are fighting deportations and the racist immigration controls.

1987 may well be general election year. The conference will discuss how to make deportations a central issue in the campaign; how to use the election period to put real pressure on the Labour Party to live up to its promises to defend black people

The two-day conference will discuss all aspects of fighting deportations: trade unions and their contribution; the immigration controls and visa restrictions; political asylum and refugees; the 1981 Nationality Act; sanctuary campaigns.

Come to the conference. Make it the beginning of a mass national movement against racist deportations. The mobilising committee meets in Manchester every week. Next meeting: 14 January at 7.30pm. For further information contact: VMDC 061 234 2870

## Final appeal rejected

On Thursday 18 December Bob Litherland MP, Tony Lloyd MP and the Reverend Paul Weller made a final appeal to the Home Office Minister for deportations, David Waddington against the deportation of Viraj Mendis. Waddington replied, Viraj 'must pack his bags and go'. Go to Sri Lanka where imprisonment, torture and sudden death await him.

Waddington had shown his contempt for Viraj's life even before the meeting. In an interview on Radio 4, Waddington called Viraj 'a failed student' 'living on the state'. It is Waddington who lives on the state. He is a ruling class mercenary paid to attack black people. Black people in Manchester know Viraj to be a very successful anti-deportation fighter. It is this success that Waddington hates.

### REV PAUL WELLER

'David Waddington realises that his political arguments are very weak. He has therefore resorted to lies, innuendo and personal slander. This indicates that we are in a strong position... We should carry on to victory.'

In a letter to Bob Litherland, dated December, Waddington rehearsed a catalogue of bureaucratic excuses designed to justify his attempt to have Viraj killed by deporting him to Lanka.

● The ten year rule which states that ten years' unlawful residence creates a prima facie case against deportation does not apply to Viraj, says Waddington. Viraj is '17 months short of the ten year period'. This, it seems, means it is alright for Viraj to be sent back to the Lankan security forces who have killed countless opponents of the regime.

● Waddington places 'complete confidence' in the 'assurance' given by the Lankan High Commissioner. No doubt Waddington would have been happy to deport anti-Nazis to Nazi Germany on the grounds of 'complete confidence' in Nazi assurances that there were no concentration camps.

● According to Waddington there is no 'compelling compassionate factor' to justify allowing Viraj to stay. What about the 'compelling compassionate factor' that Viraj could be killed in Lanka?

### EDDIE NEWMAN (MEP)

'I want to identify myself very much with Viraj's campaign. I think that it's absolutely important that we win.'

Viraj Mendis is a publicly identified opponent of the Sri Lankan government's genocidal war against the Tamils. Thousands have been killed, thousands have been detained, thousands have been tortured, thousands have disappeared. These facts are attested to by independent observers, by Amnesty International and the United Nations Working Group on Disappearances among others.

The British Home Office is the only body that tries to deny the facts of repression in Sri Lanka. It is also Britain (coincidence surely?) that provides the Jayewardene regime with investment, diplomatic support, military equipment, military training and military personnel. British profiteering is much more important to Waddington than the life of a black communist.

Waddington hates Viraj Mendis because Viraj is opposed to the whole racist system that Waddington lives on. Waddington would rather see Viraj dead in Sri Lanka than alive and fighting in Britain.

You can defeat Waddington's conspiracy against Viraj Mendis. Act now to save our comrade and secure his right to stay in this country.

This page has been compiled by Eddie Abrahams, Gary Clapton, Ken Hughes, Ruby Khan, Graham Johnson, Virman Man and Terry O'Halloran

# Join the VMDC



# Broadwater Farm State revenge grinds on

The stream of trials that have been going on at the Old Bailey for the last three months show that criminalisation and revenge against the community continues.

Two more youths, Chris Newell and Peter Grey, have been acquitted. Peter Grey, 18, was picked up on 28 October 1985, racially abused and assaulted. He was treated in hospital for bruises.

Others have not been so fortunate. Earl Douglas, 20, got 4 years for affray and burglary; Mark Douglas, 20, got 3½ years on the same charge and Simon Planter, 20, got 3½ years for affray. The Douglas brothers were arrested for the murder of PC Blakelock and then forced to 'confess' to affray and burglary. Simon Planter fell into the malign hands of DC Rex Sargent. Not surprisingly Sargent succeeded in extracting a 'confession'.

On 21 November, the Appeal Court reduced the sentences on Simon Mac-

Minn, Paul Keys and Lester Sween. Simon MacMinn's sentence was reduced from 7 years to 4½ years. Paul Keys' and Lester Sween's were cut from 5 years to 3½ years.

Whilst the reduction in sentences is welcome, Lord Justice Lane's explanation is ominous. He outlined a tariff of sentencing. At the bottom is: '... a low affray, ie, for people not actually throwing weapons, but deemed to "encourage" others to do so.'

The more s/he 'encourages', the longer the sentence, the minimum sentence being between 18 months and 2 years.

Lane defined 'very serious affray' as implying: 'some measure of preparation for it,

organisation and direction, and the organisers and ringleaders, if detected could expect heavy sentences. They might be in the range of seven years and upwards, apart from any sentences imposed on them for specific offences, such as wounding with intent or the like.' In effect, Lane is telling the Old Bailey judges to be more discriminating in sentencing. The most vicious sentences should be reserved for the most serious 'enemy': those who have organised resistance to police violence and racism.

The process of criminalising the community in Broadwater Farm now includes studies of local schools carried out not by educationalists or sociologists, but by criminologists. At a cost of £25,000 criminologists from Middlesex Polytechnic made sweeping judgements linking truancy to crime in Tottenham schools. The Broadwater Farm Inquiry Report itself notes that the schools concerned are poor, badly resourced and that 'the education system has failed young black people in particular.'

Black and working class parents in the community do not need criminologists to tell them that the education provided is tenth rate, the housing is tenth rate and that justice is non-existent. Nearly 300 angry black parents attended a public meeting on 17 November demanding a discussion on the educational provision and policies of Haringey Council.

Broadwater Farm remains a community under attack, inside and outside the courts.

Sue Davidson  
Terry O'Halloran

\* Mass picket of the Old Bailey to mark the beginning of the murder trials. Wednesday 14 January 1987, 12 noon to 2pm. Be there!



# Bring back Victoria

FRFI has learnt of yet another black family brutally separated by Britain's racist immigration laws. David and Victoria Williams from Acton, West London, were married for only 6 months when Victoria was deported back to Ghana in May this year.

David, an electronics student, told FRFI that on 14 May he came home to be told by neighbours that immigration officials had called at his home and taken his wife away. They left him a note telling him to contact Victoria at the Home Office Detention Centre. Within a few days she was deported and their lives shattered.

Victoria came to Britain in 1982. She overstayed her visa and in 1985 spent an agonising 6 months in Holloway Prison and Harmondsworth Detention Centre. Appeals by the United Kingdom Immigrants Advisory Service and their MP, Sir George Young failed to move the Home Office. Both Victoria's parents are dead. Neither she nor David have any family or income in Ghana. Victoria is now destitute, living in one room with another couple and their children. She has no means of support and has been reduced to selling most of her clothes to survive. Her health has suffered and she is now being treated for severe depression caused by separation from her husband.

A letter from her psychiatrist in Ghana appealing to the Home Office to allow her to rejoin David received a stony response. On 4 November David

Waddington in a personal reply to Sir George Young wrote 'I have taken into account the Doctor's comments but I am afraid I am not persuaded that the compassionate circumstances would justify revocation of the order.'

David tries to send Victoria what money he can, but his resources are running out. 'I cannot take the stress anymore' he told us. A campaign is being formed to fight to reunite this young couple. For more information contact the Bring Back Victoria Williams Campaign, c/o BM Box 4835, London WC1N 3XX.

Jan Ali and David Williams

## Another victory in Manchester

The Manda Kunda Defence Campaign has won a victory against Home Office attempts to deport her to Zambia (see FRFI 64). Manda has now secured a one year work permit and is being allowed to remain in Britain for the next 12 months. If her work permit is renewed for four years, Manda will finally receive the right to permanent residence for which she has been fighting so long.

## IRANIAN FAMILY WIN RIGHT TO STAY

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With the help of my organisation, the RCG, numerous individuals and other organisations we set up the Mashadimirza Family Support Campaign. Through intensive public political campaigning we brought our case to the attention of thousands of people. We organised street meetings, public meetings, pickets of the Home Office and other events. We contacted MPs, councillors, sympathetic academics and other prominent personalities. Eventually we also broke down the publicity barrier when World In Action featured our case in a special programme on Iranian refugees facing deportation from Britain.

As a result of all this work, inspired by my comrades in the RCG and particularly by the experience of Viraj's campaign against his threatened deportation to Sri Lanka, we forced the Home Office to back down. In a letter to us Waddington wrote: 'I have decided... not to enforce the removal of Rahim, his wife, his son or Kamran. All of them will be allowed to stay in the United Kingdom for 12 months.'

Although a great victory, the campaign will remain vigilant for what might happen after 12 months.

The family and myself would like to thank everyone who helped make this victory possible.

But our fight is not finished. Right now, Viraj another RCG member is fighting against impending deportation in the new year. We will put all our power to the task of winning Viraj's right to stay here with us.

Kamran Mashadimirza

# French student demonstrations change the law

Faced with the Devaquet proposals on University education, French schoolchildren and students took to the streets in protest. The proposals were a watered-down version of the conservative philosophy on Universities, wanting them to be competitive, selective and more self-financing.



While the ruling class looked forward to less state spending on universities as a result, the young people foresaw a bleak future. In France anyone passing the 'baccalaureat' exam at school can enrol on any university course, and diplomas have nationwide value. The new law aimed to double the registration fees, and give more autonomy to each college: to select students, award diplomas, etc. This would both close the doors to many potential students, and result in 'ghetto' colleges producing invalid diplomas. The students demanded freedom to study where they choose; no increase in fees; nationally-recognised diplomas; and more state funding for education.

On 27 November 500,000 people demonstrated on this basis all over France: almost half of this number in Paris. Deliberately refusing to choose any one party's banner, in spite of efforts by the Socialist Party to make the most of the anti-government feeling, they stood as a broad-based defence of students' interests. Very well-organised through a network of liaison committees linking colleges and school PTAs, they stewarded their marches for maximum impact and minimum disruption by agents provocateurs.

The government was amazed at this sudden protest, and within ten days of continuing pressure, with calls from the CGT Union for a day's general strike, they withdrew the Bill completely. Democratic militant protest had won the day!

But at a price. In a charge by the CRS riot police the previous week, one student had lost an eye, another had lost an

arm. And in a 'cleanup' operation late one night, Malik Oussekiine, a 22 year old French student of Algerian origin, was beaten to death by uniformed racist thugs. The following day the peaceful demonstrations turned to anger and violence. 8 December was declared 'Youth In Mourning' Day with a massive demonstration in Paris, and all the major unions stopped work for an hour.

The anger spread to Germany and Italy, where solidarity demonstrations were held in Frankfurt, West Berlin, Mainz and Milan.

The students' successful campaign has come out of the blue. In the last few years there has been no militant activity on any scale, except in sympathy with the anti-racist movement SOS-Racisme. Gone is 1968 with its plans and dreams for a new society. The 1986 generation worries about passing exams and getting a job, with unemployment at 10.5%. But issues that have roused them to anger and action have been about democratic rights for themselves or others. Opposition to the new anti-immigrant nationality Bill, to the stricter identity checks, to the law treating drug-takers as delinquents, to racism generally, has united thousands of young people over the past months. The attacks on the right to further education was simply the last straw.

The government's capitulation is a real encouragement to all fighting for democratic rights, while Malik's death is yet another warning that the State's response to effective protest activity will be brutal.

Sheila Marston

# Death sentences in Grenada

In December Grenada's Acting Chief Justice sentenced 14 former People's Revolutionary Government members and soldiers to death for the murder of Maurice Bishop and his comrades in October 1983. Among those facing execution are former Deputy Prime Minister Bernard Coard and commander of the army Hudson Austin. Three other defendants were found guilty of manslaughter and imprisoned for a total of 120 years. Those convicted will set in motion an appeal process that may conclude with the British Privy Council. The announcement of the verdict was accompanied by an increase in the occupation forces, including US troops.

The killing of Maurice Bishop was a terrible crime against the Grenadian people and the revolutionary movement everywhere. However the stooge government

and court, imposed by the US invasion, have no right to try the accused. Among those concocting the evidence were Scotland Yard officers. Confessions were extracted by torture. The sentences are part of an escalating use of the death penalty across the English speaking Caribbean. The last death sentence carried out in Grenada was in 1978. No executions took place during the revolution, 1979-83.

Grenada is now run by the fawning, corrupt mediocrities typical of Caribbean governments. In an insult to the Grenadian people the government has recently supported US sanctions against Nicaragua, opposed UN Resolution 435 supporting Namibia's right to independence, and opposed UN motions condemning apartheid.

Travor Rayne



**Earthquake shakes Duarte regime**

The earthquake which devastated San Salvador on 10 October killing 1,000 people and leaving over 20,000 homeless has further strengthened the position of the revolutionary FMLN forces, as the US backed Duarte government has failed to respond to the scope of the resulting chaos and suffering. In purely economic terms the cost to the El Salvadoreans has been in the region of £1.4bn.

The government has done nothing to tackle the crisis which has destroyed even the marginal existence of the poorest sections of the people. Large areas were left without water and food, and medicines remain very scarce as many hospitals were destroyed.

The needs of the people of El Salvador have again been made subservient to the war the Duarte regime is waging against the FMLN. It now absorbs 40 per cent of government spending. Every indication suggests that the bulk of the aid received has been directed into the latest counter-insurgency plans imposed by US strategists.

It has been left to the people's movements - the FMLN/FDR in conjunction with trade unions, churches and students to take up responsibility for dealing with the aftermath of the quake. By taking the leading role in organising assistance for those ravaged by the earthquake the FMLN and other opposition forces have considerably strengthened their position as representing the interests of the masses. Responding to this development the FMLN has been stepping up the struggle both politically and economically. They immediately initiated a ceasefire to allow the country to recover but the Duarte government refused to follow suit. A five point proposal for overcoming the effects of the earthquake and the ensuing national crisis was issued on 5 November. It is also known that senior FMLN commanders took advantage of the chaos to slip into San Salvador to address people in the barrios. In the past few weeks attacks have taken place on military bases resulting in the deaths of 21 government troops. The FMLN's absence from the capital since they were driven out by terror tactics in 1980 has been a major advantage for the government.

Sources inside the government have voiced their concern that it was an earthquake, which razed Managua in 1972, that was seen as the catalyst without which the Sandinista revolution might never have triumphed after Somoza took possession of much of the aid which flooded into the country.

Andrew Price

**Lebanon/Palestine**

Since 30 September 1986, Palestinian camps in Lebanon near Beirut, Sidon and Tyre have successfully withstood a vicious siege by the Syrian backed Amal movement. Chatilla has been virtually razed to the ground, pounded by Syrian supplied T54 tanks. Over 600 people have died and thousands have been injured. Despite their numerical inferiority, Palestinian forces, uniting all trends in the PLO, have mounted significant counter-offensives capturing a string of Amal controlled villages including the critical Maghdoush overlooking Ain el-Hilweh. So threatening has the Palestinian military presence become to reaction, that the Zionists have intervened in an attempt to bolster Amal's forces by striking at Palestinian forward positions. Despite ceasefire agreements, the fighting continues as Syria and Amal stubbornly attempt to disarm and destroy the Palestinian national presence in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Palestinian masses on the West Bank and Gaza Strip have mounted the largest protests against 'Israeli' occupation for a long time. During November and December 1986 street fighting and protests spread through scores of towns, villages and camps. Zionism's response was 'shoot-to-kill'. Between 4 and 8 December the 'Israeli' army shot dead four people - two students and two children - and injured dozens of others. But this has not affected the fighting spirit of the people. As a West Bank activist put it, the morale of the Palestinians 'is higher today than at any time since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon (in 1982)'.

The Syrian sponsored 'camp wars' in Lebanon and the 'Israeli' repression on the West Bank and Gaza are both designed to halt the re-emergence of the Palestinian resistance as a major, independent and progressive force in the region. But in the current round of battles, conditions are more favourable for the Palestinians despite the awesome difficulties they still face.

Eddie Abrahams



Above: Colonel North who like all American gangsters hid behind the 5th amendment

continued from page 1

est since the Vietnam War. The US Special Forces, specialists in 'low intensity conflict', have had their funds tripled since 1982 to \$1.2 billion. Reagan's gang were nothing if not single minded in pursuit of their counter-revolutionary offensive. Therein lay the danger.

After the CIA mining of Nicaraguan ports in early 1984, sections of the US ruling class balked at the escalation towards all out war with Nicaragua. Congress passed the Boland Amendment forbidding the US government from giving military assistance to the contras. Reagan's team, recognising that the contras would collapse without US capital, mobilised a cluster of retired generals, fascist gangs and financiers to circumvent Congressional restraints and supply the contras plus a string of other mercenary bands across the Third World. Their co-ordinator was Lieutenant

**The Irangate Scandal**

**Reagan unmasked**

Colonel Oliver North, serving first under National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane then Admiral Poindexter. One of North's gangs, Citizens for America, is headed by Lewis Lehrman whose finances were managed by Ivan Boesky, the dealer recently fined \$100 million for 'insider trading' on Wall Street.

**Hasenfus opens the door**

The sale of arms to Iran may have been the tripwire over which Reagan's team stumbled, but it was pulled in Nicaragua on 4 October when Sandinistas shot down a C-123K plane carrying supplies for the contras. The following day US mercenary Eugene Hasenfus was captured. He talked. Among the plane's ruins was a card from Oliver North. Hasenfus said that US Vice President George Bush knew about the missions. He named two CIA men in El Salvador as organisers of the mission, one of whom was a friend of Bush.

Hasenfus' evidence was followed up by meticulous investigative journalism in the US. The clandestine network unravelled; all the trails led to Oliver North, and up to the front door of the White House.

When Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega appeared on US television in late November to denounce Reagan as a domestic and international law breaker, it stuck.

Reagan's over-reaching arrogance brought about his fall. His team had grown contemptuous of the law and

heedless of the opinions of those around them. The threatening language and flag waving hysteria drummed up for his gunboat ventures had set a trap. How would US public opinion respond when reality forced Reagan to negotiate with 'terrorists', Iran, instead of bombing them? In the space of a month Reagan's popularity rating fell from 67 to 46 per cent. US foreign policy looked flawed and foolish. The sale of arms to Iran was a sign of weakness, not strength; the covert operation a sign of division, not unity.

The Reykjavik arms negotiations fiasco had already unnerved the US

establishment and its imperialist allies. The emergence of a covert foreign policy running out of control triggered further alarms in US ruling circles. Reagan has never been able to lay the ghost of Vietnam and convince the majority of US people of the need for an all-out attack on Nicaragua. Any major commitment of US troops in a Third World conflict poses great perils for the US ruling class. They face the threat of serious opposition from among the people combining with a divided ruling class to create an instability that 'could rapidly imperil US imperialism's global position.'

However, the problem of Nicaragua will not go away. US imperialism must decide whether it will forsake the 'big stick' policy for a 'good neighbour' policy. It recognises the dangers of destroying the Reagan administration for its last two years, and will seek to keep its options open.

Meanwhile, in Nicaragua, Hasenfus has been released to tell his tale to the awaiting US committees, and the 19 year old Sandinista who shot down the C-123K, Jose Fernando Canales Aleman, has been awarded the Camilo Ortega Medal, one of Nicaragua's highest military commendations.

Trevor Rayne

Below: the White House gangsters from left to right - McFarlane, Casey, Regan, and Reagan



**Communist Party of the Philippines sign**

**Ceasefire**

Tens of thousands of people throughout the Philippines participated in marches and rallies on 10 December to celebrate the implementation of a 60 day ceasefire. Concluded by the communist led National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Aquino government, the ceasefire has conferred a degree of legality on the NDF and its leading organisations - the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the New Peoples Army (NPA). Though still illegal, the NDF is opening offices in Manila and its leaders occupy prime time on radio and TV to put their message across. Throughout the country NDF cadres now have an opportunity to strengthen and supplement their underground organisation with more extensive open work.

A clause of the ceasefire agreement stipulates that within one month discussions must resume on substantive issues in an attempt to achieve a 'lasting peace'. The CPP's readiness to participate in such discussions with Aquino's anti-communist government by no means marks a 'sellout' or 'betrayal'. Recognising the bourgeois and pro-imperialist civilian-military alliance, that Aquino represents, the communists have refused to lay down their arms. They have also stated clearly that a 'lasting peace' can be attained only by resolving 'the fundamental problems . . . which have given rise to the poverty and oppression of our people as well as to the armed revolution.' These problems are in essence those of land and of US imperialist domination. Carolina Malay, a prominent communist, explaining that there could be no permanent ceasefire until US military bases are removed said 'The bases must go. They are the cornerstone

of American domination.'

By proposing and agreeing to the ceasefire, the revolutionaries are engaging in a protracted political battle to broaden their support among sectors still sustaining illusions in Aquino's democratic and reformist claims. The ceasefire and subsequent negotiations for a 'lasting peace' will demonstrate that it is not the revolutionary armed struggle, but Aquino's government which is the real obstacle to resolving the fundamental problems facing the Filipino masses. As NDF negotiator Saurino Ocampo put it, the coming period will see a 'competition' between the NDF and the Aquino government for the people's support.

In the forthcoming negotiations, the NDF will be dealing with a government which has shifted even further to the right since the sacking of Enrile on 23 November. Relying not on the masses, but on her Chief of Staff General Fidel



Communist guerrillas demonstrate their support of the ceasefire

**HAITIAN GENERAL STRIKE**

Mass demonstrations coincided with the 18 November general strike called to promote a 'democratic alternative' to General Namphy's military rule. Two demonstrators were killed when troops opened fire. Each act of repression now brings forth an angry response from the people: school children have boycotted classes, burning barricades are erected, and soldiers have refused to open fire. The oppressed have shaken off the grip of fear that sustained the Duvaliers.

The 19 October constituent assembly election was boycotted by almost all political parties. Just 5 per cent of the electorate voted. There are signs of growing unity among those opposed to the regime. Washington has raised its military aid to the government five-fold since Duvalier fled on 7 February leaving his henchmen to face the people's justice.

Trevor Rayne

Ramos to defeat Enrile, Aquino has become more dependent on the military. She has sacked two liberal cabinet ministers and replaced Enrile with an equally die-hard anti-communist, General Ramon S. Magsaysay. Iletto won his spurs organising the Scout Rangers who played a crucial role in suppressing the armed communist resistance in the 1950s.

Since the ceasefire came into effect the military, and Ramos in particular, becoming increasingly concerned at the political headway made by the NDF. Sections of the military are trying to provoke the collapse of the ceasefire and Ramos has warned that the government must not 'give way to what happened in countries like Vietnam'. The revolutionaries, with 17 years of revolutionary experience behind them and daily growing support are today well equipped to deal with the complex political questions posed by the ceasefire.

Eddie Abrahams



# South Africa Smash apartheid in 1987

## Barclays bank forced out of South Africa

Two years ago in a pamphlet aimed at students, Barclays Bank strongly endorsed the position of Margaret Thatcher on British economic and financial relations with South Africa. Thatcher wrote at the time:

'... the presence of British banking and other financial institutions in South Africa is a positive and constructive development offering useful opportunities for encouraging the improvement of the lot of the non-white communities'.

Today this racist policy of so-called 'constructive engagement' spearheaded by Reagan and Thatcher, is totally discredited and on 24 November 1986 Barclays Bank was forced to pull out of South Africa. It sold its 40.4 per cent stake in Barclays National (Barnat) for 527m rand (£82m), below its market value, to Anglo-American, DeBeers and Southern Life Association.

Immediately the decision of Barclays Bank was announced Mike Terry, secretary of the British AAM, ever keen to grab the limelight on such occasions, spoke of 'an important victory in the international campaign for sanctions'. It certainly was. But that victory had very little to do with the 17 year long low-key campaign of the official British Anti-Apartheid Movement. So why did Barclays pull out?

The present political and economic crisis in South Africa is wholly due to the heroic resistance of black people against the racist apartheid regime. It is that resistance which has in two years undermined the ability of South Africa to guarantee the flow of superprofits to foreign investors. The dramatic fall of the rand has meant that the profits of Barnat in sterling have plunged from a peak of £118m in 1983 to £67m last year. They were only £29m in the first nine months of this year. Barclays is selling its South African subsidiary because it is no longer sufficiently profitable.

Barclays now has its largest overseas investment in the USA: assets of \$11bn and 7,500 staff with nearly \$1bn being invested in the last ten years. This market is crucial for Barclays. However the powerful anti-apartheid movement led by black people in the USA could have blocked any further progress in that country if Barclays continued its open links with South Africa. This was almost certainly another consideration in the decision to pull out.

Finally many individuals and organisations in Britain have stopped banking with Barclays because of the links with South Africa. In particular the campaign by the National Union of Students over the years has reduced Barclays share of student accounts from 25 per cent to 17 per cent of the market. This represents a loss of future rather than present business but certainly caused the bank some irritation. End Loans To South Africa (ELTSA) has also supplied people with valuable information over the years about the activities of Barclays Bank. This political material has been used by thousands of activists in picketing, occupying and generally harassing Barclays Bank. The *Financial Times* regards this 'political battering' as even more damaging than the withdrawal of student and other accounts.

Barclays however has not broken all links with South Africa. It will co-operate with Barnat on matters like training and technology. It will preserve a correspondent banking relationship, finance trade and keep credit lines open. It has over £700m in outstanding loans in South Africa including £538m to Barnat. This means that Barclays is still giving substantial support to the racist apartheid regime.

The boycott must go on. But don't wait for the British AAM to tell you so. You might have to wait another 17 years.

David Reed



Shut Botha up in 1987!

## Censorship crackdown

continued from page 1

Against the Emergency' starting from 16 December. This will include a boycott of white businesses and other action in solidarity with those in prison and in exile. Even before the new measures, the regime had placed a restriction order on Azhar Cachalia, a prominent UDF

spokesperson, and detained at least thirteen activists from the End Conscription Campaign (ECC). In another incident, undercover agents from the security forces murdered the sister of the late PAC leader Robert Sobukwe and her husband, a leading doctor known for treating victims of Botha's thugs.



## British press tainted with apartheid

62% of all daily newspapers and 77% of all Sunday newspapers sold in this country have a stake in apartheid.

Tiny Rowland's Lonrho owns the *Observer*, *Today*, *Glasgow Herald*, *Glasgow Evening Times* and *Scottish*, and Universal Newspapers Ltd (22 local titles). Lonrho also has substantial stakes in Border TV and Radio Clyde. Lonrho controls 107 concerns in South Africa and Namibia. The most important part of Lonrho's operation is mining, accounting for 9,400 out of Lonrho's 11,517 employees in South Africa. Lonrho has in fact increased its mining workforce by 12%. According to the Ethical Investment Research and Information Service (EIRIS) Lonrho's minimum wage rate quoted in 1984/5 was £107 per month (36% of the EEC target - itself a poverty level figure). Not surprisingly, in 1985, Lonrho's Southern Africa operations accounted for 8% of group sales but 17% (£215.3 million) of profits.

Pearson own the *Financial Times*, Westminster Press Ltd and 30% of the *Economist*. Pearson also have shares in Yorkshire TV (25%), LWT, Metro Radio, Essex Radio and Goldcrest Films (41.5%). Pearson have 5 companies in South Africa. More importantly, Pearson

own 50% of Lazard Brothers (UK), 40% of the profits of Lazard Freres (USA) and 10% of Lazard Freres (France). Lazards are the multinational financial conglomerate who gave us Ian McGregor. Lazards founded the first merchant bank in South Africa and play a crucial role in securing loans for apartheid. Pearson also have holdings in Shell.

Robert Maxwell owns Pergamon Press which owns *Mirror Group Newspapers* (*Daily Mirror*, *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday People*, *Scottish Daily Record*, *Sunday Mail* and *Sporting Life*). Maxwell also has substantial holdings in Radio Tay, Radio Clyde, Aire Northsound, Radio Moray Firth and Devonair. He is a director of, and major shareholder in Central TV. He also owns Metromode TV, Rediffusion Cablevision, Selectvision and Mirrorvision. Pergamon Press own MacDonal Purnell publishers in South Africa and have a 10% share in McCorquodale Ltd with 4 companies in South Africa.

Rupert Murdoch owns News International which publish the *Sun*, *The Times*, *News of the World*, *Sunday Times*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Times Education*

*Supplement* and *Times Higher Education Supplement*. Murdoch also has a substantial holding in LWT. News International owns 14 business titles in the UK, Satellite Television, Sky Channel and an important stake in 20th Century Fox. Murdoch owns 2 companies in South Africa through William Collins Plc. He also has a 20% share in Shell Consortium.

Rupert Hambro, Chairman of Hambro's Bank, is a director of the Telegraph Group (*Daily Telegraph*, *Sunday Telegraph* and shares in LWT). According to End Loans To South Africa (ELTSA) figures for 1982-4, Hambro's Bank was the second largest lender to South Africa (\$842.8 million between mid-1982 and December 1984).

British and Commonwealth Shipping has 28 companies in South Africa. They are also the second largest shareholders in TSW. Thames Television, the largest commercial TV station, is owned jointly by BET (40 companies in South Africa) and Thorn EMI (29 companies in South Africa). BET's minimum wage rate quoted in 1984/5 was R257 per month (49% of the EEC target). BET's African operations (of which South Africa is the major part) in 1984/5 accounted for 16% of group sales and 22% (£25.7 million) of

profits. Thorn EMI's minimum wage rate quoted was £332 per month (48% of the EEC target). Thorn EMI admit to paying black women even less on the grounds that they are not 'breadwinners'.

Newspapers, magazines, radio, television, films, book publishing are all tainted with apartheid. No surprise that the British media have mounted no serious challenge to the apartheid censorship regulations. No surprise that not one British commercial newspaper supports compulsory economic sanctions. No surprise even that the nine month long picket of South Africa House is countered.

Terry O'Halloran

Sources: *FRFI* 45 January 1985; *Economist* 1 November 1986; *Labour Research March 1986*; EIRIS 'UK Companies in South Africa: pay and conditions' June 1986; ELTSA 'Bank Loans to South Africa mid 1982 to December 1984' 1985; *Labour Research Department 'Profiting from apartheid' July 1986*; Mark Hollingsworth *The Press and Political Dissent*, 1986; David Reed and Olivia Adamson *Miners Strike 1984-1985: People versus State*, 1985.

The ANC, too, has made 16 December a key date - it will be the 25th anniversary of the founding of its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and Oliver Tambo has announced that MK's actions will be escalated to new heights from that day. In the last month, military actions against the regime have included a landmine which seriously injured two policemen, a grenade attack which injured two more at Guguletu police station, and a limpet mine which exploded at the Putco bus depot in Soweto. Putco has been the target of sustained boycott action after it increased its fares by 17½%.

Another target of the press crackdown is the Detainees Parents Support Committee (DPSC), which last month published a powerful report on the detention and torture of black youth. The report revealed that there are still 4,000 detainees aged 18 or under. Over a third of the 22,000 detained since the State of Emergency began have been in this age group, and they have faced the same brutal torture as other detainees. They have been beaten, suffocated, throttled to the point of unconsciousness, given electric shocks, urinated on, and doused with petrol then threatened with necklacing. They have been held in filthy, freezing, overcrowded cells, and come out physically and mentally scarred for life.

One 'schoolboy' said, 'I had to lie on a bench face down and then different police took turns in delivering between 80 and 86 lashes to my body from my head to my feet. They wanted to know the whereabouts of a certain boy. About three hours later a five-litre can of petrol was poured over me and one of the white police urinated in my face. There was talk among the police of burning me...'

The regime responded to the report with attempts to fiddle the figures and bland denials, but the new ban on reporting of such allegations is a stark admission of guilt.

South Africa is smouldering with revolt and nowhere is this clearer than in the mines. On 25 November 2,000 workers struck at Gencor's Matla colliery against the management's treatment of unionised workers. Teargas was used against the workers at another Gencor mine and one worker died in fighting at Gencor's Kinross gold mine, where 177 died in an accident earlier this year. On 4 December 5,000 workers at Gencor's Grootvlei mine struck after police attacked a union meeting, killing one miner and injuring eight more. The worst incidents, however, took place at Anglo-American's Vaal Reef's mine. In November 13 workers died in clashes, then eleven were hospitalised as a result of an accident in the mine. In early December clashes between militant and reactionary miners led to twenty more deaths and 72 injuries. The following week 500 miners resigned and left the mine.

With repression and resistance escalating, the irrelevancy of 'reforming away apartheid' and the forces which advocate it are ever more clearly exposed. The last month has seen Botha shelving proposals from his 'Presidents Council' for reform of the Group Areas Act, and a spokesman for his party rejecting plans for multi-racial 'power sharing' in Natal/KwaZulu. The power-sharing proposals came from an alliance of the collaborator Buthelezi and the 'liberal' white Progressive Federal Party who share Neil Kinnock's aim of reforming away the appearance of apartheid with the minimum damage to imperialism. But Botha's National Party is giving up its attempt to put a 'reforming' mask over its ugly countenance.

As the call for the Christmas Against the Emergency says, 'There are only two sides to take in South Africa today. The side of those fighting for democracy, non-racialism, and peace or the side supporting apartheid destruction.' Botha's latest measures show his side is on the defensive.

Dave Hunter



# Anti-Apartheid Movement

## — a year of prevarication

**'Britain is the only country that is blocking, that is standing between us and our total liberation. If Britain were to agree to the proposals to go along with sanctions, a lot of pressure would be put on the South African regime and apartheid would start to crumble.**

**... we believe that the British people as a nation have done nothing to assist us in attaining our liberation.'**

Cyril Ramaphosa, General Secretary NUM (South Africa) speaking to the British NUM Conference, 1 July 1986.

The leadership of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and its close political allies Neil Kinnock and the TUC, have allowed Thatcher to keep Britain the world's principal backer of apartheid terror. Any other assessment of the AAM's performance since its last Annual General Meeting in December 1985 diverts attention away from the movement's central task and responsibility — to mobilise, unite and lead the forces that can break all British collaboration with apartheid.

### Thatcher's 'tiny little bit'

Thatcher returned from the Bahamas summit in October 1985 boasting that she had only conceded 'a tiny little bit' to the pressure for sanctions from the Commonwealth. She had manoeuvred to give Botha time, time to reassert control and crush the resistance in South Africa. The 'Eminent Persons Group' was formed to that end.

Millions of working class people, alerted by scenes of heroic black resistance, felt nothing but revulsion for Thatcher's racist gloating. Two weeks later, on 2 November 1985, 100,000 converged on Trafalgar Square. A substantial section had to battle with the Metropolitan Police squads which attacked the crowd.

The ruling class had given notice that, if needs be, it will fight on the streets of Britain to defend its interests in Southern Africa and it would suspend the democratic right to protest to deal with those forces who mounted any serious threat. The harsh realities of class struggle in Thatcher's Britain had for once been forced onto the attention of the AAM.

So, in preparing its strategy for 1986, the AAM leadership was faced with a clear political choice. Would it stick with its tried and failed methods which had over decades gained for the AAM a respectable niche within British constitutional politics? Or was it prepared to lead an effective mass movement which would force an end to Thatcher's collaboration and time wasting, thereby putting at risk its own secure position? The AAM turned away from such a dangerous prospect. Plans were laid for the next national demonstration on 28 June 1986 to ensure the marchers were kept well away from Downing Street and Trafalgar Square.

### The AAM — Kinnock alliance

In practice the AAM leadership is a conscience-saving front for the Kinnock-led Labour Party. Kinnock's backsliding on his promise to 'isolate apartheid' was already well under way. He refused to call for closing the racist Embassy. The Party's formal support for economic sanctions has always been cast aside once it threatened to stand in the way of Labour's assurances to big business. Kinnock began speaking of selective measures as the means to avoid revolution ie to defend future British investment at the expense of political power and liberation for the black masses in South Africa.

The AAM leadership works hand in glove with Kinnock. Its strategy is based on the election of a Labour government. The AAM places no conditions on its support for Kinnock — it raised no objection at Kinnock's climb down on sanctions.

In the Spring of 1986 there were momentous events in South Africa.

While many local AA groups stepped up campaigning activity, there was for months no national focus. The only consistent centre of protest was the Non-Stop Picket launched by City AA on 19 April. The AAM leadership had yet another opportunity to put aside its sectarian hostility to City AA. It could have supported the Non-Stop Picket, but to do so would mean encouraging the type of initiative and activity that could galvanise the movement and bring it back out onto the streets outside the Embassy.

Thatcher's EPG dodge worked even better than she could have planned. The press speculated that the EPG could negotiate a peaceful settlement, starting with the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC in return for the ending of the ANC's guerrilla war. Botha's answer to those who still held out the prospect of reform was the murderous bombing raids on the Frontline states. The AAM's inertia when it should have been on the offensive for Mandela's release, is inexplicable unless it too placed its faith in the outcome of the EPG mission. As Convenor Carol Brickley told City AA's mass rally outside the Embassy on 16 June, 'The silence is deafening'.

Thatcher ramméd the point home. At the EEC summit on 27 June she stalled any decisions on sanctions for a further 3 months. Howe was sent on yet another 'fact finding' mission. The insult of Thatcher's diplomatic swindle raised a clamour of outrage across the world. Labour tried to limit the damage to British interests. Months before Kinnock had extracted a promise from Rajiv Gandhi not to bring India out of the Commonwealth over sanctions, and Healey now attempted to persuade Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda to meet Howe and so give credibility to Thatcher's plan.

The 100,000 who marched and the 250,000 who joined the pop festival at Clapham Common on 28 June occasioned no difficulty for Thatcher. They were not meant to. There was no direction from the AAM for those who joined the demonstration looking to do more against apartheid than listen to rock music. That evening 1000 people did join the Non-Stop Picket and were immediately involved in City AA's campaign. The AAM lost over £42,000 on the day. At the precise moment that pressure had to be built up, the AAM's leaders contrived an event that would do no more than let off steam.

### The black Commonwealth boycott — Hughes scabs

Significant pressure on Thatcher came from outside Britain through the black Commonwealth nations. At first Ghana and Nigeria, and before long 32 black nations joined in a boycott of the Edinburgh Games in protest at Britain's refusal to implement sanctions. Tory 'wets' criticised Thatcher's hard line as counterproductive, and even the Queen let her concern for the Commonwealth's future be known. At last Thatcher had been pushed onto the defensive. The way was clear for the AAM to exploit the rifts in the ruling class by mobilising mass action in support of the Commonwealth boycott.

AAM Chairman Bob Hughes broke the boycott. Hughes, then a member of Kinnock's front bench, and the AAM's Scottish Secretary Brian Filling signed a public letter from the Scottish TUC calling on the boycotting nations 'to contin-

ue their participation in the 1986 Games. The Kinnock-Hughes-AAM alliance deliberately destroyed an historic opportunity to decisively shift the balance of forces against continued British collaboration. It was a scabbing act.

Tourists' spending money, Maxwell's loot and Kinnock's own shallow ego (he attended the Games of Shame closing ceremony) were considered more important than a united stand with the black majority of the Commonwealth.

The outcome of Hughes intervention was to demobilise even further the movement in Britain. By the time the 7 Commonwealth leaders met in London on 3/4 August to consider the EPG's recommendations barely 400 people gathered outside. The pressure was off. As a consequence, although completely isolated in the Commonwealth, Thatcher felt no need to make more than paltry concessions, a line which she car-

ried at the EEC's September summit too.

At last year's AAM AGM the RCG and City AA pointed out that Bob Hughes debating with representatives of the regime was collaboration with apartheid and we warned of the consequences. That warning should have been heeded. This year Hughes has gone even further and sabotaged the boycott.

### The issues before the AGM

AAM members and delegates attending this year's belated AGM must insist on a full and open debate, it may well be their last chance to do so. They will witness a mass mobilisation of Labour Party and Communist Party members whipped up to vote down, shout down and beat down the 'ultra-left'. For many it will be their only contribution of the year. The outgoing National Committee is proposing constitutional

amendments which will provide for internal policing of local groups, along the lines that were used to expel City AA, a restriction of AA activists participation in the AGM to one delegate per 50 members and a weighting of delegations in favour of the block votes controlled by their allies in the TUC and Labour Party. It is a constitution tailored to exclude or marginalise any active currents and to prevent upward pressure that might jeopardise the old alliance. We will be moving its rejection.

- The RCG will be supporting motions and amendments condemning the role of Hughes and Filling.

- Comrades in City AA and the RCG have amended a Communist Party inspired motion congratulating 'the head office for organising the hugely successful march and festival on June 28 and we will be arguing for a national

### Fighting history of Trafalgar Square

For 140 years Trafalgar Square has been a trophy room for the British ruling class. Here they celebrate their might and present the perpetrators of their criminal history as heroes: Nelson, whose victory at Trafalgar in 1805 secured British domination of the sea lanes to Africa and Asia; Napier, butcher of Ireland, India and Afghanistan, who proclaimed it as law of nature 'that barbarous peoples should be absorbed by their civilised neighbours'; Havelock, who left his trademark of burned-out villages and hanging corpses along the roadsides of the Crimea, Persia, China and India; and the fountains are dedicated to Admirals Beatty and Jellicoe, suppressors of the Chinese Boxer Rebellion, and who distinguished themselves in 1916 at the Battle of Jutland by drowning twice as many British sailors as German sailors and still managing to claim a victory.

But, Trafalgar Square has a more honourable if less obvious tradition behind it: it is the site of many of the most determined struggles of the oppressed in Britain. In 1848 Trafalgar Square was already a favourite meeting point for the Chartists, with their slogans of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity', 'Ireland for the Irish', 'Bread or Blood', they were banned from the Square. Between 6-8 March 1848 over 103 arrests are reported, mainly of young people aged around 20. On 10 April 150,000 people gathered on Kennington Common in support of the Chartists' demands. The 'Iron Duke' of Wellington ringed the Square with Cavalry and Infantry to prevent access to the demonstrators.

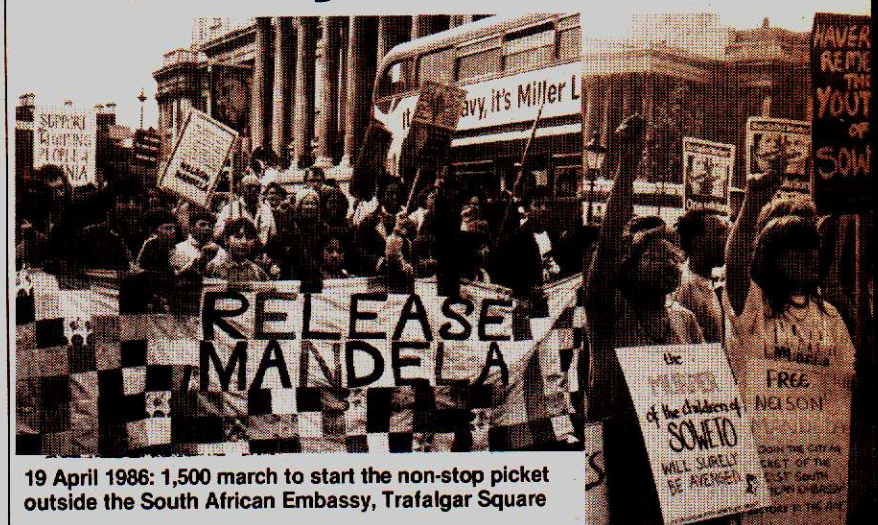
On 'Bloody Sunday' 13 November 1887 the Irish National League and Metropolitan Radical Federation organised a march into London demanding the release of Irish MPs and Free Speech in Britain. Thousands converged on Trafalgar Square from their starting points in Deptford, Rotherhithe, Notting Hill, Clerkenwell and Bermondsey. Hand-to-hand fighting broke out with the police and Grenadier Guards in the Haymarket, St Martin's Lane, Parliament Square and the Strand. Two people were killed, 200 hospitalised and 160 jailed. Even MPs of the day fought and were arrested. The fighting went on into the evening and some people managed to break through into the Square. Even today demonstrations in support of the Irish struggle are banned from Trafalgar Square. A ban enforced by the current Tory Cabinet Minister Peter Walker in 1972.

During this century the Suffragettes have rallied, been spied on and arrested in Trafalgar Square; the Hunger Marchers of 1920s-30s had to fight their way in as police arrested anyone not dressed in blue; CND and anti-Vietnam War demonstrators have filled the Square. Its lessons are simple and vital: the British ruling class gathers its strength from imperial domination; until the British working class unites with the struggle of the oppressed in the world, the ruling class will remain strong.

In Spring 1987, the Department of the Environment will start 'refurbishing' the Square. It will be out of action for demonstrations for up to two years. Trevor Rayne

# Non-stop picket

## 250 days for Nelson



19 April 1986: 1,500 march to start the non-stop picket outside the South African Embassy, Trafalgar Square

Many special mass protests were held, including: Soweto Day and the start of the State of Emergency, Mandela's birthday, Women's days in South Africa and Namibia



On 28 June, 1,000 people picketed in the evening in stark contrast to the AAM pop festival

The police made numerous attempts to silence the picket. They are now collaborating with the Embassy to bring prosecutions. On 18 August we broke the silence — the court cases continue



# Smash apartheid in 1987

demonstration outside the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square.

● We will be arguing that the AGM reaffirms its position of campaigning to close down the Embassy.

● We will want to know what has the National Committee done under the direction of last year's AGM to defend democratic rights - has it campaigned against the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the racist immigration laws?

● A motion from Sheffield AA reads: 'This AGM welcomes the development of initiatives by local authorities, trade unions, churches and other organisations to take action in support of the economic boycott of the apartheid regime. We believe that such action should be concentrated on the boycott of South African and Namibian products and on disinvestment for companies with interests in the two countries. We further believe that 'secondary boycotting' is a strategy to be used against specific targets (eg Barclays) or in special circumstances (eg Rowntree Mackintosh), and not as a blanket policy. We therefore call upon the National Committee to draw up clear advice on economic action and 'secondary boycotts'.

What is this motion trying to do? Typically, the AAM has always pulled back

from launching a full-scale spirited boycott movement in Britain - that's why it took 17 years for Barclays to withdraw and in response to the Rowntree-Wilson strike in 1983 the AAM urged its supporters 'to think' before eating their Kit-Kats. Extraordinarily, at a time when the anti-apartheid movement in the USA has proved that boycotting US companies who have a stake in South Africa, *actually works*, Sheffield AAM wants the British AAM to *pull back* from boycotting British companies (the 'secondary boycott') except in exceptional circumstances. Why? What is the meaning of Sheffield AAM's (home of Richard Caborn MP and David Blunkett) apartheid free-zone if they now want carte blanche to trade with apartheid's British backers? As usual the AAM is more concerned with the difficulties the boycott, presents for the British labour aristocracy than the prospect of winning victories for the oppressed of Southern Africa.

● We will be moving an amendment urging an energetic campaign 'for the immediate release of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Zephaniah Mthopeng and all South African and Namibian political prisoners and detainees'; for SATIS to raise funds for prisoners, detainees and their families, to encourage a campaign for their adopt-

ion and for SATIS itself to adopt a democratic structure.

## Trade unions and solidarity

There are several motions concerning support for trade unions in South Africa, including the call for 'direct links' ie contacts between rank and file trade unionists in Britain and in South Africa.

The position of the RCG is to support, without placing any conditions on that support, all organisations and movements in their fight against apartheid.

This has never been the approach of the AAM. Its sectarianism was most damaging when the liberation movements ZANU and ZAPU fought to end white racist domination in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The AAM has never accounted for the fact that for years its leadership gave no support to ZANU, always preferring ZAPU in what little solidarity action it did organise. But it was ZANU who bore the brunt of the fighting for liberation and showed at independence that it was the party supported by the majority of the people. The war was won despite, not because of, the abject state of the AAM's solidarity.

Beyond question in making contact

with trade unionists in South Africa their security has to be given central consideration. But security concerns have been used to cover the AAM's own selective 'direct links' and its sectarianism has resulted in a lot of unions and left groups refusing to go through the AAM and its organisations. They have found their own channels, not going through the offices in exile of SACTU (South African Congress of Trade Unions) which works closely with the AAM.

The AAM imposes a veto on contact with unions in South Africa, particularly if they do not subscribe to a particular viewpoint or are not organised in COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions - membership 600-700,000). Now, the formation and growth of COSATU is a major gain for the South African working class and the centre of moves to unity (see *COSATU: new weapon against apartheid* in FRFI 61), but there are other independent unions and the newly federated CUSA/AZACTU alliance (Council of Unions of South Africa and Azanian Confederation of Trade Unions - combined membership 300-400,000) who also represent sections of workers. They too deserve our support for it must be left to the South African, and if they choose, Azanian workers to express their

allegiances, not to the movement in Britain.

The RCG will be arguing at the AGM that while the AAM leadership has a sectarian history of one-sided solidarity, the AAM constitution gives in its 'aims and objectives' the basis 'to co-operate with and support Southern African organisations campaigning against apartheid' for the principled position. Links, direct or otherwise according to the circumstances of the particular union, should only be made with trade unions campaigning against apartheid.

The central issue remains the political direction of the leadership of the AAM.

If all progress to sanctions is to be held hostage to the Labour Party which betrayed the miners, has not lifted a finger for 4 million unemployed and condemns black resistance to police racism - then there will be no progress by the AAM. There will only be prevarication, sectarianism, dirty deals and cover ups for sabotage.

City AA's Non-Stop Picket has shown that the time for all that to be acceptable as an unwelcome, but necessary feature of anti-apartheid campaigning is well past. New methods, new leaders, a new culture, new politics are coming to the fore.

Andy Higginbottom

## Picket Mandela

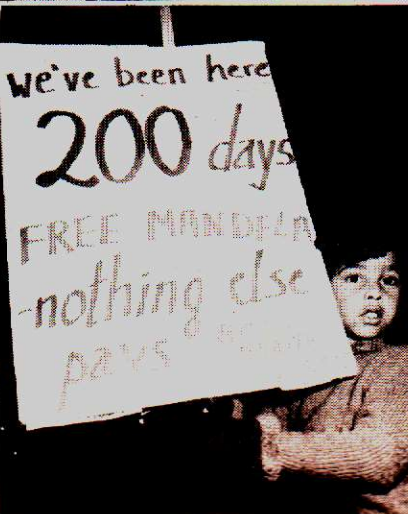


Many bands and performers support the picket - especially the Horns of Jericho

But the continuation of the picket is due to the support of many young people who have been there for 250 days and nights and will stay until Mandela is free.

Join them!

For more information phone City AA 01-837 6050



## DEFEND THE RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE!

Hands off women picketers!  
Picket for Simone's case.  
Wells Street. 10am. 16 January.

## North West support for non-stop picket

Lorna and Claire went on a speaking tour in Manchester and Liverpool between 26 and 28 November. We spoke at meetings called by St. Helen's AA group, Manchester and Liverpool FRFI, and at five colleges. We raised £70 for City Group, received donations of clothing and made new contacts for the Non-Stop picket.

At Liverpool University we spoke at a rally for Jeanette Herrity, a NUPE member who was sacked from her job as a cleaner at the university because she is pregnant. Unfortunately, we had to fight for the right to speak even though we'd been invited. Members of the Labour Club attempted to prevent us speaking after being told by members of Socialist Action, who control Merseyside AA, 'Don't touch them (City Group) with a barge pole.' Despite these sectarian manoeuvres we did speak. Socialist Action's smear campaign in the North West reached the height of absurdity. They told the members of Merseyside AA that 'Supporting the Non-Stop Picket is like supporting Botha.'

It's this nonsense that is holding back the building of a movement that will seriously challenge apartheid. At Edge Hill college, near Liverpool, we joined students on a picket of Nat West bank. For six weeks the students have held pickets twice a week and have managed to reduce the number of students banking there from 100 to less than 20. The Edge Hill students have taken up that challenge to apartheid. A serious movement against British collaboration with apartheid will follow their example and ignore those who are content to slander real action against apartheid whilst doing nothing themselves.

Lorna Morgan

## Merseyside Non Stop Picket Support Group

The group has been set up to encourage active opposition to the racist embassy in London, to encourage and sustain and build the non stop picket of the South Africa Embassy.

To become involved contact:  
Merseyside Non Stop Picket Support Group  
c/o Lark Lane Books, 82 Lark Lane, Liverpool 17

## Victories in the courts

On 26 November City Group activists won another important victory against police harassment of the Non-Stop Picket. The charges of assault and police obstruction against Amanda and of police obstruction against Cat and Simon were dismissed after Magistrate Audrey Jennings had heard the conflicting and spurious evidence of 5 police officers and told the prosecution, 'your evidence is in something of a turmoil... you really don't have a case, do you?'

Amanda is now in a strong position to proceed with her writ against the police for sexual assault and harassment following her arrest on 17 September.

Simone is in court on 16 January for assault and obstruction. While in custody at Cannon Row she was forcibly strip-searched and has also issued writs against the police, since when she has been subjected to constant intimidation in the form of repeated arrest for police obstruction in a blatant attempt to discredit her and weaken the writs. There will be a picket of the court which FRFI will be supporting. A strong picket outside court can often help to win the case. So, support Simone and defeat police harassment!

The trial of 5 black and 3 white comrades arrested on 13 June when police brutally attacked the picket, has been adjourned to February after 4 days of prosecution evidence. Two of the defendants are black South Africans who came to the picket in disgust at the declaration of the State of Emergency. Those arrested were subjected to racial abuse and physical violence. The charges against Susannah, arrested during the onslaught, were dropped before the trial.

Highway obstruction charges against Anver, who was allegedly holding the banner too close to the Embassy gates, and Richard, who was standing by the picket equipment in an empty street at 7am, have been dropped. Anver won £60 costs. Neville, arrested on the 11 October Day of Action, was convicted of threatening behaviour and fined £50.

Award for the PC most keen for promotion goes this month to AD738 who has developed a policy of arresting chief stewards who ask him to speak to them instead of approaching individual picketers, as has been standard practice for 4 years. AD738 is individually responsible for at least 7 arrests on the Non-Stop Picket and is an accessory to several more.

The most alarming development recently is the police abuse of stop-and-search powers. Picketers on their way to and from Trafalgar Square have been repeatedly stopped, questioned and searched, allegedly for drugs. Of course nothing has been found on anybody. Picket rules strictly forbid possession

and use of drugs.

Police intimidation, coupled with threats of violence made by white South Africans, is being taken seriously by City Group. Picketers have been accosted and told to stay away from the Embassy, 'or else'; City AA's office received a phonecall saying it would be in our 'best interests' not to be outside South Africa House. *The Observer* of 7 December carried an article on Control Risks, a security consultancy, investigating the 'potential violent threat' of anti-apartheid activity on behalf of a syndicate of UK companies with South African links.

Since 19 April the Non-Stop Picket has been harassed by the police. Now, it seems, apartheid's representatives in Britain are taking action against the picket themselves. Lorna will be prosecuted on 30 December under the Westminster byelaws regarding noise and an Embassy staff member will give evidence against her. Formal complaints that the picket disturbs the Embassy's work are now an everyday occurrence and over 100 picketers have been reported for offences concerning noise. We are fighting back against this 'legal' harassment and now we have direct, physical intimidation to contend with as well. The picket celebrates 250 days on Christmas Eve and will not be frightened away by thugs, in or out of uniform. We will stand firm until Nelson Mandela is free.

Nicki Rensten

## Court dates

6 January John Patrick. Wells Street. 10am. Threatening behaviour (arrested 11 October).

12 January Dominic and Andy. Noise under the Westminster byelaws.

13 January Simone. Wells Street. 10am. Police obstruction (arrested by AD738).

16 January Simone. Wells Street. 10am. Assault and police obstruction. PICKET!

22 January Andy, Jane and Sally. Wells Street. 10am. Police obstruction (arrested 11 October for chaining themselves to the Embassy.)

10 February Amanda, Amanda and Satsi. Horseferry Road. Nearest tube Victoria. 10am. Highway and police obstruction from 16 June - case not heard.



## Repression in US Prisons

# MARION MADNESS

The United States Penitentiary at Marion (USP Marion) is located in a remote rural area in Southern Illinois, about 300 miles due south of the city of Chicago. This predominantly agricultural area of notoriously high unemployment and economic depression is the site of several state prisons.

USP Marion was originally built as a replacement for the infamous Federal Penitentiary Alcatraz, which closed in 1963. Of the 47 prisons maintained by the federal government (each state has its own prison system independent of the federal system which houses about 35,000 prisoners; some state systems are even larger), Marion has the highest security rating: security level six. During its early history, it was used primarily to house young prisoners and those considered less notorious as a test of its security status. That character was later changed, especially after the 1973 construction of the barbarous control unit, H block, where prisoners were, and still are, sentenced to years of almost complete isolation.

During the 70s, prisoners with longer sentences (41 years is the present average), and those considered security risks due to their records of escape, political activity, or violence were increasingly sent here. Conditions began to deteriorate as a staff disposed to engage in social experimentation and indulge a macho

**'Prisoners were chained "spread-eagled" to bunks for long periods'**

inclination to demonstrate its power over the 'bad asses' imposed new restrictions and harassments. In 1979 and 80 a series of work strikes with universal prisoner participation to protest the abuse shut down the prison. The administration responded by closing down the industrial, vocational and education programmes and shipping all the equipment to other institutions. Existence at USP Marion was then reduced to tier time and a daily 2 hour recreation period outside the block.

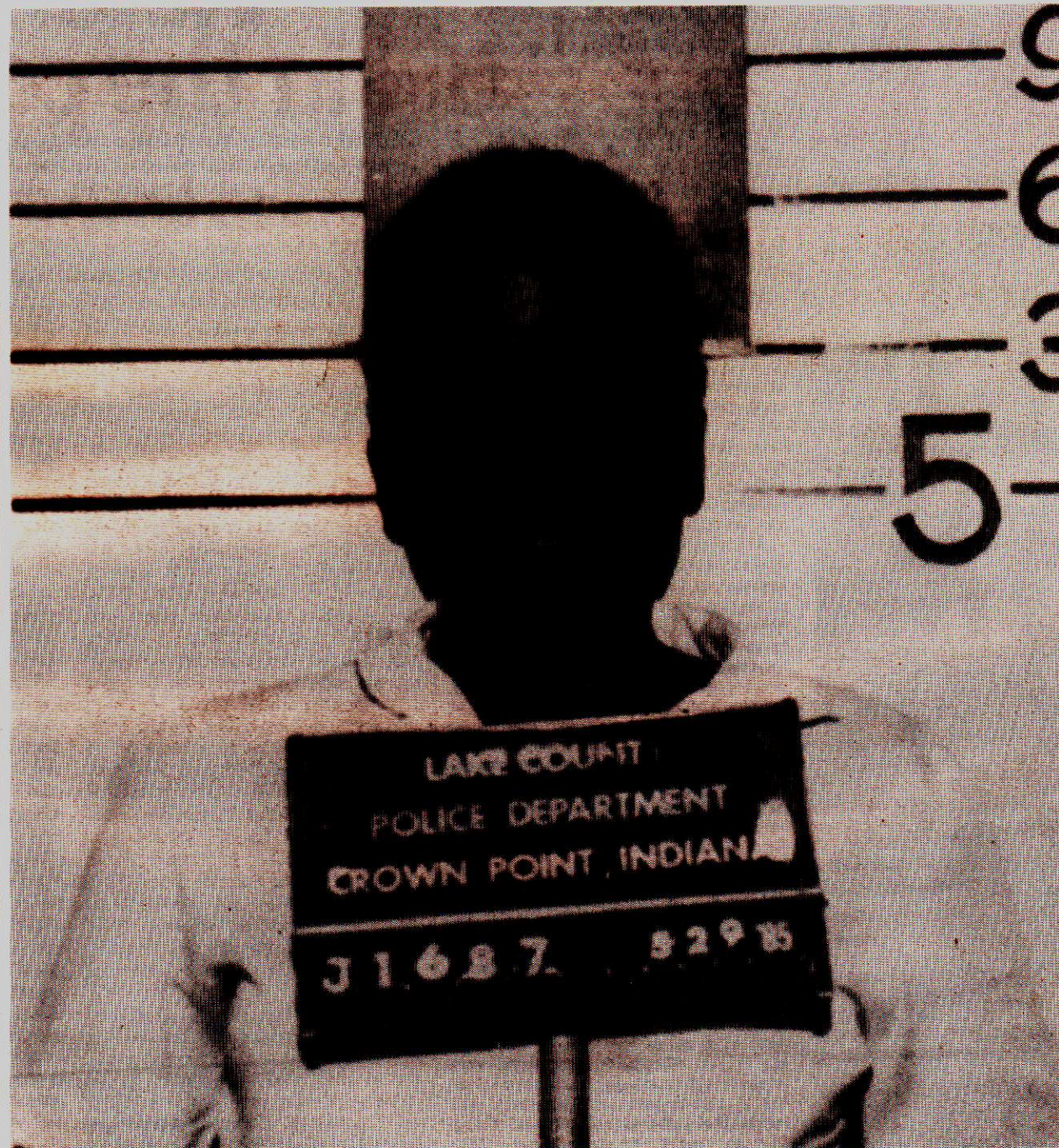
On 27 October 1983, the prison was 'locked down', that is all prisoners were confined to their cells round the clock and fed 'sock lunches'. The reason alleged was 'acts of violence' and the killing of two guards. However, the fact that the violence was only comparable to that happening in other prisons, was only engaged in by a small minority of the population, and that the guard killings were isolated incidents that occurred in the control unit (an entirely separate part of the prison) 5 days before the imposition of the lock down, demonstrate that this 'reason' was only an excuse. Bureau of Prisons (BOP) documents released during subsequent legal proceedings and cited in a consultant's report to the US Congress, confirm that the incidents were merely used to legitimise implementation of an existing repressive design.

During the lock down, squads bearing such names as 'The A Team' and 'Blue Thunder' were rotated from all over the prison system and went on a rampage of repression throughout the institution. Dressed in riot gear including flak jackets and helmets with dark face plates and without name tags, these club wielding crews terrorised prisoners inflicting beatings during arbitrary cell

*Bill Dunne is a prisoner in US State prison Marion. His account of the repression in Marion, and the targeting of 'subversives' reveals that US prisons, like British prisons, are used to intimidate the poor and destroy resistance.*

*Presently \$5 billion is being spent on 626 new prisons. In 1985 there were 1,540 men and women on 'death row' waiting to be judicially murdered. 40% of these prisoners are black (black people form 11% of the population as a whole). The death rows are so overcrowded that last year the Texas state prison director asked the courts to avoid scheduling more than one execution a day.*

*Since Reagan's 1981 inaugural the rate of judicial killing has increased tenfold. The average age of those condemned to death is below 20.*



*Paula Cooper is 16 years old. She is on death row in Indiana. Send messages of support to her at: Indiana Women's Prison, 401 North Randolph St, Indiana 46201. Send protests to: Robert D Orr, Office of the Governor, 206 State House, Indianapolis, Indiana 46204.*

after a meal, or 'bad attitude'. All property was confiscated and much of it destroyed. Food was contaminated. Windows were left open during cold winter weather. Prisoners were chained 'spread eagled' to bunks for long periods and left handcuffed in cells for days. Rectal probes were inflicted, purportedly to search for contraband but in reality as a punitive measure. Chained and shackled prisoners were beaten down and 'finger woved' while numerous guards made obscene and degrading remarks. The resulting litigation (still pending showing the exceedingly limited utility

of unit recreation periods are divided between an outdoor pen and a recreation period, they are handcuffed in back and 'escorted' by club-brandishing guards. They are allowed only one correspondence course at a time. There is no work except for a few floor sweeping jobs. Searches, including strip searches, abound. Violence, including rectal probes, chainings to bunks, confinements to 'boxcar' cells and beatings, is only occasionally applied against infrequent resistance.

The character of Marion style repression is endless cell time, incessant har-

assment, feelings of powerlessness and tension. Myriad petty rules exist, all of which no one knows, such as regarding the position of the cardboard box that serves as a locker or requiring the exchange of the used sliver of soap for the new bar, or prohibiting the possession of the cardboard back of a writing tablet etc. From time to time, a new senseless decree is issued in an apparent effort to increase tension and a binge of enforcement thereof undertaken. We are now in the grip of one such, about what can be on the floor and where it must be.

Different guards insist on enforcing different rules at different times and selectively. Infractions of these arbitrary rules are usually written up as 'refusing to obey an order' and the result is that no prisoner knows if or when he will be taken to the hole for something he didn't know he was doing wrong. The effect of these infractions is magnified by making them justification for up to another year at Marion beyond the hold time. Other harassment includes verbal abuse, interference with mail, property, legal work, the practice of religion, lying about regulations and procedures, arbitrary cell and unit moves and creation of frustrating bureaucratic obstacles. Though staff deny it, the apparent intent of these deliberate vexations is to pursue prisoners into the very corners of their cells and prevent them

from building the psychological space to resist their oppression.

There are no set criteria for consignment to Marion or for transfer to another prison. The usual justifications for sending people to Marion are violence, disruptive behaviour, or escape potential at other prisons, but they are frequently just excuses. They provide a cover for punishing legitimate activity displeasing to authorities and in a growing number of cases, are not even alleged. Prisoners are allowed no input into the process and administrators insist that movement is on the basis of their 'professional judgement'.

**'... endless cell time, incessant harassment and isolation'**

The stated reason for the existence of USP Marion is so that the other 46 federal prisons can be run in a more open manner, but that assertion is contradicted by the actuality that Marion has served more as an anchor that draws the rest of the system towards its repressive extreme. Indeed, the proliferation of abusive control units on the Marion model, has not been limited to the federal system. Nor has Marion, as an 'end of the line' or 'concentration model' prison, resulted in a demonstrable reduction of violence at other prisons.

The increasing use of Marion against people not categorised as 'violent and predatory' at other prisons as time goes on legitimises the precedent and diminishes scrutiny, exposes the BOP's 'safety' concerns as more for public relations than real. Its real concern is shown by the growing use of Marion against people directly from the streets, political prisoners, litigators, organisers etc, despite the cost to both prisoners and public.

The character of Marion style repression is endless cell time, incessant harassment, feelings of powerlessness and tension. Myriad petty rules exist, all of which no one knows, such as regarding the position of the cardboard box that serves as a locker or requiring the exchange of the used sliver of soap for the new bar, or prohibiting the possession of the cardboard back of a writing tablet etc. From time to time, a new senseless decree is issued in an apparent effort to increase tension and a binge of enforcement thereof undertaken. We are now in the grip of one such, about what can be on the floor and where it must be.

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The average daily prison population was 46,373 – an increase of 3,000 over the previous year. The number of women prisoners rose from 1,470 to 1,570. At the end of November 1986 there were 48,010 prisoners. This is only the second time ever that the 48,000 mark has been passed.

Overcrowding grew steadily despite the massive prison building programme. In 1985/6 there were 18,544 prisoners sharing cells designed for one person – an increase of 1,308 (8%) over the previous year. Since the Thatcher government came to power in 1979, overcrowding has increased by 12%.

As any paid apologist for the Home Office will unctuously inform you, prison provides work and education for prisoners. The facts, however, conflict with this claim. In 1985/6 the number of workshop places fell by 276 from 14,480 to 14,204 despite the rise in the prison population. The total number of hours prisoners worked fell by 600,000 from 9.1 million to 8.5 million. This represents less than half the hours worked in 1974/5 (over 17 million).

In the academic year 1984/5 prisoners spent 5.1 million hours on education – a fall of 500,000 hours over the previous year's 5.6 million hours. If the increase in the prison population is taken into account these figures mean that per prisoner the number of hours worked fell by 13% and the hours spent on education fell by 15%.

58 prisoners (56 male; 2 female) died. According to the report, 24 died of natural causes. One of those 'natural' deaths was that of Eusif Ryan in Wandsworth prison who died of a fit in a shit-smearing punishment block cell. He had been racially abused and medically neglected (see *FRFI 50, 51, 53*).

# BRITISH PRISONS Bad to worse

**In their annual report for 1986 NACRO note that on all the major indicators conditions in British prisons have got worse in the last 20 years. The Prison Department report for 1985/6 certainly confirms that British prisons, bad enough to start with, are getting worse every year.**

On the brighter side the report shows an increase in the number of 'acts of concerted indiscipline' from 37 to 38. The report covers the period April 1985 to March 1986. It therefore excludes the nationwide disturbances at 22 prisons in England and Wales between 29 April and 2 May. It also excludes the major protests in Scottish prisons Saughton and Peterhead in October and November 1986.

Prisoners are continuing to resist and

even the Home Office's own carefully manufactured figures show they have cause enough to resist. But outside the prisons the Labour Party opposition, the trade union leadership and most of the British left remain silent as prisoners suffer. It is this silence that allows the Tory government to condemn prisoners to ever-worsening conditions and ever-increasing repression.

Terry O'Halloran

Right: Northeye April 1986  
Below: Peterhead November 1986



DRUGS: THE DIRTY DOZEN	
Prison	Number of doses per prisoner*
+ Holloway	329
+ Bullwood Hall/	
+ East Sutton Park	249
Parkhurst	247
Wakefield	212
+ Cookham Wood/	
+ Styal	198
Brixton	140
Grendon	112
Winchester	95
+ Askham Grange/	
+ Drake Hall	86

Seven of the twelve worst drugging prisons are women's prisons (+).  
\*Total number of doses of psychotropic, hypnotic and other drugs acting on the central nervous system administered divided by the average daily population of the prison. Calculated from *Report on the Work of the Prison Department 1985/6*.

OVERCROWDING LEAGUE	
Prison	Rate of overcrowding*
Leeds	203%
Leicester	188%
Birmingham	179%
Bedford	178%
Oxford	177%
Reading	176%
Lincoln	174%
Manchester	173%
Risley	163%
Liverpool	157%
Durham	155%
Pentonville	152%

Leeds prison with a Certified Normal Accommodation (CNA) of 630 had an average daily population of 1,281 and a peak population of 1,420.  
\*Rate of overcrowding = average daily population as a percentage of CNA. Calculated from *Report on the Work of the Prison Department 1985/6*.

## Report condemns judicial racism

**'Black people in the criminal justice system', a report by NACRO's Race Issues Advisory Committee, provides statistical evidence of a system which criminalises and condemns black people not only as targets of a racist judicial system but also as victims of racist attacks.**

In Nottingham a study showed that black youth are three times as likely as whites to be given custodial sentences on their first court appearance. In East Croydon, where 4% of the population is black, 29% of juveniles in detention are black.

In adult prisons, of prisoners serving sentences of four years or more, 18% are black. In 1985 27.5% of prisoners in Holloway women's prison were black.

As victims of racist attacks black people are treated with contempt by the police. There were 1,945 reported cases in 1985 in the Metropolitan Police area alone. Yet the police have only now 'established a formal procedure for centrally recording and monitoring racial incidents.' (p33).

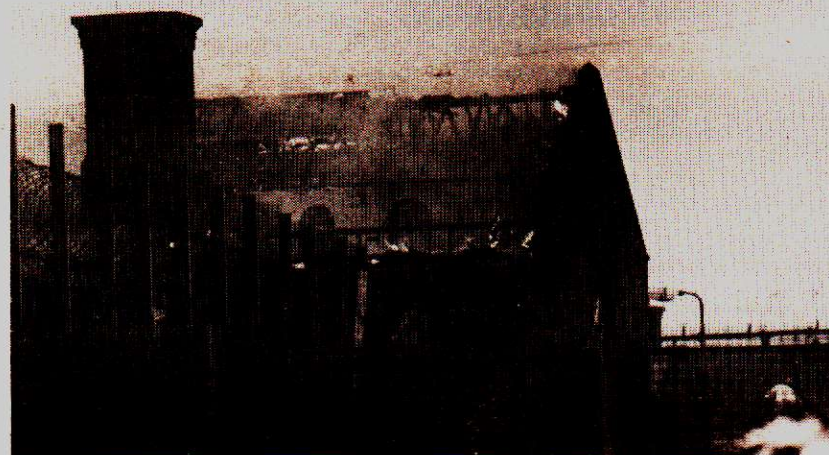
Each section of the report ends with 'proposals': always including 'training'

and 'recruitment'. NACRO regrets that the Met have only 285 black officers and that there are only two black judges. In the absence of any understanding of the causes of racism, NACRO's proposals are pitiful. Black cops and black judges, in whatever numbers, will never be called upon to try or sentence the perpetrators of racism – a police force committed to the criminalisation of the black community; a judiciary only too willing to collaborate with the police; and a government which freely provides the legislation to make it possible.

The information in the report, dearly bought at £5, is, however, useful and should be used.

Beth Summers

Report available from NACRO, 169 Clapham Road, London SW9 0PU.



## INSIDE NEWS

**John Schofield fighting prison censorship**

FRFI has heard more news from John Schofield who has been on punishment for over 14 months. John, who is currently in the notorious F Wing punishment block at Wakefield jail, tells us that prisoners are being held for long periods in solitary confinement.

We sent John a book which took 6 weeks to get to him. Apparently the governor at Liverpool decided not to show the book to John even though it had arrived recorded delivery. Having petitioned the Home Office about this breach of his rights, John received a reply saying, 'It is the policy at Liverpool that all recorded delivery mail is opened by the officer in charge of the census department, without the presence of the inmate.' So it seems that Liverpool jail is allowed to operate a policy different from any other prison in the country. This is another example of the harassment and abuse that prisoners suffer. As John says, 'I was at Liverpool for 6 months and all the recorded delivery letters I received were opened in front of me. It just proves that the

Home Office doesn't even look into complaints'.

Despite the constant harassment, John fights on for his rights and sends his best wishes to City Group's non-stop picket of the South African Embassy.

**Black prisoner takes Home Office to court**

John Alexander, a 26 year old black man in Parkhurst jail, is the first prisoner to bring a case of racial discrimination against the Home Office. In August 1983, John applied to work in the prison kitchen, but despite the fact that the vacancy appeared before and after his application, he was refused the job. He applied repeatedly and was constantly turned down. When he questioned this, he was told by a prison officer that, 'we don't allow black guys in the kitchen'. John reported this to the Campaign for Racial Equality (CRE) in November 1983 and decided to go to court.

In the context of prison work, a job in the kitchen is a privileged one. John had been working in the prison sheet metal plant, and had, not surprisingly found

this very noisy and depressing. He also applied for a cleaning job to get out of the plant – this too was refused. According to the assistant governor of Parkhurst, Mr Dean Hall, 3 years ago white prisoners working in the kitchen walked out when a black prisoner came to work with them. Since John's complaint to the CRE, however, black prisoners have been allowed to work in the kitchen with no apparent signs of protest.

During John's court case early in December, evidence of the racism in British jails has been further exposed. A confidential report said, 'Alexander is a 22 year old West Indian. He displays the usual traits associated with people of his ethnic background, being arrogant, suspicious of staff, anti-authority, devious and possessing a very large chip on his shoulder.'

A few months later prison officer, K Parkin, who had never spoken to John reported similar, sick-making filth, adding '... his attitude leaves me in no doubt that he will quickly become a control problem and with the growing coloured population in Parkhurst at this time he will most willingly join forces with them in any act of indiscipline.'

Black prisoners face this abuse every day of their sentences in British jails. John Alexander's stand is a courageous example of how to expose Home Office racism and fight for justice and your rights. The outcome of the case will be given in the New Year.

Alexa Byrne

**POW NEWS**

FRFI sends greetings and solidarity to all Irish POWs in Irish and English prisons this Christmas and New Year.

Special solidarity to Vince Donnelly POW, in HMP Wormwood Scrubs, England, who has been moved 10 times in the last year – part of the oppression of POWs here and done in a conscious effort to try to cut prisoners off from friends and family.

Warm greetings to Republicans Gerry Kelly (Crumlin Road Jail) and Brendan McFarlane (H Block 7) who were extradited from Holland in December after an 11 month legal battle. Also to Thomas Quinn in Wormwood Scrubs, who lost a long fight in the US courts against extradition to British 'justice'.

And to Ella O'Dwyer, Martina Anderson and Judith Ward, at present suffering at least six body searches a day in Durham gaol.



# British press and dissent

**The Press and Political Dissent, Mark Hollingsworth, Pluto Press, £6.95 pb, 367pp, 1986**

Mark Hollingsworth has performed an invaluable service in exposing the reality of the press in Britain: racist, lying, corrupt.

Three white multimillionaire men – Rupert Murdoch (News International), Robert Maxwell (Mirror Group Newspapers) and David Stevens (United Newspapers) – own 75% of the 14.7m daily papers sold, and 84% of the 17.8m Sunday papers sold. So three men control 80% of the total circulation. In 1948, the three largest newspaper groups accounted for only 48% of total circulation. The process of concentration and growing monopolies which characterises capitalism in its imperialist phase, is amply demonstrated in the press.

Concentration is not confined to the print media. All the major newspaper owners also have extensive

holdings in local radio and TV. Murdoch and Maxwell have major satellite and cable interests. The apparent 'choice' of news sources is largely a case of the soap-powder phenomenon. You can 'choose' from a dozen different soap powders but they all come from the same maker.

A person living in Yorkshire, for example, could read the *Daily Express*, *Daily Star* and *Yorkshire Post* (100% owned by United Newspapers) and in the evening, watch Yorkshire TV (10% owned by United Newspapers) and, for amusement(?) read *Punch* (100% owned by United Newspapers). United Newspapers, by the way, also donated £3,000 to Tory Party funds in 1984.

The so-called 'free' press turns out to be the creature of a handful of rich white men (six own 95% of all daily papers sold and 100% of Sunday

papers) who control the press in the interest of profit: both directly, and indirectly in the role the press plays in promoting and defending a society based on profit.

Hollingsworth's carefully researched and closely argued chapters on Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Peter Tatchell and the miners' strike brilliantly demonstrate how the press act to marginalise and criminalise any body or group seen as a threat. These individuals and groups become the cause of the problems of crisis-ridden Britain. As Hollingsworth puts it:

'Crime? Blame the blacks. Unemployment? Blame the scroungers. Inflation? Blame the unions. Permissive society? Blame the teachers. Miners' strike? Blame Arthur Scargill. Division in the Labour Party? Blame Tony Benn.' (p4)

Perhaps the most interesting example of the press acting as the propaganda arm of the ruling class is the chapter on the Greenham peace camp. At first Fleet Street could not think of anything bad to say. These were mostly middle-class white women, non-violent, very respectable and representing majority opinion (55-65% of the population are opposed to cruise missiles). Best just to patronise them and hope the winter disposes of them.

The peace camp, however, flourished and became a serious threat to government plans for deploying

cruise. And lo! Fleet Street did discover 'Moscow agents' in the peace camp, and disease in the peace camp, and (o horror!) lesbianism in the peace camp.

On 11 December 1983 30,000 women demonstrated at the base. The women were attacked by the police. 29 went to hospital. One went into intensive care. The press concentrated on Inspector Page who was injured when a concrete post fell on him. He said it was an accident. A couple of reporters investigated the women's accounts of police violence. The police replied with a tale of a police horse being whipped with barbed wire by one of the women. It was a lie. The press printed the lie (pp188-190).

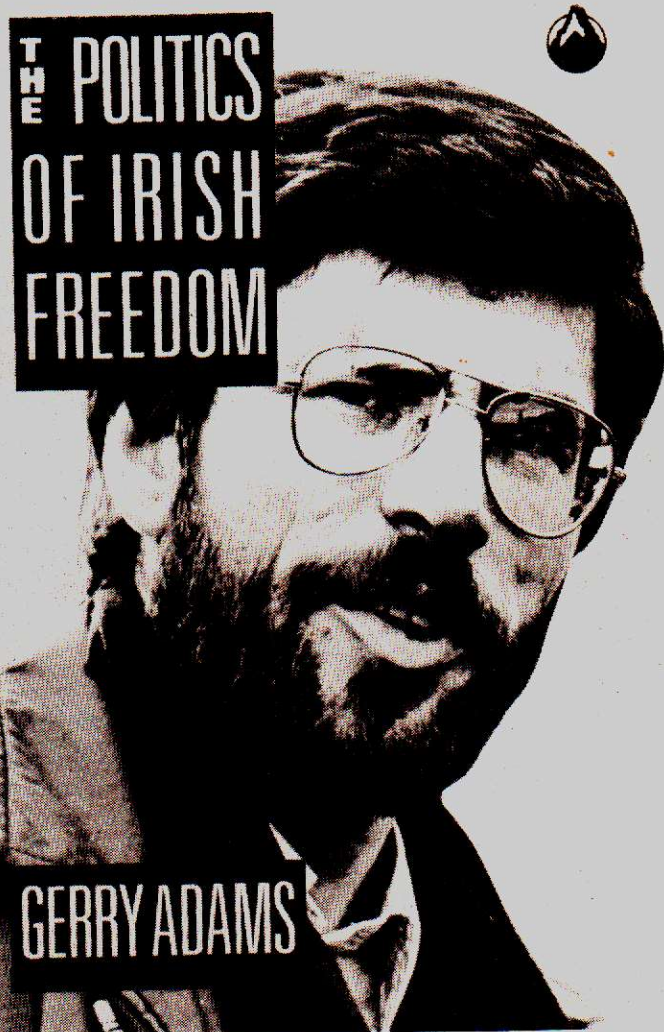
As Hollingsworth points out:

'Britain's national newspapers have simply refused to accept that anyone with views to the left of James Callaghan or Harold Wilson is politically legitimate.' (p3)

Black people, Irish people, trade unionists, women, gays, peace campaigners are all threats. Anyone who claims to represent their interests, however true or false the claim, is mad or an agent of Moscow.

Hollingsworth's book should be read by all who are fighting back today. It teaches us that words are as much a weapon in the class war as police truncheons, plastic bullets and cells.

Terry O'Halloran



# Gerry Adams on the Irish struggle

**The Politics of Irish Freedom, Gerry Adams, Brandon, 176pp, £3.95, 1986**

Gerry Adams is President of Sinn Fein and his life in Irish Republican politics has spanned the recent period of anti-imperialist struggle there. Adams is very definitely seen as representing a new generation of leadership: one which at the most recent conference (Ard Fheis) of Sinn Fein won a major policy change in overturning the movement's long held abstentionism in relation to the 26 County Parliament.

Adams argues the necessity and legitimacy of the Republican movement's struggle against British imperialism. But his book is also an attempt to get his and others in the leadership's views on how the struggle should go forward across to a wide audience in Ireland and, importantly, in Britain.

In the introduction his publisher, Steve McDonagh, refers to the contact between Sinn Fein and the left of the British Labour Party. He describes Ken Livingstone and others as feeling a 'sense of solidarity and kinship' with the new Sinn Fein of Gerry Adams and ascribes this to 'developments in recent years in the Republican Movement with which Gerry Adams has been particularly associated.' Although Adams himself does not, in his section on Britain, concentrate overly on the British Labour Party, it is clear that the book is seen as a further step towards cementing a possible alliance. It is a pity that Adams does not comment on relations between Sinn Fein and the Labour left as these have clearly been the focus of Sinn Fein's attempts to win support in Britain. Readers would be interested in some clear analysis of strategy in relation to building opposition and pressure within Britain among the Irish and working class communities. From a British perspective, one hopes that not too much cheer is taken from the feelings of solidarity from Livingstone et al given their rabbit-like capitulation to Kinnoekism.

Adams refers to the feeling of stalemate in the 6 Counties over the failure to break through in the 26 Counties and make the struggle against partition one supported on

both sides of the border. However, his arguments against the abstentionist policy do beg some of the important questions which have been asked and are bound to be posed in the very near future.

He acknowledges that what support there is is rooted in the most oppressed working class communities, but draws no conclusions from this in relation to where the base of support for a real popular national movement in the South would come from, and on what political principles and demands it would base itself.

A burning question in the 26 Counties over the last year has been women's right to abortion. The referendum was lost, exposing the sectarian nature of the 26 County state and its oppression of women. Yet Adams successfully opposed Sinn Fein's support for a woman's right to choose on abortion at the last Ard Fheis. The question of whether electoral interests will override principle is left unanswered.

The beginnings of this electoral strategy lie in the successful election of Bobby Sands as an MP in a by-election during his fast to the death in pursuit of political status. Adams describes his opposition to the hunger strike; firstly because he knew it would lead to deaths of comrades, but also because he objected to the 'hijacking' of the struggle which 'conflicted with the leadership's sense of the political priorities of the moment' (p80). In fact, the hunger strike provided the mass support and momentum which took Sinn Fein into national and international prominence in the '80s and confirmed yet again that the prison struggle and the armed struggle are central to taking forward the struggle.

There is no doubt that Sinn Fein is embarking on a new phase in its history and that there will be a sharpening of political debate and of class tensions within the movement. Gerry Adams' book is indispensable reading for those who want to understand that process as it develops.

Maggie Mellon

# Fidel Castro on liberation

**Nothing Can Stop the Course of History, Fidel Castro, Pathfinder Press, 258pp, 1986, £5.75**

This book is a long and splendid interview with Fidel Castro by black US Congressman Mervyn Dymally and his political advisor Jeffrey Elliot. Packed with information, facts and statistics, it is an excellent educational manual and deserves to be read by all, and especially young, communists. Castro sharply exposes the reality of the capitalist world divided between imperialist and oppressed nations and the social, political and economic consequences of this division. He deals with the oppressed nations' debt, the imperialist led arms race, the US backed counter-revolution in Nicaragua and El Salvador, the struggle in South Africa and Angola, the question of Palestine, the defeats and difficulties facing anti-imperialist and socialist movements in Grenada and Afghanistan and much else besides.

Castro explains how a small group of imperialist nations systematically plunder the oppressed nations, leaving billions hungry, poor, sick and suffering. In 1984, for example, the imperialist nations took \$70bn out of Latin America alone. Commenting on current relations between imperialism and the oppressed nations, Fidel Castro says 'During past centuries, colonialism never plundered the colonised countries to this extent.' The oppressed nations' 'gigantic debt is nothing more than an expression of systematic and historical plunder' which has reduced millions of people to the condition of 'slaves without chains'. But Fidel Castro believes that the debt question can become 'the chisel with which the economically enslaved peoples of the Third World begin to break their chains.'

He shows how the imperialist countries – especially the USA – in order to defend 'a system of privileges' resort to backing the most vicious and genocidal fascist regimes. But 'nothing can stop the course of history' and the oppressed peoples who are now fighting for liberation will inevitably destroy imperialism.

There is no attempt to disguise the serious defeats and setbacks suffered by anti-imperialist and socialist revolutions – in Grenada, Kampuchea and Afghanistan for example. But he recognises imperialism as the fundamental cause of these problems:

'Revolutions always entail more than a few complications and headaches, essentially as a result of counter-revolutionary actions fostered from abroad... These problems inevitably arise from attempts promoted from abroad to overthrow the revolution.'

Despite this, Fidel Castro does not shy away from discussing seriously the mistakes and errors made by revolutionaries in Cuba, Afghanistan and indeed Grenada.

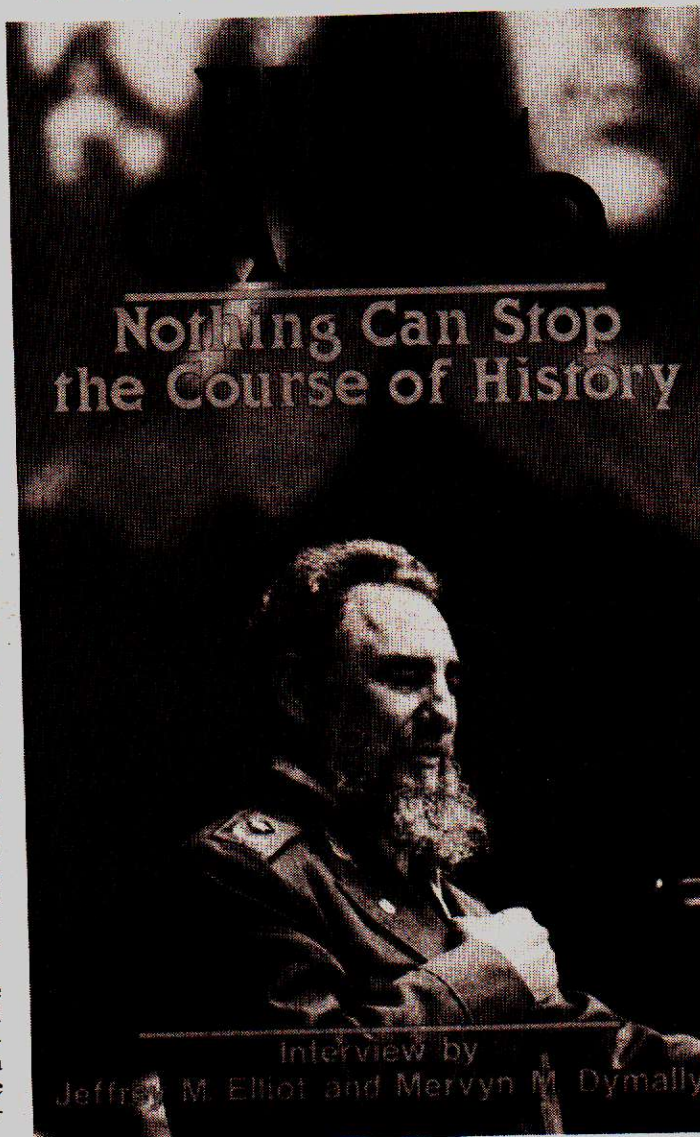
Explaining why Cuba, relentlessly

subjected to US sabotage and blockade, has avoided the worst of problems Fidel Castro states:

'We have developed economic relations with other socialist countries and established a new international economic order in our relations with them... As a result, we have established solid foundations for our country's economic and social development which is guaranteed.'

At £5.75 it is not the cheapest of books, but it is worth buying for yourself or as a gift. Pathfinder should be congratulated for publishing it.

Eddie Abrahams



## SHORTS

**With Extreme Prejudice, Martin Walker, Canary Press, 203pp, £3.50, 1986**

Another interesting and informed book by Canary Press. The first full account of the terrorising of two Manchester students by Anderton's police there. Martin Walker argues for the left to be much more conscious and united in the defence of those who are victims of state persecution and for this defence to be above all a political act.

**Against All Odds, Arc Print, 115pp, £1.95, 1986**

Dedicated to the Unilever 25 – young animal liberation activists who were jailed for taking part in an attack on a Unilever laboratory. Although mainly addressed to those active in animal liberation, the book does point to important lessons, particularly in its account of the charges against the Unilever activists and their trials and sentences.

**The Irish Civil War, Frances M Blake, Information on Ireland, 71pp, £1.75, 1986**

Timely publication of a well researched and very readable new book from Information on Ireland. Uses the story of the treacherous origins of the 26 County State to explain the nature of the new 'Anglo-Irish' Deal and to argue for the only just solution: British withdrawal and a united Ireland.

**Shutdown. The Verdict on KAL 007, RW Johnson, £10.95, 335pp, Chatto & Windus, 1986**

Detailed study of the real facts behind the shutdown of the Korean passenger plane by Soviet fighters three years ago. Not surprisingly the US/Western story of Soviet evil is demonstrated to be far from the truth. The deaths of the 269 passengers are shown to have been more certainly caused by the US use of the flight for military purposes. But a hard-back costing £10.95 does put this truth out of the reach of the popular market.



## PUBLIC MEETING

The London-based Birmingham 6 Committee is holding a public meeting in Islington in January. FRFI calls on our readers to support this.  
 London Birmingham 6 Campaign Public Meeting  
 Thursday 15 January  
 Islington Town Hall  
 Speakers include: Robert Kee, Chris Mullin, Chris Smith MP, Alastair Logan and relatives of the Birmingham 6.

## Anger greets welfare cuts

Widespread anger has greeted the Twenty Six County Coalition government's latest attacks on the poor and unemployed. Just three weeks before Christmas they have cut the Christmas bonus (the normal seasonal increase in social welfare benefits) to 64% of its normal level. At the same time, as a result of their method of implementing an EEC Directive, 17,000 of the poorest families have been deprived of up to one third of their incomes.

The South's social security system is already both mean and inefficient. Recent surveys have shown that recipients live on the margins of poverty, barely surviving week to week. Their income does not allow for clothes, repairs, furniture, school books, entertainment etc. Yet an increasing number of people are forced to live at this level. One quarter of all children come from families dependant on social welfare. Many people have pointed out that

whilst a claimant has to live on £37.50 per week, the TDs who passed the cuts get £18,517 per annum and ministers get £754 per week – the equivalent of 20 claimants.

Protests against the new cuts were organised and a 1,500 demonstration was held in Dublin. The gardai responded to protests in their normal brutal fashion and 5 Sinn Fein members were arrested and others assaulted.

Maxine Williams

## BIRMINGHAM 6

# New evidence for framed prisoners

Unexpected new evidence has arisen in the case of the framed Birmingham Six. Former police constable Tom Clarke was on duty in November 1974 at Queens Road Station, Birmingham, where the men were being interrogated. Interviewed on Granada's 1 December *World in Action* programme, Clarke remembers the attitude of the interrogation team towards the prisoners:

'... I formed the opinion that these men were going to be asked to make statements under duress – extreme duress. That was the object of the whole exercise.'

His testimony backs up almost word for word the detailed statements of the Birmingham Six that confessions were extracted by unbridled brutality. He saw the injuries on the men's bodies and graphically confirms that they were subjected to physical beatings, sleep deprivation, extreme terror tactics and were threatened with guns and police dogs.

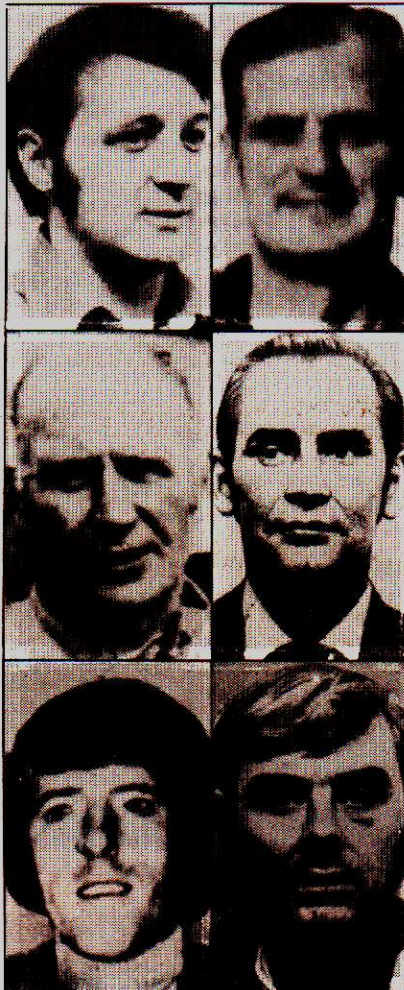
Clarke said: 'I've never seen men so frightened in all my life. They were petrified.' He is convinced of their innocence: 'How much can one man take before one can take no more and will admit to anything. I believe that's what happened.'

One year after the initial *World in Action* programme in October 1985, the Home Office has released a statement that it had mistakenly provided forensic specialists engaged by the programme

team with an incorrect chemical formula. This would have meant that, using the Home Office's figures in attempting to mimic the tests used by the State's forensic scientist in the trial, they had used a strength of solution ten times too strong! If true, this Home Office claim would have invalidated the new evidence provided by the *World in Action* team which challenged the convictions. This shallow Home Office deception was exposed in the latest programme which disclosed documents unknown to the Home Office containing figures derived from the State's original forensic scientist himself. They confirmed that no error had been made.

By placing a decimal point in the wrong place in a chemical formula, the Home Office has attempted to pervert the course of justice. It is determined to protect its political interests and has shown itself quite prepared to lie in order to condemn the Birmingham Six to end their lives in prison.

On 16 November, Channel Four showed edited parts of documentaries about all three major Irish frame-ups (Birmingham Six, Guildford 4 and Maguire family). In a later studio discussion, even the chair of the Conservative Home Affairs Committee, Sir Edward Gardiner QC, called for urgent action by the Home Office on these cases. The Labour Party's shadow Home Affairs spokesperson, Clive Soley, did not commit a future Labour government to release the ten prisoners.



The Birmingham Six: an ex-policeman's testimony confirms their story

Soley's inability to press home the simple truth that all 17 people should have their wrongful convictions immediately quashed gives cause to ponder on whether a future Labour government would in fact release the ten still imprisoned. All three frame-ups took place under the 1974-79 Labour administration.

Tony Sheridan

## Step up campaign against frame-ups

In November the Free the Guildford 4 Campaign was wound up after some of the relatives involved left to set up another committee from which socialist and solidarity organisations were excluded. FRFI had struggled to build and maintain the FGFC as a democratic and broad campaign but after this blow reluctantly conceded, along with the other organisations involved, to the winding up of the Campaign.

Following this various organisations and individuals (including FRFI, WRP/Workers Press, Maire O'Shea of the IBRG) met to discuss how further campaigning work could continue so that the pressure could be kept up on all the frame-up cases. It was decided that a campaigning body was still vitally needed. Such a body would aim to involve the widest possible forces, work democratically and include all forms of campaigning work – from lobbying politi-

cians to street work. It was agreed that a public meeting should be organised in mid February calling for the release of the framed prisoners. Already Maire O'Shea and Fr Bobby Gilmore, head of the Irish Chaplaincy, have pledged to speak at the meeting. But if such a campaigning body is to succeed it must have wider support and we call on all solidarity organisations and progressive organisations to join in the effort to build it.



Gerry Adams addresses the 1986 Sinn Fein Ard Fheis

## VIEWPOINT

# Mac Stiofain on the abstentionism issue

Sean Mac Stiofain has sent FRFI the following article as a contribution to the discussion and debate on the question of the Republican Movement and abstentionism. Sean Mac Stiofain was Chief of Staff of the IRA from 1969 to 1972 and is a veteran Republican and anti-imperialist. We are pleased to print his article which represents his views and not necessarily those of FRFI.

The decision by the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis to take seats in the Twenty Six County Parliament was a tragic mistake, that if implemented will do great harm to the Republican cause.

That was certainly not the intention of the present leadership of the movement who clearly underestimated the potential to the Republican cause that exists in the ever growing number of underprivileged in the Twenty Six Counties and the effect that could and would have on the anti-imperialist struggle if these issues were linked to the struggle in the Six Counties. However, sending people into a reactionary, bourgeois parliament will produce the opposite to what the leadership of the Republican movement wants (or should want) – a mass movement of all the poor, the unemployed, the oppressed not only in the Twenty Six Counties, but throughout the country.

So far very little has been done to organise the underprivileged and sending one or two people into the parliament of Southern Ireland will not in any way produce the organisation required to help the unemployed etc to organise themselves. The underprivileged need leadership, political education and good example from Republicans, many of whom are unemployed, are underpaid, are exploited by those who support the status quo, who support the collaboration between the forces of the Twenty Six County State and the British occupation forces.

Again, I must say that the best way to fight these forces, is not to enter a parliament for the privileged and wealthy, a parliament that is as remote from the people and their problems as the House of Lords is in England, but to bring democracy to the people by helping them organise themselves. This would mean a move away from parliamentarianism and in time to people's power. However, the problem now is how to persuade both the leadership and rank and file of the Republican Movement that the Ard Fheis decision to enter the Dublin Parliament should not be implemented. Ard Fheis decisions are not sacrosanct, (a decision to organise a national movement for the unemployed taken by the 1981 Ard Fheis was never implemented to give just one example).

A short term solution would be to nominate prisoner candidates in the next election in the Twenty Six Counties

in the five constituencies where Sinn Fein has reasonable support; Louth Monaghan / Cavan, Sligo / Leitrim Dublin Central and North Kerry. Prisoners have always received good support in any election, particularly in these constituencies. All Republicans would support them and the plight of the prisoners would be highlighted for the duration of the election!

Apart from being a short term solution to the present difficulties, nominating prisoners is the right thing to do at this time. Whether or not the leadership and the activists in the Republican Movement can be persuaded to take this course of action is of course another matter. I, for one will certainly try to do that.

As for the new organisation, Republican Sinn Fein and its prospects of becoming a real national organisation capable of making a significant contribution to the anti-imperialist struggle, do not believe that it will ever amount to a strong organisation, it most certainly will not make the phenomenal progress made by the Republican movement in 1970 following the split from the counter revolutionaries who formed the Workers Party. It faces serious problems from lack of finance and a lack of newspaper, office etc. However, Republican Sinn Fein could contribute to the overall struggle as another anti-imperialist organisation but only if its spokespersons avoid personal attacks on the Sinn Fein leaders by calling them stickies and comparing them with the 1969 leadership. That kind of crude propaganda serves no cause, will not win support for Republican Sinn Fein but could provide opportunities for British Intelligence to exploit. However those who walked out of the Ard Fheis have a right to serve in their own organisation and all anti-imperialist activities must be welcomed.

Like many Republicans I am greatly concerned about the present situation. I hope that all the leaders of the Republican Movement agree with Gerry Adams' recent statement, 'If Sinn Fein disowns the armed struggle they won't have me as a member'. That statement should be repeated by every leading member of Sinn Fein, and as soon as possible the armed struggle should be intensified.

Sean Mac Stiofain

## Kaufman refuses to give release commitment

On 5 December MISC held a lobby of a surgery held by Gerald Kaufman MP, shadow Home Secretary, in support of the Guildford 4 and Birmingham 6. Members of the lobby asked Kaufman to do two things:

1. Sign a declaration calling for the immediate release of the Guildford 4 and Birmingham 6 on the grounds of their innocence,
2. Commit himself to releasing the 10 if, after the next General Election he became Home Secretary and they were still in prison.

Kaufman refused to do either, on the grounds that if he did it would undermine his position.

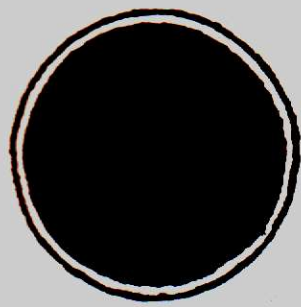
His position is that of a future Labour Home Secretary, that is more important to Kaufman than the lives of 10 people framed by the British State and held in prison for 12 years.

Bob Shepherd

## Labour backs loyalist

Sam Campbell, arch loyalist bigot and leader of the Labour Group on Midlothian Council is to have the Labour Whip restored to him in February by the Labour Party National Executive. Campbell had the whip withdrawn after a speech to an Orange rally in June 1986 in which he called for the closure of Catholic schools and described Catholics as the enemy. He urged Protestants to withhold their TV licence fees because of the influence of Catholics in the media. This is out and out racism. We should not be surprised that this reactionary has been welcomed back into the anti-Irish Labour Party.





# Call to action

## Organise to fight the Public Order Act

On Saturday 29 November nearly 1,000 people took part in the Campaign Against Police Repression (CAPR) demonstration against the passing of the Public Order Act. The mood was strong and defiant especially when the march halted outside Holloway prison in solidarity with women prisoners.

Conspicuous by their absence were the British left, the Labour Party and the trade unions. The RCG was the only British left group to take part. There were no Labour Party or trade union contingents.

### RCG attacked

Yet the Call to Action conference after the march saw an attack on the RCG. Speakers from City AA, Stonehenge, London Greenpeace, Federation of Claimants' Unions together with Louise Christian and Viraj Mendis, all pledged support for the campaign and received an enthusiastic response. When the RCG was announced, however, anti-communist jeering and booing broke out from a small section of the audience.

David Reed, the RCG speaker, challenged the sectarianism of the hecklers: 'We're fighting

for democratic rights and you're trying to deny me mine'. The CAPR chair insisted that all groups supporting the march had speaking rights. The vast majority present supported this.

### Our rights under threat

The Public Order Act is yet another weapon in the government's armoury for use against the people. Carol Brickley, speaking for City AA, described the growing gap between 'semi-detached Britain' and 'the rest'. The Public Order Act is a weapon against 'the rest' - the poor and oppressed - who need the right to strike, to demonstrate, to picket. Viraj Mendis pointed out how in Britain there is only freedom for the rich. To be successful the campaign against the Public Order Act must be based on all those forces which have to oppose it in order

to defend themselves.

As the capitalist crisis deepens repression increases. Under threat the ruling class is building up a supply of weapons both legislative and real, for the future. The Public Order Act follows close on the heels of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and is followed by the Criminal Justice Bill which will abolish the right to challenge jurors. The defence of democratic rights is essential to the struggle of the working class against oppression. The ruling class is criminalising the means and methods of struggling to overthrow oppression.

This reality has yet to dawn on the traditional labour movement and its appendage: the British left. Speaker after speaker condemned the failure of the Labour and trade union movement to organise against the Public Order Act. The absence of the British left, with the exception of the RCG, was also remarked on.

From Kinnock to Willis to the CPGB to the SWP, these 'socialists' united in their refusal either to recognise the threat posed by the Public Order Act or to acknowledge the political potential of the young people who made up the great majority of the demonstration.

### Organising to win

The march and conference, given the boycott by the labour movement and left, was a success. It showed that there are people willing to defend democratic rights and beginning to organise.

It also showed the problems. Sectarianism and anti-communist prejudice must be fought within the campaign. As we have said before, a campaign which does not defend the democratic rights of its supporters cannot defend democratic rights at all. The narrow-minded sectarian refusal of the labour movement and the left to support the campaign must also be fought.

The RCG and FRFI supporters have an important role to play in this campaign bringing the lessons of our work in City AA, VMDC and elsewhere, to bear on the campaign against the Public Order Act and all attacks on our rights.

Terry O'Halloran and  
Nikki Rensten

The next major demonstration is the Saturday After march on Saturday 3 January 1987, assemble 12 noon Clock Tower Place, London N7 (nearest tube Caledonian Road).

### Get into print

Write to FRFI with your news, views and comment. FRFI, BCM Box 5909 London WC1N 3XX.

### 'Democracy' strikes again

Dear FRFI

On 30 November Edinburgh AA Group held its Annual General meeting. FRFI comrades attended. Traditionally EAAG has large and business-like AGMs. Equally traditionally the group meetings whose task is to organise activity are small and often boring. This year's 35 or so people who attended the AGM were the usual sea of unknown faces. However, undoubtedly they were known faces to the Communist Party / Labour Party 'leadership' of EAAG. In the fine labour movement tradition the automatic block vote machine was in full swing, with one or two brave exceptions.

FRFI supporters proposed a motion rejecting the role of Brian Filling and Bob Hughes during their Commonwealth Games anti-boycott campaign (see FRFI 62). The unknown sea of faces voted for an amendment which totally reversed reality and congratulated the Scottish Committee for their 'good works' throughout the campaign.

Two of the unknown sea of faces were even elected into leadership positions. Jim Patton who we had never seen at a group meeting during the previous year and who we were told works full time on trade union business was block voted into the position of chair of the group. Dougie Dolan stood against Alistair (FRFI) as Trade Union Secretary. Alistair has been a member of the group for several years and is active in his union and his group. Dougie Dolan is similar to Jim Patton in that as far as we know he hasn't attended an EAAG meeting for the past year. However we couldn't be positive about this as he couldn't be identified! This might have been something to do with the fact that he wasn't even at the AGM. However he was duly 'blockvoted' into the position of Trade Union Secretary.

No doubt these two 'leaders' will keep the unknown sea of faces happy at least until next year's AGM. It's good to see EAAG preparing for the struggles ahead in the usual tradition. Readers' comments welcome.

Alistair and Rhian  
Edinburgh

# Letters

area looking for temporary accommodation. Also, people claiming under these new measures have to wait around most of the day at the DHSS for payments. How on earth can they find work? They can never get on a housing waiting list if single, and are on a never ending move up and down the country... What a life for those in such a position and thousands upon thousands in this country are now in such a position.

We must stand firmly with these people and the campaign for single homeless (CHAR 5-15 Cromer Street, London WC1H 8LS) must get more support from FRFI readers. Sympathy with the homeless must be turned into direct action against these tough new measures. The time for talking is over. We must organise the masses and take what's rightly ours.

Yours sincerely  
Bob Bensusan  
HM Prison Parkhurst

### Fascists on the march

Dear FRFI

The police and local politicians have yet again run to the aid of the National Front thugs in Preston. The fascist group is planning to march through Preston and also intends to leaflet local schools in an obvious attempt to incite racial violence towards the black and Asian population.

Meanwhile the police do nothing to stop the fascists, on the contrary they and their Tory backers have consistently defended them. The role of the police and local authorities in collaborating with and protecting fascists in Preston is not new. The last time the NF proposed to march through Preston (in 1980) the fascist thugs received the full support of the police and Tory councillors.

Today little has changed. The fascist thugs act in the confidence that they will go unchallenged. Chief Superintendent Ken MacKay defended 'their right' to distribute racist filth within schools, saying he was 'monitoring' their activity, (*Lancashire Evening Post*, 18 November 1986), and would step in only 'if we consider a breach of the peace is likely. Meaning that he would waste no time in acting when black people attempt to defend themselves against racial violence and terror.

ably would not get 'much support'.

With the police and their Local Authority allies all rushing to the 'democratic defence' of the fascist thugs, they have totally disregarded, and simply announced their complete contempt for, the black and Asian community of Preston. The results of the green light to racists and fascists can only be an increase in the number of attacks towards the black and Asian community. Facts obviously beside the point and completely irrelevant to the police and their political backers. Black people can expect only yet more harassment and abuse from the British racist State, racist courts, laws and police. Self defence is the only defence! We must drive the racist thugs off the streets.

Smash the National Front!  
Nick Hill  
Preston

### Who are the terrorists?

Dear FRFI

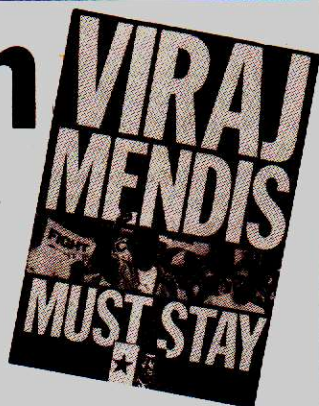
Many thanks for the papers and your support for all oppressed sections of the world. I have been reading the daily papers with interest over the past few months and as usual the gutter press continues to represent the view of the parasites who control our society.

According to the press, the Irish, the Blacks, the Syrians, the Libyans and even the popular elected government in Nicaragua are called terrorists. If the so-called neutral press would only go and interview the people of Broadwater Farm, Toxteth, Brixton, St Pauls and working class people wherever they may be, they would be told who the real terrorists are. Maggie's bully boys: the British policemen. Keith Blake-lock is regarded as a hero, this was one of the thousands of animals who descended on Broadwater Farm to try to beat the local population physically and mentally.

I have one thing to say to all enemies of the people: 'We have been oppressed for hundreds of years... with all your weapons, all your men you can never destroy our spirit. Power to the people.'

Yours in solidarity  
Tommy Carliss  
HM Prison Lewes

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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)



### Fight back with the homeless

Dear FRFI

I'm writing to mention the plight of the homeless under 26-year-olds living in bed and breakfast hotels and guest houses who claim supplementary benefit. Due to new regulations brought in last April by the government, which are most damaging to unemployed people under 26, the homeless are only allowed to stay in accommodation as mentioned for up to 2, 4 or 8 weeks and then have to move to another area; they are not allowed to claim in the area they were last at for 6 months.

The top amount the DHSS will pay for full board is £70 per week in London when after 8 weeks you have to go to somewhere else. Anywhere else the top amount paid is between £50-£60 full board. If no meals are paid for you take £29.40 away from the £50 or £60.

These new measures must cause mayhem for those people claiming, not to mention the time spent in one

Tory Parliamentary Candidate Dr Raj Chandran also defended the fascist thugs, saying that their incitements of violence should not be stopped as we live in a 'democracy'. In a remarkable display of hypocrisy and opportunism, (even by Tory standards) he went on to attack black and anti-racist people concerned about racial violence and terror, by saying 'There are other subjects like unemployment and housing which are far more important than fighting the National Front.!!'

Liberal County Councillor Bill Chadwick, in a barely disguised apologetic for fascist terror, claimed that the violence did not come from the NF, but that they 'sometimes' caused 'a violent reaction among other groups.' His radical proposal to prevent racial violence was that the 'county might have to consider not allowing them (the NF) access to public libraries in certain areas...'

A proposal not worthy of comment. Mrs Audrey Wise, Labour Parliamentary Candidate, in a typical display of racist unconcern offered the feeble comment that the NF prob-

### Little false worlds

Dear Comrades

Many thanks for your card sent to the Scrubs - it arrived without problems. Since then, however, I've been transferred yet again and this is the first chance I've had to reply.

Good to hear news of the picket (non-stop picket) especially the obvious commitment to the cause of racial equality of those taking part. To realise there exists in this country people with such a deep sense of social justice for all people is heartening indeed... it's only with such news as you've related concerning the South Africa House picket that one gets a chance to see that there are still those, not so wrapped up in their own little false worlds of hypocrisy that they've become deaf to the cries of the oppressed... Take care, comrades. Smash the racist state and its lackeys,

Jimmy Anderson  
HM Prison Parkhurst (Segregation Unit)





## Fighting Racism – Fighting Deportations – Fighting for Viraj to Stay!

The campaign for our comrade Viraj enters 1987 faced with enormous possibilities – and enormous problems. Despite widespread support for our struggle, Home Office Minister Waddington is determined to deport Viraj – and many hundreds of others – in 1987. On his side he has the racist laws, the courts and the police: all the forces of reaction. On our side we have the justice, democracy and unity of people opposed to the racist immigration laws. It is the possibility of victory for our side which Waddington is determined to smash. The work of the VMDC has inspired many people to fight their campaigns and win. The Mashadimirza Family victory is only the latest of a string of victories won in Manchester. Waddington's decision on Viraj is not based on the legal facts of Viraj's case; it is based on a political determination that Viraj, his organisation, and his campaign cannot be allowed to win.

The task ahead in 1987 is to unite the forces which can insist that we will win, Viraj will stay.

Starting in January, our major work will be building for the national Stop the Deportations Conference called by the VMDC for April 87. The fight for Viraj will be at the centre of mobilising for the Conference.

VMDC Support groups are already established by our members in London, Glasgow, Dundee, Leeds and Newcastle and have all successfully drawn in other support for the fight. In London in particular the links have been made with others fighting deportations. The targets for work must be:

- the postcard campaign
- Home Office pickets
- weekly bulletins
- speaking tours

- street events, pickets and protests
- The issue of sanctuary, and campaigning around that will be a crucial one for many people in 1987; work which we do now in broadening the lessons of the Viraj Mendis Campaign and others in winning the right to stay will be vital to the success of the conference and so to the future of the struggle against the racist immigration laws. This month our immediate aims are:

- Keeping Viraj here in Britain
- Mobilising for the VMDC demonstration in Waddington's Preston constituency called for 17 January.
- Winning support and sponsorship for the April conference and organising attendance and transport through student unions and trade unions and other organisations for this.

Revolutionary Communist Group –  
Manchester

### PUBLIC MEETING

**Viraj Mendis Will Stay!**  
Friday 30 January, 7.30pm  
Black Lion Hotel  
(corner of Chapel Street &  
Blackfriars Street)

Revolutionary Communist Group  
London

Discussion group on The Revolutionary Road to Communism in Britain, Manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist Group. The discussion group meets on Sundays. The next meeting is on  
**Part One: Imperialism in Crisis**  
Sunday 18 January 1987,  
Conway Hall,  
Red Lion Square  
(nearest tube Holborn) at 7.30pm

### FRFI FUND DRIVE

The December Fund Drive raised £551 going well over our £500 monthly target. As we go into 1987, we would like to thank all FRFI supporters and readers who contributed to the Fund Drive in 1986. These contributions have helped us sustain FRFI.

We will of course continue to rely on your help during the course of this year as well. Have YOU thought of making a donation to the Fund Drive. Any contribution allows us to keep the price low for a paper which consistently stands on the side of the oppressed in Britain and internationally. Make a regular pledge. Join one of our supporter groups to help raise money collectively. Or just make a one off donation.

Cheques/postal orders payable to 'Larkin Publications'. Post to: FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.

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

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## Broadwater Farm on Trial

On 14 January, the murder trials of Broadwater youth start in the Old Bailey.

Our members have worked consistently in the Defence Campaign, and FRFI has given consistent coverage to the trials and imprisonment of the youth. We must build with the campaign to ensure the maximum turnout for the picket of the trial called by the Defence Campaign for 12–2pm Old Bailey on 14 January.



## Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! – Our Paper

1987 must see a major change in FRFI's ability to reflect and comment on politics and struggle in Britain. The Editorial Board has the task of sharpening our coverage on the struggles and campaigns we are involved in. This can only be achieved if you send in reports, views, comments and questions.

We aim for our paper to begin to represent the interests and experiences of all those who can be drawn towards building a new, fighting, anti-racist, anti-imperialist spirit in Britain. This means selling FRFI around all demonstrations, meetings and other political events. It means encouraging other activists to contribute to FRFI and ensuring that the political issues raised in FRFI are seriously discussed by us with those we want to win to active work with us and our paper. Political differences and problems will not be glossed over but actively confronted in our reports and articles. This way we will succeed in engaging new layers of people to work with us and our paper in 1987.

Maggie Mellon and Lorna Morgan  
Phone us on 01-837-1688 for more details or information on our activities.

## Non Stop Against Apartheid

By the end of 1986, the Non Stop Picket outside South Africa House had won through more than 250 days of police harassment, of AAM downright hostility and opposition, of terrible British weather... and much more. It continues into 1987 as the most consistent, lively and political of campaigns: a thorn in the side of the apartheid Embassy and a source of inspiration to thousands of people here.

The existence of the picket is in stark contrast to the opportunism which made 1986 a year of retreat for the working class movement. The continuation of the picket and its strengthening and consolidation must be a focus for our members and supporters in the coming year, as one of the clearest expressions of how to organise for justice and against reaction – and win.

Our first political battle in 1987 will be the AGM of the AAM on 10/11 January, where the RCG and other Non Stop Picket supporters will be fighting for a movement which is active, accountable and democratic. The fight at the AGM is only part of the battle which must be fought for a genuine movement in solidarity with the struggle in South Africa. It is an appropriate start to 1987. But the coming months must see that determination and political clarity continue. Our members and supporters must take the lead in London and all local areas in mobilising and organising all possible forces to act and to take sides.

This means

- Becoming involved in and initiating local campaigns
- Disinvestment campaigns
- Public meetings with speakers from the Non Stop Picket
- Showings of the FRFI video on the Picket – Non Stop for Mandela



- Organising transport to the Picket for weekends and special events
- The 14 March City AA demonstration commemorating the Sharpeville and Langa massacres will be a national demonstration. Our members and supporters must mobilise for a national turnout which reflects a real growth of support for the picket. January should see intensive work to lay the basis for

this, establishing wider numbers of supporters of FRFI for the Non Stop Picket in order to make such a national turnout possible.

• The February issue of FRFI must reflect concrete progress: reports of work, the political issues, obstacles faced, and be able to advertise planned events leading up to the demonstration.

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# Organise with FRFI



# W R E

issues which could harm Labour's electoral chances outside the party, the Labour left has become an insignificant political trend with no political base inside or outside the Labour Party.

On every issue from nationalisation to nuclear power, from racism in Britain to apartheid in South Africa, the Labour Party's public positions are designed to appeal to the social backbone of semi-detached Britain - to win the next election. As the election draws closer we must resist the growing pressure to vote Labour as the 'lesser evil'. The Labour Party, in or out of power, will offer the poor and oppressed in Britain precisely nothing. Far better to vote only for those candidates who, for example, fight to end racist deportations, repeal the Criminal Justice and Public Order Acts, repeal the Tory union laws and bring British troops out of Ireland.

### Thatcher's tame opposition

Tory economic policy is in disarray. The wealth of North Sea Oil has been squandered and overall taxation and state spending are at higher levels than in 1979. Manufacturing output is still below that of 1979. Balance of payment

from 'people's capitalism' could present an effective challenge to Thatcher. But Kinnock cannot mobilise these forces because they would threaten not only Thatcher but the social and material privileges of the people that Kinnock's Labour Party represents.

Time and again in 1986 the Labour Party refused to fight any serious campaign against Thatcher's government. When black Commonwealth nations boycotted the Commonwealth Games in protest against Thatcher's collaboration with apartheid, the Labour Party broke the boycott. Bob Hughes publicly appealed to black nations not to boycott and Kinnock gave official recognition to the games by attending the closing ceremony. The Labour Party, far from building on the popular opposition to nuclear weapons, and nuclear power after Chernobyl, is now publicly backtracking on Labour's conference policy in order to appease the US ruling class and deflect Fleet Street-led hysteria. In a year when democratic rights have been ceaselessly attacked and police powers massively increased, the Labour Party has chosen to adopt a 'law and order' platform. At the height of the campaign to expose Manchester police's vendetta

## Faces of '86



Dean: led SOGAT from behind



O'Shea: rare victory in the courts



Rich and poor: the gap widens

framed prisoners. This was proved by the successful, public and broad-based campaign to defend Mairé O'Shea.

1986 saw Britain continue to be the major international supporter of the apartheid regime. The heroic resistance of the black majority in South Africa could, and should, have inspired a mighty popular movement against Thatcher and her collaboration with apartheid. It was the leadership of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, representing the interests of the Labour Party-TUC bloc, which fought to prevent such a movement being built.

In June 1986 the AAM leadership diverted 100,000 people on its annual demonstration away from the South African embassy, to a pop festival in Clapham Common. Bob Hughes, chair of the AAM, publicly opposed the boycott of the Commonwealth Games. By 3-4 August only 400 people could be mobilised by the AAM to picket the Commonwealth leaders' conference discussing sanctions against South Africa.

Despite police harassment and the hostility of the AAM leadership, the non-stop picket outside the South African embassy organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, has shown that there are many thousands of people who want to act against apartheid and British collaboration. The RCG has played a crucial role in mobilising support for the non-stop picket amongst the widest possible forces: women, unemployed youth, black and white, Labour councils and councillors, students and trade unionists. Only such a movement developed right throughout the country could break Thatcher's intransigent support for apartheid. Yet all over the country a motley alliance of AAM leaders, Labour Party members, CPGB members and Trotskyists (Socialist Action) are devoting all their energies not to mobilising people against apartheid but to attacking the non-stop picket, City Group and the RCG. 1987 must see the non-stop picket become the organising focus of a mass effective movement against apartheid.

During 1986 the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign has continued to fight the attempts to deport RCG supporter Viraj Mendis to Sri Lanka. The VMDC has successfully organised an historic march from Manchester to London and has helped, through its support for other campaigns, to make Manchester a recognised centre of opposition to deportations. In the 2½ years of the VMDC, six campaigns based in Manchester and supported by the VMDC have won. The latest victories of Rahim Mashadimirza and family and RCG

## JOIN THE RCG

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

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

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

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

I wish to join/receive more information about the RCG

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# BRITAIN IN 1986 A YEAR OF RETREAT

In 1986 the working class movement continued to retreat in the face of Thatcher's onslaught and Kinnock's consolidation of power in the Labour Party. Little progress was made in organising those forces which, over the last few years, have demonstrated some real political independence from the opportunist bloc of Kinnock's Labour Party, the TUC leadership and the privileged sections of the working class they represent. That task remains the primary one in the year ahead.

The retreat was inevitable. The defeat of the miners' strike demonstrated that even the most determined fightback by traditionally militant sections of the trade union movement could not overcome the reactionary TUC-Labour Party bloc. Trade unionists who want to fight have to build new alliances with forces both outside the traditional labour movement and politically independent of it. They have to ally themselves with the more oppressed sections of the working class. This new alliance is not an option. It offers the only possibility of halting and reversing the retreat.

### Labour-TUC bloc triumphant

1986 saw the printworkers struggle at Wapping and Kinning Park slowly but surely crippled by a combination of police repression, the printers' cowardly leadership, the scabbing of other trade unionists (particularly the EETPU and in the NUJ) and the refusal of the TUC to take any action against those unions scabbing on the strike. The leadership of the strike believed they could fight and win by traditional means, relying on traditional labour movement forces. They were proved tragically wrong - so much so that when one of the leading organisers of the demonstrations at Wapping, SOGAT executive member Mike Hicks, was gaoled for 12 months (eight months suspended) there was little or no response from outside the printworkers and their immediate supporters. No political campaign existed to defend the over 1,200 people arrested during the dispute. No wonder the police felt confident enough to victimise a leader of the strike.

In 1986 the Militant Tendency in the Labour Party was marginalised and the process of destroying its political base in Liverpool began in earnest. The Labour left, where it has not already capitulated to the Kinnock trend, has been totally isolated. By refusing to take on Kinnock in the party, and limiting its support for



Militant: capitulates to Kinnock

problems are looming ahead and unemployment is still at record levels. Government ministers have been involved in all kinds of scandals, incompetence and corruption. Poverty is now widespread and welfare services have seriously deteriorated. Attacks on our basic democratic rights have been a fundamental feature of both Tory governments as in the introduction of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and the passing of the Public Order Act. A new Criminal Justice Bill will remove the right to challenge jurors. Yet Thatcher is holding her own and could win the next election.

How is this possible? The Tory vision of a 'people's capitalism', with handouts to those that can afford it, appeals to the narrow self-interest of semi-detached Britain. Thatcher reflects the greed and bigotry of this layer. Kinnock has chosen to fight Thatcher on her home ground. He necessarily must make concessions after concession to this backward layer. However, this strategy has so far failed. Many clearly prefer Thatcher to her shadowreactionary in the Labour Party.

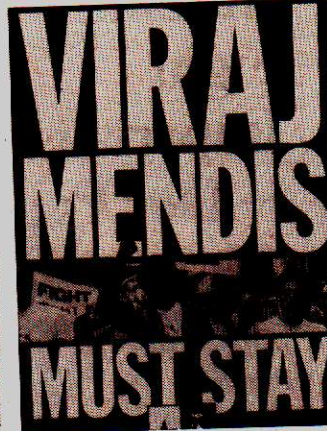
Only the political mobilisation of those forces who have nothing to gain

against Manchester students, Gerald Kaufman used a Police Federation meeting to attack Manchester City Council who had been campaigning on behalf of the students.

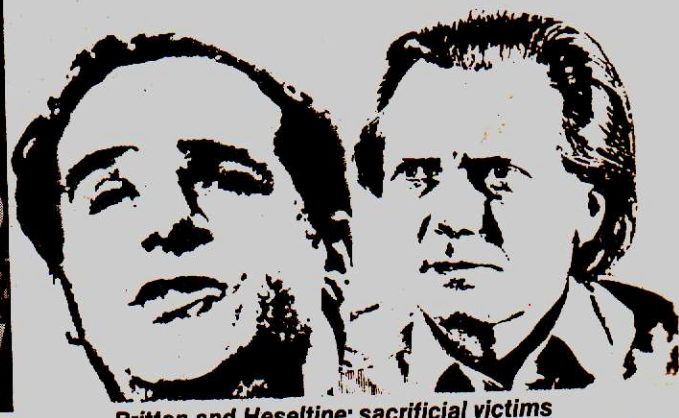
### Building for the future

The primary task in the year ahead remains to organise all possible forces which are prepared to fight and who have shown political independence from the TUC-Labour Party opportunist bloc.

Failure to recognise this truth meant that a major opportunity was lost in 1986. The framing of the Birmingham 6, the Maguire family and the Guildford 4 was exposed as never before. Initially the Guildford 4 campaign with the support of the RCG, broke new ground in uniting all trends within Irish solidarity work in a public campaign of action. Tragically some relatives, in alliance with right-wing Irish organisations, succeeded in disbanding the Guildford 4 campaign in favour of behind-the-scenes lobbying of 'influential people'. The fact is that only mass pressure could force the government to release all the



VMDC: building for the future



Brittan and Heseltine: sacrificial victims



Anderton: did God warn him against Stalker too?