

FIGHT RACISMS! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Anti-imperialist paper of the Revolutionary Communist Group

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The most reactionary government of the post-war period has been returned to power with the second largest majority since 1945. This has happened in a period when four million people are unemployed, 16 million live in poverty and public provision of education, health, housing and transport no longer meet the needs of millions of people.

In the middle of a deep-seated and long-lasting crisis of the capitalist system, poverty on the scale already created by the Thatcher government cannot be tackled from above. Any serious attempt to overcome mass poverty would require a frontal assault on wealth and privilege. Such an assault can only be carried through by the mass mobilisation of those working class people who are bearing the brunt of Thatcher's policies.

It certainly cannot be carried through by a Labour Party whose every campaign is directed solely at the prejudices and interests of semi-detached Britain, and which, at the same time, attacks and demobilises the very forces which alone can defend the people against the effects of the capitalist crisis.

In the next five years larger and larger sections of the working class and oppressed will be forced into political struggle. They will follow the lead already given by black people, the striking miners, the VMDC and other anti-deportation campaigns, the Non-Stop Picket and all other examples of people organising to fight for their rights and refusing to sacrifice their struggles on the altar of Labour electoral politics.

ANOTHER FIVE YEARS OF TORY REACTION



**VIRAJ MENDIS WILL STAY!
STOP ALL DEPORTATIONS NOW!**

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

MANCHESTER

*Continue the fight against deportations!
Defend Viraj Mendis! Organise, mobilise
and bring thousands onto the streets!*

Saturday 11 July

**ASSEMBLE 12 NOON AT CROWN SQUARE
(near City Centre) MARCH TO THE
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION, HULME**

*Transport available from London, Brighton,
Cambridge, Milton Keynes, Bristol,
Wolverhampton, Leicester, Coventry, Leeds,
Bradford, Newcastle, Liverpool, Dundee, Edinburgh
and Glasgow*

*There will be creche facilities, disabled access,
sign language interpreter and interpreter into
Punjabi and other languages.*

*For information, leaflets, posters and other
publicity contact:*

VMDC, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent,
Hulme, Manchester M15 5AL Tel: 061 234 3168

Break with Labour Organise to fight

INSIDE: AIDS & THE PURSUIT OF PROFIT • EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH EDITOR OF SOWET

ISSN 01435426

Thatcher's Britain

The poor get poorer

- Nearly 8 million people were dependent on Supplementary Benefit in 1984 - an increase of 77% since 1979.
- Over 16 million people live in poverty defined as on or within 40% of Supplementary Benefit level.
- Out of £8.1 billion given away in tax cuts between 1979 and 1986 the poorest 6 million tax payers received only 8%. The richest 10% received half.
- Over half (52%) of all personal marketable wealth is owned by the richest 10% of the population. The bottom 50% owns just 7%.

Unemployment

- Unemployment in the North of England at 16.9% is nearly double that of the South East at 8.5%. 18 towns in England have unemployment rates at over 20%. With over 400,000 people unemployed, London now has the largest concentration of unemployment of any city in the industrial world.
- Between 1979 and 1986 male unemployment rose by 143%. Women's unemployment rose by 189%.
- In 1985 unemployment for black men was 20%, twice that of white men. Unemployment for black women was 19% compared to 10% for white women.
- Unemployment rates in 1985 for 16-24 year old men were:
White men - 16%.
Black men - 33%.
Pakistani/Bangladeshi men - 48%.
- One third of the workforce is no longer protected from unfair dismissal.

Health

Reality for them

'I can go on the day I want, at the time I want, with the doctor I want.' (Margaret Thatcher on private medicine, June 1987)

Reality for us

- 60% more people need hospital treatment.
- 681,901 people are on hospital waiting lists.
- Over one million people are waiting for day surgery.
- 161 hospitals have been closed since 1979 with a loss of 36,311 beds.
- The mortality rate for the young and middle-aged in the most deprived areas of London is double the rate in the least deprived areas.

Editorial

Thatcher has been re-elected on a programme which offers no change of policy, no amelioration of the appalling conditions facing masses of people in Britain. Thatcher makes no secret of her intention to escalate the assault on the conditions of life of the working class so that British capitalism can survive in the cut-throat world of imperialist crisis.

The next five years of Thatcherism threaten the dismantling of the welfare state: the last buffer against the mass poverty and destitution which inevitably result from the naked operation of the laws of the capitalist market.

The next five years of Thatcherism threaten the crudest promotion of racism and national chauvinism: ever tighter immigration controls; ever more blatant collaboration with the apartheid regime; an ever growing stockpile of nuclear and conventional weapons; and rampant anti-Sovietism.

The next five years of Thatcherism threaten an even greater onslaught on basic democratic rights: the rights of political organisation and protest on the streets; the rights of effective trade unionism. How could such a government, with such a record and such a programme be voted in with a massive majority?

How did Thatcher win?

The last eight years have made this development possible. First the Thatcher government by means of what it calls 'people's capitalism' - very real handouts of hard cash to the rich, the middle class and better off sections of the working class - has created for itself a solid electoral base. At the same time the Thatcher government has built up the repressive apparatus of the state to deal with any potential or actual resistance: increased police powers such as the Police and Criminal Evidence Act; major restrictions on rights of protest such as the Public Order Act; serious inroads into trade union rights particularly giving the courts the power to seize funds and the banning of secondary picketing; and the massive expansion of police resources and weaponry.

Second the Thatcher government has been aided and abetted by the Labour Party and the TUC. They knew that they had to win back the votes of semi-detached Britain - the middle class and better off sections of the working class - in order to win the election. To win these votes Kinnock has ruthlessly dealt with opposition within the Labour Party - expulsion of Militant supporters, betrayal of left Labour councils in the anti-ratecapping campaign, the attack on black sections and the deselection of Sharon Atkin. Kinnock and Willis have systematically sabotaged every serious fight within the trade union movement - the most significant being the year long miners' strike 1984/5. Kinnock has condemned each and every inner-city rising against police violence and racism. In order not to upset the prejudice and selfishness of semi-detached Britain Kinnock has either refused to exploit opportunities to attack Thatcher - such as Westlands or the campaign for sanctions against South Africa - or openly sided with Thatcher as in the Zircon affair. Kinnock has refused to mobilise the very forces which could mount a serious challenge to Thatcher, for fear of alienating semi-detached Britain. In the event semi-detached Britain decided that its privileges were safer with the Tories.

Labour's election fraud

Labour's election campaign was a fraud. It was a mixture of promises and threats. Kinnock promised to reverse health and education cuts and reduce unemployment. At the same time he threatened to control the left, control the unions and defend 'law and order'. Kinnock told us that a future Labour government would be a 'caring' government. The poor, the unemployed, the low-paid, the elderly and the sick could rely on his government to introduce the necessary changes from above. At the same time he assured semi-detached Britain that there would be no serious disturbance of their comfortable and privileged lives. The most bizarre example of this came from Roy Hattersley who repeatedly said that only those earning more than £500 a week (£26,000 a year) would be affected by Labour's tax policies. This was the political fraud.

In the middle of a deep-seated and long lasting crisis of the capitalist system,

NETWORK
GEOFF FRANKLIN/NETWORK



The most reactionary government of the post-war period has been returned to power with the second largest majority since 1945. This has happened in a period when four million people are unemployed, 16 million live in poverty and public provision of education, health, housing and transport no longer meets the basic needs of millions of people

THATCHER WINS THIRD TERM OF POWER

Break with Labour Organise to fight

poverty on the scale already created by the Thatcher government cannot be tackled from above. Any serious attempt to overcome mass poverty would require a frontal assault on wealth and privilege. Such an assault could only be carried through by the mass mobilisation of those working class people who are bearing the brunt of Thatcher's policies.

It certainly cannot be carried through by a Labour Party whose every campaign is directed solely at the prejudices and interests of semi-detached Britain, and which, at the same time, attacks and demobilises the very forces which alone can defend the people against the effects of the capitalist crisis.

The working class gets what it wants only by organising and fighting for its interests which are diametrically opposed to the interests of the wealthy and privileged. In its appeal to semi-detached Britain Kinnock's Labour Party has excluded, isolated and demobilised anyone, inside or outside the Labour Party, who is prepared to take up and fight for the interests of the working class. In so doing Kinnock has exposed an even greater political fraud: the fraudulent character of parliamentary democracy.

The election was about which party would gain parliamentary power by winning the allegiance of semi-detached Britain. The poor and oppressed never featured except as objects of pity and patronage used by the Labour Party to stir the consciences of semi-detached Britain. No parliamentary party represents the interests of the poor, the low-paid, the unemployed and the oppressed. Indeed the Labour Party can only get to power by abandoning any serious pretence to defend their interests. This means that for the mass of the working class, in today's conditions, parliamentary democracy is a sham.

Parliament and the class struggle

This leads to the central question as to what

role parliament can play in the class struggle.

Communists know that parliament cannot be the instrument enabling the working class to achieve its political aims. For us the only way parliament can be used is as a platform from which to give a voice to the interests of the working class and to focus public attention on the issues that matter to the working class. That is why, during the election, the RCG opposed the Labour Party for the racist reactionary party it is and at the same time supported those few candidates who would be prepared to use their parliamentary position to aid the working class in struggle. For example if Paul Boateng, MP for Brent South, stands by his commitment to invite Viraj Mendis to the House of Commons to address a meeting on immigration controls then millions more people will become aware of the justice of Viraj's struggle and of the racist character of the immigration laws.

During the election the RCG organised to raise those issues which were being excluded from Kinnock's campaign and are crucial to the future of the British working class. We raised the issue of democratic rights, the role of the Public Order Act, the police ban on demonstrations outside the South African Embassy and the increasing police violence. We raised the issue of the racist immigration controls and the importance of defending Viraj Mendis. We also raised amnesty for the Broadwater Farm defendants, the right of the Irish people to self-determination, the release of framed Irish prisoners, the rights of gays and lesbians, women's rights, the repeal of Tory anti-trade union laws and many other issues. In doing this, inside and outside Labour Party meetings, we not only won national publicity for some of these issues but also exposed the undemocratic character of the Labour Party.

The main Labour election meetings were pre-packaged, stage-managed media events. Anyone daring to disturb the smooth running of these events by, for example, trying to question the speakers,

was unceremoniously thrown out, abused and, often, assaulted.

In Bolton a black RCG member was called a 'black bastard', physically manhandled and locked up in a room for the duration of the meeting because he raised the issue of racism at a Kinnock rally.

In Westminster North Labour Party stewards, not content with throwing us out, called the police and five FRFI supporters were arrested. One was held overnight and bound over to keep the peace. Four face charges of police obstruction. Their 'crime' was to ask Gerald Kaufman a number of crucial questions. Frequently it was Labour left-wingers who did the dirty work of ejecting and assaulting RCG members and FRFI supporters. This is the party that the British left flocked to defend.

The election and the left

'Defeat Tory extremists. Vote Labour' *Militant*

'All out for a Labour victory' *Socialist Action*

'Vote Labour, Kick out the Tories' *Socialist Organiser*

'Vote Labour but organise to fight' *Workers Power*

'Throw out Thatcher. Vote Labour. No confidence in Labour leaders. Build revolutionary socialist alternatives.' *Workers Press*

'Vote Labour in a class vote against the Tories' *Newsline*

'Vote Labour with no illusions. A tactical vote is a vote for the bosses. Build a real socialist alternative to Kinnock' *Socialist Worker*

'Put the Tories on the run' *7 Days*

'Kick the Tories Out' *Morning Star*

In the election the British left acted as a cover for the rotten, reactionary Labour Party. Far from building any alternative to Labour they either took part in attacking the RCG - eg Jack Dromey, Morning Star supporter at the Islington Kinnock rally - or in most cases, did nothing. They often gave over their front pages to anti-

RCG POST ELECTION PUBLIC MEETINGS

Break with Labour Organise to fight

Manchester

Monday 22 June
Town Hall Conference Room
Albert Square 7.30pm

Liverpool

Wednesday 24 June
AEU Hall, Mount Pleasant
7.30pm

Leeds

Monday 15 June
Leeds Trades Club
Saville Mount, 7.30pm

Glasgow

Thursday 25 June
City Halls
Candleriggs, 7.30pm

Dundee

Wednesday 17 June
Wellgate Library
(City Centre), 7.30pm

Edinburgh

For details contact FRFI, PO Box 43,
Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh

London

Tuesday 23 June
Red Rose Club, Seven Sisters Road
London N7 (nearest tube Finsbury
Park) 7.30pm

Thatcherism with their 'criticisms' of Kinnock tucked away inside. There was a great deal of voting Labour but precious little building of alternatives. The left became nothing more than amateur vote-gatherers for the Labour Party.

The main exception to this was the RCP/Red Front who refused to support anybody other than themselves. They stood candidates who had no chance whatsoever of achieving a significant vote. Whereas the rest of the left refused to build a real alternative, the RCP/Red Front pretended that they were a real alternative. Their empty posturing only emphasised their irrelevance and, far more seriously, by implication, the irrelevance of the issues they raised. The RCP/Red Front candidates represented no one. They were in no sense representatives of any section of the people. They were not leaders of or even associated with any serious struggle. Their participation in the parliamentary sham did nothing but damage to the building of a real alternative.

Apart from the RCG, the British left remains tied to the same, privileged section of the working class whose interests are expressed by Kinnock's Labour Party. Inevitably, given their choice to concentrate their work in this arena, they fall prey to the influence of the Labour Party and its parliamentary cretinism. They are forced to lie about the class character of the Labour Party, to claim that it is the party of the working class when in fact it is the party of the privileged upper section of the working class: the labour aristocracy. The last eight years have demonstrated that the working class is fundamentally split between a privileged upper layer who represent the interests of the ruling class within the working class movement, and the mass of the working class whose conditions of life have steadily worsened. They can only defend their interests by organising independently of, and in opposition to the labour aristocracy. That demands a fundamental and irrevocable break with the Labour Party. Unless the British left recognises this political reality it will remain part of the problem and not part of the solution.

Building a real alternative

Having failed in this election to win back enough votes from semi-detached Britain, Kinnock's Labour Party will shift even further to the right. The left in the Labour Party faces increasing irrelevance unless they decide to take seriously the words of Paul Boateng and make themselves 'tribunes of all the people' that is put

themselves at the service of the people fighting back.

Today all socialists, inside or outside the Labour Party, have to decide where they stand: with the mass of the working class or with its privileged upper layers. A real alternative can only be built by 'going lower and deeper, to the real masses' (Lenin)

Britain is a divided nation. The division between rich and poor is daily widening. It is not simply a division between North and South. The division within London is, if anything, more extreme. This division is fundamentally a class question. It is the inevitable result of the crisis of capitalism.

Nearly a third of the British population have been plunged into poverty. Millions more face the same fate in the coming years. The material basis already exists for a real alternative to be built.

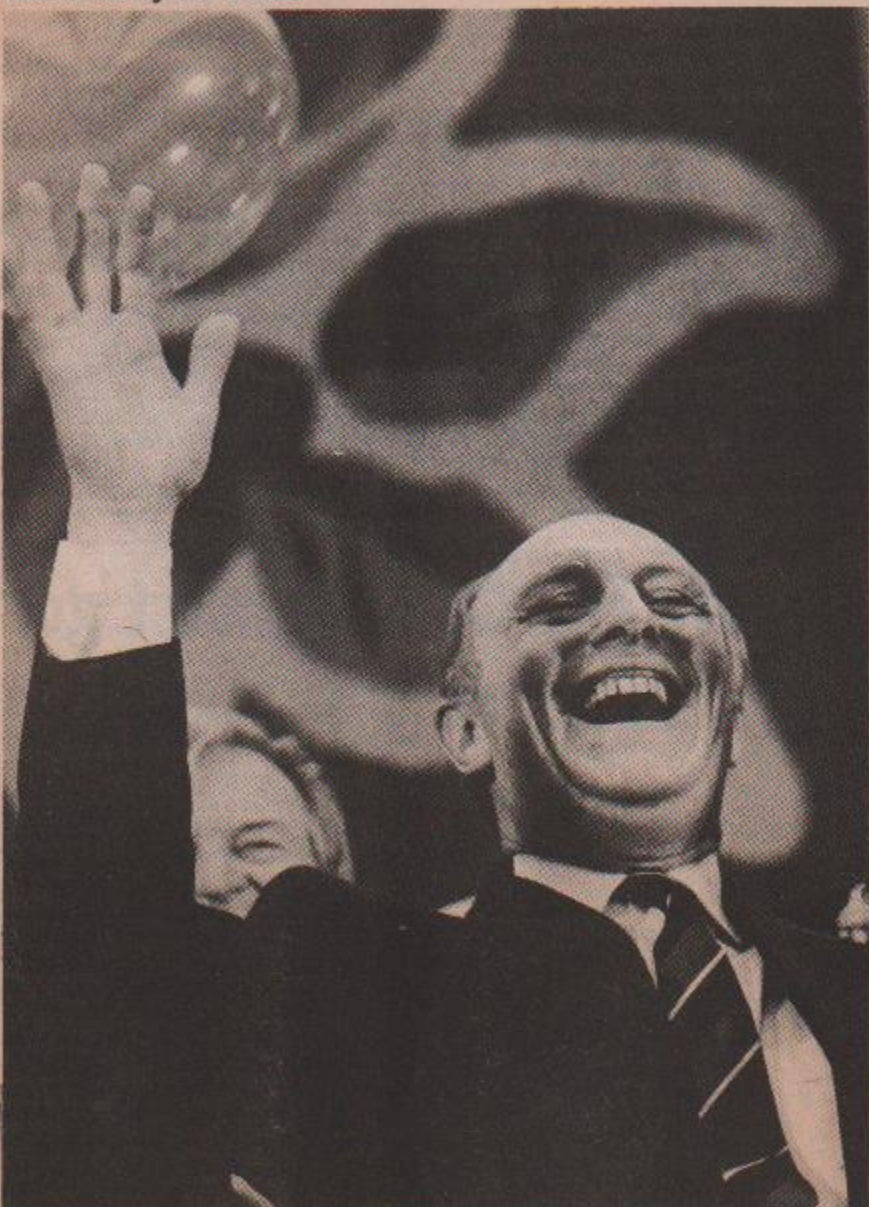
In the next five years larger and larger sections of the working class and oppressed will be forced into political struggle. They will follow the lead already given by black people (1981, 1985), the miners (1984/5), the VMDC and other anti-deportation campaigns, the Non-Stop Picket, and all other examples of people organising to fight for their rights and refusing to sacrifice their struggles on the altar of Labour electoral politics.

The RCG intends to put itself at the centre of this real class struggle. We will be working for the organisation of all forces of opposition into a fighting movement which can defend the interests of the working class: a coalition of the dispossessed. This movement will be open to all who are prepared to join it. However the possibilities now presented to revolutionaries in Britain will only be realised if the number of organised communists grows rapidly. Join the RCG.

ELECTION RESULTS SUMMARY

- The Tories with 43 per cent of the vote and 375 seats have an overall majority of 101 seats. The Tory vote fell by only 0.2 per cent compared to 1983. In London it increased by 2.5 per cent.
- Labour with 32 per cent of the vote and 229 seats increased its overall share of the vote by 3.3 per cent. Its share increased most in the more deprived areas; in the North by 7.1 per cent, North West 5.2 per cent, Yorkshire 5.4 per cent, Wales 7.6 per cent and Scotland 7.3 per cent. In the more prosperous areas the increase was small; in the South East by 0.9 per cent and in London 1.5 per cent.
- The Alliance with a 23 per cent share of the vote had 23 seats. Its share fell by 2.9 per cent.

■ Kinnock's circus came to town: anyone with serious questions was booted out by the clowns



BOB GANNON

The conduct of election campaigns by the methods of the bourgeoisie has a price to pay in terms of democratic rights. Along with the stage-managed political rally go Oswald Mosley and his Blackshirts.
Trevor Rayne, speaking outside the Islington Design Centre at an RCG street meeting

Labour Party racist bigots

A personal experience

On Wednesday 27 May I attended a Labour Party rally in Bolton at which Kinnock spoke. During his speech he made no references whatsoever to Labour Party policies on anything.

After listening to this pathetic person drivelling on, I stood up and raised the issue of Viraj Mendis. I told Kinnock that David Steel had written a letter of support to Viraj and then asked if he would say, there and then, that he supports the right of Viraj Mendis to stay in this country. Stewards came over and told me to shut up. I sat back down and Kinnock continued his speech.

Three minutes later I stood back up and raised the issue of Labour's history when in government, particularly on South Africa and immigration. The crowd were against me with calls of 'shut up black bastard' and 'nigger' coming from them.

Five stewards came at me saying 'you're coming with us you bastard.' I was dragged out of the hall. They were going to throw me outside when they noticed the press and TV waiting there. They decided to lock me in a room with two stewards for over an hour. After Kinnock had left, they let me out of the room.

The hostility shown towards me clearly showed that the Labour Party are not interested in black people at all and are, in fact, nothing but a set of racist bigots.

Mike Russell
(Leeds FRFI)



KATIA IN ARRELL/NETWORK

■ The number of homeless is rocketing: they have no voice in British elections

Comin' up roses or the Labour circus

On Sunday 7 June RCG and VMDC comrades attended Kinnock's 'Comin' Up Roses' election jamboree at the Islington Design Centre.

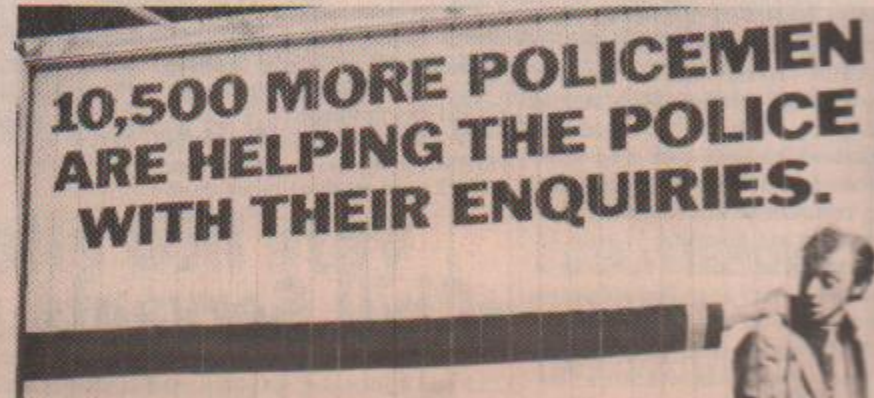
We were treated to a sickening display of the 'Labour Party fiddles while Britain burns' type of entertainment. A whole host of stars from Eastenders, Billy Bragg, Bill Owen, Lenny Henry and others turned out to give their support.

Comedian Ben Elton told us that this was only a taste of the fun we would have during the next five years under Labour! Yes, fun for the designer audience with their designer socialism in their designer setting! No fun for the unemployed, the youth, black people, the oppressed who were nowhere to be seen at this circus! To the strains of the Goldthorpe Colliery Brass Band Glenda Jackson announced that there were only four more days of Thatcherism to go. During the thunderous applause which followed Neil and Glenys emerged arm in arm at the top of a long stair case. (Dynasty all over again!) They made their way slowly and regally up to the stage.

I was able to get close to the stage and when Kinnock began speaking I shouted 'What are you going to do about Viraj Mendis in sanctuary? What are you going to do about the fifty black people deported every week?' Fearful that their carefully stage-managed show for the TV cameras would be spoiled, six Labour Party thugs pounced on me, lifted me shoulder high and brutally carried me the length of the hall, one woman running behind me, trying to pull the hair from my scalp. I managed to keep shouting about Viraj and telling people that this was the kind of democracy and freedom of speech they could expect under Labour. I was violently ejected from a fire exit and my shoes thrown after me. Inside the hall Jim and John protested about my treatment and raised the issue of Viraj Mendis and they too were ejected from the meeting.

Meanwhile, RCG and VMDC comrades had been holding a street meeting on the green outside the Design Centre. Whereas on the way into the jamboree people had tended to ignore us or treat us with disdain, on the way out Viraj Mendis was suddenly a burning issue! Many Labour supporters showed themselves in their true colours and jeered at us. Others, however, were prepared to enter into discussion, some of it heated, and take our election and Viraj Mendis July demonstration leaflets. On that day the politics of the oppressed were voiced on the streets and not inside the Design Centre!

Jan All



■ Law and Order: all three major parties agreed on recruiting more police and increasing their powers to deal with opposition

Policing the election

Gerald Kaufman showed us what it would be like if he ever became Home Secretary. At a meeting at Westminster North on 31 May, RCG members tried asking Kaufman about Viraj Mendis and the Public Order Act. His reply was to unleash the Labour Party's thugs (described as stewards), who violently ejected 9 people from the hall, including Red Front supporters. The organisers then called on the police to disperse a street meeting we organised outside! 5 people were arrested including 3 who had not even been in the meeting. Lorna Reid was held overnight charged

Home truths on TV

Election night, 11.30pm. Piccadilly Circus. Crowds, at various stages of inebriation, cheer or boo results flashed up on the giant screen. The stage is set. Enter Esther Rantzen with BBC film crew for live broadcast. 'What's your view of the election?' she asks. The whole thing, I tell her, has been nothing but a round of baby-kissing and dog-stroking. No party has addressed itself to black and immigrant people. None of them are going to get rid of the immigration laws or support the right of Viraj Mendis, in sanctuary in a Manchester church, to stay in Britain. They are all racist. 'Ahh. Yes. Thank you very much.' Microphone and camera move off quickly, hunting for inane comments. Can't go round disturbing people with politics on TV. I mean, it is election night, isn't it?

Much later, I'm walking to the Non-Stop Picket. I'm stopped three times by black people who've seen me on the TV. 'It's just like you said. We're glad somebody said that.' They all take copies of FRFI and the leaflet 'No vote for Labour racists'. We should have more revolutionary politics on TV.

Virman Man

Kinnock abandons 'non-nuclear defence policy'

Last year's Labour Party Conference committed the party to nuclear disarmament and the removal of all US nuclear bases in Britain. Kinnock's election manifesto watered this down. When Labour's defence policy became an election issue and risked losing Labour votes, Kinnock and Healey capitulated. Healey said there would be 'consultations' with Reagan before US bases were removed. Kinnock emphasised the Labour Party's 'flexibility' and hinted that he would be sympathetic to the future position of the US nuclear base in Holy Loch and the F-111 nuclear armed fighter bombers in East Anglia. 'We are not the French de Gaulle. We are not going to take the attitude that peremptorily requires departure.' So much for Kinnock's 'non-nuclear defence policy'. Like Thatcher, he is committed to defending British imperialism even at the risk of a nuclear holocaust.

Support the framed Broadwater Farm prisoners

On Thursday 19 March the Old Bailey jury found Winston Silcott, Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite guilty of the murder of PC Blakelock and taking part in a riot on the Broadwater Farm Estate, Tottenham on 6 October 1985. All three were given mandatory life sentences. In Winston Silcott's case Justice Hodgson recommended that he serve at least 30 years.

It was so important to the Metropolitan Police, the Home Office and other agencies of the state to secure these convictions that several Old Bailey judges left their own courts to come and hear the verdict announced in Court 2. And in Tottenham surplus army Saracen armoured cars were stationed outside of the police station on the evening of the verdict. The Old Bailey trials from the Broadwater Farm risings of October 1985 began in September 1986. 75 people were charged. The results of the cases so far - May 1987 - including on charges of murder, riot, affray and petrol bombs are: 15 acquitted, 18 found guilty, 2 retrials, 12 pleaded

guilty.

25 cases of affray and 4 also of riot, are still to be heard. So far the sentences have ranged from 15 months to 30 year minimum. The prosecution case has rested almost entirely on 'confessions' extorted under torturous conditions of detention, with no access to solicitors or relatives for days on end, even for the 50% of detainees who were juveniles.

Relatives and friends of the defendants have come together under the banner of FAMILIES UNITE TO FREE THE FRAMED. They are determined to fight for amnesty for all

the defendants charged in connection with uprisings.

Susan Davidson

For information contact: BWFDC, c/o BWFYA, 12/16 Tangmere, Broadwater Farm Estate, London N17

Support the framed Broadwater prisoners

Send messages of solidarity to: Winston Silcott (B74053), HMP Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, W12 0AE Engin Raghip (B78270), HMP Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Du Cane Road, London W12 0AE Mark Braithwaite, (B78965), HMP Chelmsford, Springfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 6LQ.



BOB GANNON

Racist Murder in Hampstead

Nearly 700 people joined a march from Hampstead Heath railway station to Camden Town Hall, Euston Road on Saturday 6 June protesting against the racist murder of restaurant worker, Abdus Sattar. The march called by the Sattar Action Committee was led by several Bangladeshi organisations and included the Pakistani Workers' Association, City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, FRFI/RCG, NUT branches from many local schools, ALTARF, Camden NALGO, Kings Cross Women's Centre, HASSLL against homelessness, Camden Town SWP and several other organisations.

Abdus Sattar, a 48-year old father of four, was brutally murdered on Sunday 24 May, yards from the Fleet Tandoori restaurant in Fleet Road,

Hampstead where he worked. He was attacked and knifed by two skinheads as he left the restaurant at 11.30pm to go home. He managed to stagger back inside the restaurant but fell unconscious in a pool of blood. He died two hours later at the Royal Free Hospital. Normally he would have gone home by taxi with the rest of the workers - a practice adopted over a number of years because of fears of racial attacks. However, he had left early because it was a special religious holiday.

As a result of a number of people witnessing the murder, two men, Anthony Carroll, 23 and unemployed, and Paul Scouler, 19, a barman, have been arrested and charged with murder. Both are reported to be of no fixed address. Noor Miah, a member of the Action Committee, spoke to FRFI during the march.

He said that there was no doubt that this was a racist murder. There had been a number of racist attacks in the area on housing estates and in schools. Only one week ago a

Bengali man had been chased by four youths but just managed to escape. He believed that the police were trying to cover up the racist element in the murder. The aims of the demonstration were to show sympathy and support for the family of Abdus Sattar and to demand justice for the Sattar family and the black community at large.

While Hampstead MP Sir Geoffrey Finsberg and Labour rival Phil Turner both attended a meeting called by the Action Committee on Saturday 31 May, neither were on the march or attended the rally at Camden Town Hall. Speakers at the rally, while demanding action by the police, compensation for the Abdus Sattar's family and the use of the Council's minibus for protection, argued that in the end they could only rely on themselves. 'We cannot rely on the state for protection - the only answer is unity of black people, self defence.'

David Reed

Caterpillar closure at hand

On the 9 May, the Pink Panther tractor, built by the Caterpillar workers during their occupation, was snatched back by the Caterpillar management.

The tractor, which had stood in Glasgow city centre as a symbolic demonstration of the skills of the workforce, had been donated through War on Want, to the people of Nicaragua. The Caterpillar management threatened to tie up the charity in an expensive legal battle which they could ill afford, it was while negotiations were going on to find a compromise solution that the tractor was taken by a management snatch squad. This is despite the fact that Caterpillar themselves have no use for the Pink Panther they in fact intend to scrap it. What could have been used to build a health centre and schools in Nicaragua, has been consigned to a scrap yard by the Caterpillar management.

The workforce themselves were dealt another blow on the 24 May, when news leaked out that whilst their jobs had been abandoned, on the supposed grounds of lack of finances, Caterpillar are planning to open 12 factories in China. The workers in the factory are still waiting for a concrete offer which will secure their future. The offer by Sir Monty Finniston, which was used by Jimmy Airlie of the AEU to break the 100 day occupation of the factory has fallen through as FRFI predicted in our last issue. As the closing date for the factory looms, the chances of an offer which will secure the 1200 jobs is becoming less and less likely. The Caterpillar management will fly off to wherever they can get the highest profits, leaving the 1200 workers on the dole, with rocketing debts and little hope in a place where the chances of securing another job are next to none.

Kim and Gerry

TSGs: new thugs for old

Territorial Support Group (TSG) cops have been involved in attacks on the Non-Stop Picket on at least four occasions: 19 April when Steven Kitson was knocked unconscious; 30 April when Lorna Reid and Dele Olajiga were arrested; 6 May when the picket was first moved; 5 June when one of the Friday defiance rallies was taking place.

On 27 April it was TSG cops who beat up people protesting against Tower Hamlets Council's racist housing policy. Who are these TSG thugs?

The TSGs came into operation on 12 January this year. Based in each of the Metropolitan Police's eight areas, the TSGs replace both the Special Patrol Group (SPG) and District Support Units (DSUs).

There are 920 TSG officers - 115 to each area. Each group has eight fully protected carriers and three general purpose cars. Selected officers receive firearms training and specialist search training. Each group is equipped with riot shields and has access to supplies of CS gas and plastic bullets. Officers serve in TSGs for four years at a time. The TSGs form fully fledged riot squads.

FROM SPG TO TSG

For those who remember the infamous Special Patrol Group (SPG) the TSGs will already be familiar. They are the SPG reborn - only bigger and better equipped.

The SPG killed two young Pakistani protesters at India House in 1973; was involved in the death

of Kevin Gately in 1974 and killed Blair Peach in 1979.

In 1981 the complement of these killers was increased from 240 to 268. In July of the same year the Instant Response Units (IRUs) were set up. These were immediately renamed District Support Units (DSUs). DSU officers served three month tours of duty. They received shield training but not firearm training nor training for plastic bullets or CS gas. There were about 900 DSU officers.

In short the TSGs represent a massive escalation in paramilitary policing: paramilitary policing which is aimed at anyone who might resist the system of poverty and racism that the police are paid to defend.

But these thugs can be fought. The Bangladeshi families are still fighting Tower Hamlets Council's racist housing policy. The Non-Stop Picket is still fighting the police ban. The answer to the creation of paramilitary police squads such as the TSGs is to build organised political campaigns to defend the people against police violence and racism.

Terry O'Halloran

Civil Servants strike

On 8 and 9 June civil servants went on a two-day strike. An estimated 160,000 (75%) of the 220,000 members of the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) and Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) took part.

452 out of 491 local DHSS offices were closed; 512 unemployment benefit offices and 28 Job Centres. Half of normal air traffic was halted. Cargo traffic at Dover and Harwich was delayed. Fifteen GCHQ workers joined the stoppage.

The two-day strike was aimed at forcing an improvement in the government's 4.6% pay offer. The action was taken in preference to a call for all out strike. Some sections of the CPSA, especially in South London DE branch, wanted an indefinite strike. The Militant-dominated Broad Left leadership, however,

thought all-out strike would damage Labour's election chances.

A Brixton CPSA member, Alan Watson, said 'The union's leadership is saying "wait until the Labour Party is elected..." But there is an opposite feeling saying don't trust the Labour Party more than any other party.'

Now, after the election, the Militant union leadership no longer has any excuse. Civil servants will have to fight to end low pay and organise in unity with claimants against the government.

Terry O'Halloran

The Great Ferry Cover-Up

The official inquiry into the Zeebrugge *Herald of Free Enterprise* disaster was a whitewash on behalf of the Department of Transport, and bears frightening similarities to the official inquiry into the *European Gateway* disaster of 1982.

Both ferries were owned and operated by the Townsend Thoresen company, part of European Ferries plc. Both ferries capsized in shallow water, and both were ro-ro ferries.

There were two inquiries into the 1982 *European Gateway* disaster. The official inquiry, which was actually convened by the Department of Transport (DoT), was unable to provide any serious conclusions.

The other, more substantial, inquiry was by J R Spouge BSc for the Royal Institute of Naval Architecture. Spouge says very clearly that

the sinking occurred because the watertight doors in the engine rooms were open. A simulation of the flood showed that the watertight doors would have had to have been shut within 50 seconds of the collision that caused the flood to have saved the ship. Those doors were of a hand operated type which took 90 seconds of pumping on a lever to close. Spouge's other important conclusion was the proposal of a completely new theory in Naval engineering. This was called 'transient asymmetric flooding' and was the only way in which Spouge could explain the dramatic heel of the ferry: it was estimated that after 90 seconds the *European Gateway* had achieved a slope of 15°, and 90° after less than ten minutes. Nothing has been done about these findings.

At the Zeebrugge inquiry Dr Meek pointed the finger very definitely at

the Department of Transport. Dr Meek has been speaking out for years against the basic design of ro-ro ferries. Water, he pointed out, will always spill onto the car decks, inevitably... however this does not automatically have to lead to the deaths of six people in 1982 and over 200 in 1987.

There has recently been another frightening piece of evidence. It has been proved beyond any doubt that the *Herald of Free Enterprise* was seriously over-loaded. The responsibility for ensuring that ro-ro ferries are not overloaded lies with the DoT. Of course the DoT does employ some marine inspectors to fulfil this very function, but the inspecting staff has been systematically cut since 1976 and especially since 1979.

Leigh O'Connor

NCU Engineers say Golding must go!

The annual conference of the National Communications Union, Engineering section, has just passed a motion of no confidence in its General Secretary John Golding.

He has been told to go because of the role he played during our strike at the beginning of 1987. He undermined the strike, and along with the majority of the union executive, recommended acceptance of an offer from British Telecom (BT) management which was no better from what was on the table at the beginning of the strike.

This move follows the result of the elections to the National Executive Committee of the union, and the group Executive Council of the Engineering section. In both elections the Broad Left candidates have gained a majority, overturning the previous right wing leadership of our

union. The anger of the majority of the union membership at the role played by Golding and the previous union leadership during the strike is reflected in these votes.

The new Broad Left leadership will certainly be put to the test over the next twelve months. Pressure from management has been steadily increasing since the end of the strike. However the previous record of the Broad Left doesn't give rise to confidence. When BT was privatised in 1984 the Broad Left was in control of the union, and they refused to call national industrial action against privatisation. A repeat performance

in the coming period would be disastrous for the workers in BT.

Bob Shepherd

The treachery of the NCU leadership has led to a 40% pay cut for workers at a British Telecom subsidiary. 600 workers at the BT consumer electronics factory at Cwmarn, South Wales will receive a lump sum of £150 to 'compensate' for this huge cut in living standards. At present average weekly pay is £150 at this factory - it will drop to £90 as a result of this cut. The NCU agreed to the lower rates as the only alternative to closing the factory.

Manchester Labour Group bows to racism

On 4 March Viraj Mendis was offered the job of Immigration and Nationality Officer for Manchester City Council. The Council explained that Viraj was 'the only suitable candidate for the job' and that he could easily work from sanctuary as 'the necessary links with the Race Unit in the Town Hall can be maintained satisfactorily.' Nearly 4 months later, the Council controlled by the Labour group and led by 'left-winger' Graham Stringer beat a cowardly retreat, surrendering to the racist campaign conducted against the job by Waddington, the media and their fascist allies (see *FRFI* 67)

On 21 May, Stringer held a press conference condemning the 'confusion and mischief' which had followed the job offer. In an official press statement, the Council claimed 'the job offer was offered subject to a lease of the Church premises being agreed... (this has)... not been agreed and it is not practicable for Mr Mendis to carry out his duties at the present time.' Stringer's deception has been nailed by Father John Methuen, rector of the Church:

'Arrangements for Viraj Mendis to work from the church of the Ascension were made... in writing and responded to in writing subject to a few details which were finalised later...'

In a last ditch effort our amateur magician produced an alleged 'clause 1(g)' of Viraj's job contract stating that 'the Immigration and Nationality Officer must be able to travel to the Home Office and Manchester Airport to be able to fulfil his duties.' Like all amateur magicians, Stringer fell foul of the truth. A VMDC member produced the original job contract which had no such clause.

These convoluted and technical 'explanations' for withdrawing Viraj's job were nothing but hopeless attempts to cover the Labour group's unprincipled capitulation to racist pressure.

Immediately after Waddington, the local Tory party, the racist media and others made the job an issue and used it to whip up racist opposition to Labour, the Labour group calculating the votes it would lose began a concerted campaign to withdraw the job. Stringer himself said after the 6 May local council elections, '... the concentration on the Viraj Mendis issue... has lost us (the Labour Party) seats...'. With an impending general election, Stringer prepared to ensure that Labour wouldn't lose any racist votes.

On 13 May, the City Labour Party (the policy making body for the Labour group) was due to meet and discuss an emergency resolution from the ASTMS Greater Manchester Branch calling on the Council 'to confirm the employment of Viraj Mendis'. Stringer packed the meeting with his fellow 'left' councillors. To the disbelief of many LP members, Tony McCardle invoked a standing order, which no-one could even remember, blocking the discussion of the resolution.

Having won their position by 50 votes to 33 Stringer's lackeys all left the meeting. Outraged, the remaining members re-ordered the agenda and carried the agenda and carried the ASTMS resolution.

Neil Kinnock came to Manchester on 20 May, and joined Stringer's campaign by openly supporting those who sought to withdraw Viraj's job offer.

Responding to Stringer's 21 May press conference, Pauline Harris, VMDC Press Officer said:

'The council are backing down due to racist pressure in view of the forthcoming elections... it is clear that the Labour Party is willing to betray Viraj Mendis and all black people fighting racism in order to win the racist vote. The Council's justification for this backing down must be seen for what it is: hollow words and empty excuses.'

NICK LEWIS

The Labour Party leadership has stabbed Viraj in the back. The VMDC can learn from this experience important lessons for its future. The way forward lies in building upon the enormous support the campaign enjoys amongst the most oppressed sections of the working class. It lies in building working alliances with those sections of the Manchester Labour Party and trade unions which did fight Stringer's surrender to racism, drawing them into the new movement which is necessary to fight all deportations and racism whatever the make-up of the next government.

VMDC disturbs Waddington's peace

For its general election intervention, the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign used the slogan 'Vote Against Deportations on 11 June! March Against Deportation on 11 July!' David Waddington, responsible for imprisoning Viraj in sanctuary, was a main target. Everywhere he went, he met VMDC and RCG supporters condemning his racism and deportations. By the end of the campaign Waddington was complaining that the VMDC was haunting him. He claimed it would continue to do so even if Viraj was allowed to stay! 'Correct' interjected the VMDC 'until all immigration controls are smashed!'

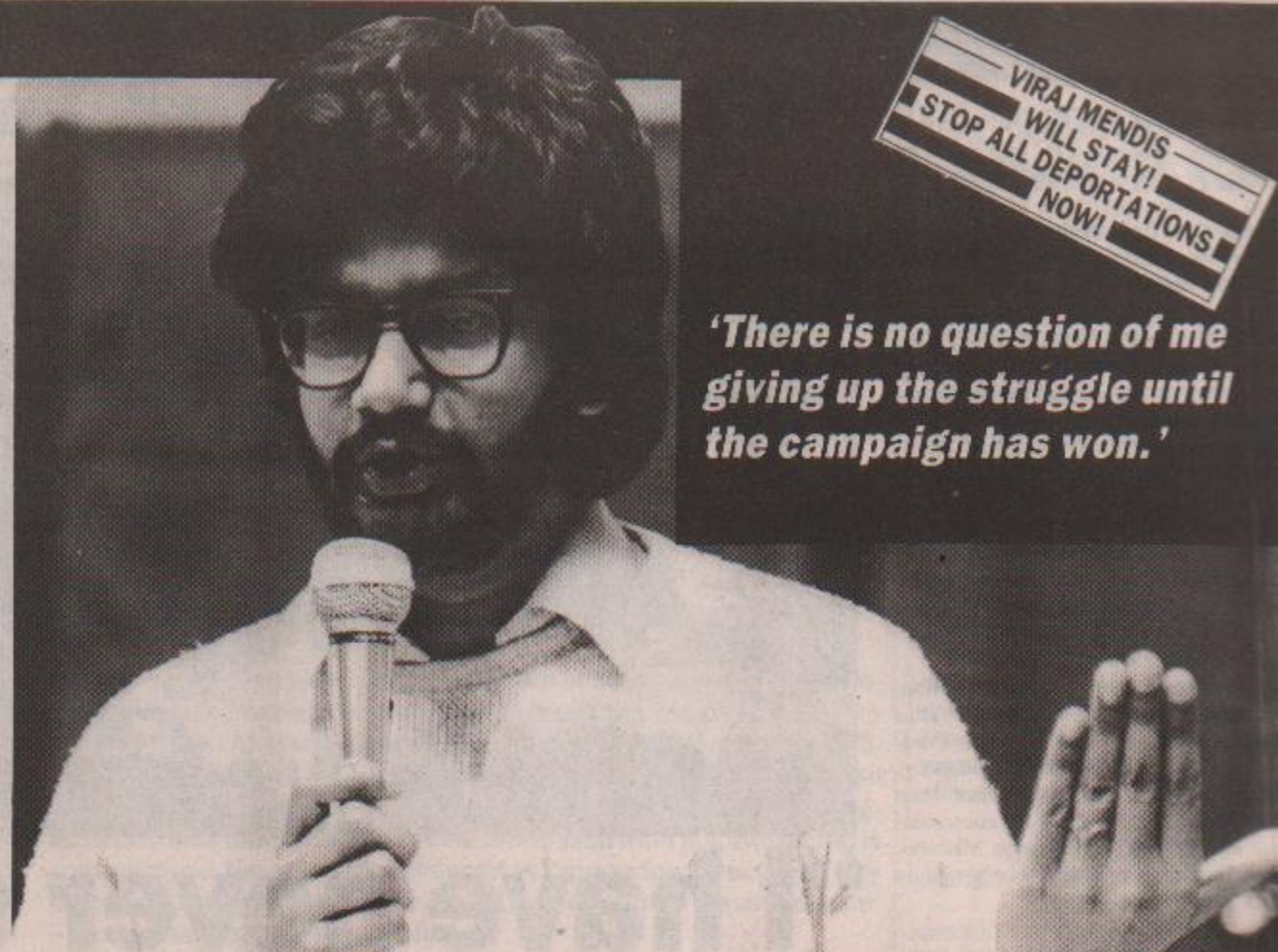
While 'haunting' Waddington, the VMDC also attended Labour and Alliance meetings to win support from candidates and build for the 11 July demonstration. However, expecting a Tory victory, the VMDC recognised that building among the local working class and black community was the most decisive task. Through street meetings and door to door canvassing, VMDC supporters distributed a special appeal from Viraj pointing out the common nature of the struggle against racism, unemployment and poverty. Through its work, the VMDC is now better positioned to fight the new Tory government.

Home Office squirms - Tamils will stay

On 13 May a great victory was won in the High Court by 3 Tamil men. Shanmuganathan Sathanathan was granted refugee status, whilst Rasalingam Rajaruban and Muthiah Udayakumaran were given 12 months' exceptional leave to remain in Britain. The Home Office was also forced to concede legal costs running into thousands of pounds.

The Home Office had claimed that Shanmuganathan, although having a well-founded fear of persecution if deported to Sri Lanka, should nevertheless be sent back to India, his point of departure to Britain. Rajaruban, since his arrival in Britain on 27 December 1986, had been sent back to India twice by the Home Office - the second time in handcuffs, escorted by a private security firm. In Udayakumaran's case the Home Office had failed to follow its own interview procedures.

The Home Office, fearing a public defeat, made desperate last-minute attempts to call off the hearing and settle out of court



'There is no question of me giving up the struggle until the campaign has won.'

A message from Viraj Mendis

Six months in SANCTUARY

So many things have happened in the six months since I've been in sanctuary that they seem to have gone by more quickly than any other period of the campaign. The intensity of activity has increased, so that my life is totally dominated by the needs of the campaign.

AT HOME

There are obvious personal problems, as anyone who has been in an enclosed space will tell you: the lack of fresh air, the lack of freedom. Until you lose it, you can't imagine what it is: the craving to go outside, which of course affects you. I'm in the public eye all the time - which shows how strong the campaign is. The press and media are always ringing up - you have to be on the ball all the time to make sure that they can't twist anything you say. The telephone has been my lifeline; it's the most important thing for me. I keep up-to-date with the news very easily - members of the campaign are always running around with the latest bit of news either from home or abroad.

I've had some fantastic support.

There has not been a single day when I've not had at least a couple of visitors. Recently the Bishop of Lewes came to see me. The people of Hulme and Moss Side have rallied around me. I've seen photographs of all the graffiti about me around the estate. Since I've been in sanctuary the VMDC has made a big leap forward. It really is a truly national campaign now, with support groups from Brighton to Dundee, and new ones springing up all over the place.

The relationship with Father John and Father Henry has deepened the longer I've been here. I see more and more the common bond between communists and religious people of principle - it's not an alliance of convenience but on a much higher plane. It shows the way for a wider alliance of people from different philosophical starting points working against racism and oppression.

GENERAL ELECTION

People have been asking me what I think of the general election. The approach of the VMDC was to measure people by the stand they

took on the immigration laws and my right to stay here. For the people of Hulme and Moss Side the election has gone over them - no party has shown any interest in them at all. The election was fighting for a quite different set of people, and has been totally irrelevant to the interests of black and working class people. But we intervened in the election precisely to push forward the interests of those who are never represented. That's why when Mike stood up in a Labour Party meeting in Bolton and said 'what about black people' he was imprisoned by the stewards so that he couldn't speak to the media. All over the country the issue of my right to stay here was raised. The theatrical quality was transformed - we brought it down to earth with a real issue, rather than having a fantasy setting with music from Brahms.

THE FUTURE

There's no question of me giving up the struggle until the campaign has won. In many ways it is not up to me anymore - it's independent of my will. We have to go on. I can't give up. That's all.

JOIN THE

VIRAJ MENDIS ★ DEFENCE CAMPAIGN!

There are VMDC Support Groups in:

- LONDON ● GLASGOW ● LEEDS ● LIVERPOOL ● TYNE AND WEAR ● BRIGHTON ● DUNDEE ● BRISTOL ● EDINBURGH ● BRADFORD ● CAMBRIDGE

Join one of these groups! If there isn't one in your town help set one up! WRITE TO MANCHESTER VMDC FOR INFORMATION AND ADVICE:

c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester M20 5AL Tel: (061) 234 3388

VIRMAN MAN

rather than have its disgusting racism recorded in court. Late in the afternoon on the eve of the case, the Tamils' solicitor, Mr A Sriharan, was phoned by Home Office solicitors saying that they would grant exceptional leave to remain for 12 months to both Rajaruban and Udayakumaran, if their cases were withdrawn and Sathanathan's adjourned. Mr Sriharan decided to go to court to press for costs.

On the morning of the case itself Mr Sriharan received a letter from Home Secretary Douglas Hurd claiming that 'after careful consideration' he was

prepared to grant Sathanathan 12 months' exceptional leave to remain. Barrister Alpa Riza (who had won Viraj Mendis' right to a judicial review) and Mr Sriharan agreed that they would fight for full refugee status. At 3.50pm, just before the court was due to adjourn, Mr Sriharan received another letter from Hurd. He 'had carefully considered again' and was now prepared to grant refugee status. This amazing about-turn, in a matter of less than six hours, shows how fearful the Home Office is of being taken to court. Thus the mere threat of taking a case to court creates panic in the Home Office. Douglas Hurd must have sweated and squirmed as he tried everything to keep the cases out of court.

The lesson is clear - no submission to Home Office dirty deals. Victory after victory will be won against the racists by persisting until their nerve cracks.

Victory in railway strike

In early June the South African Railway and Harbour Workers Union (SARHWU) won an heroic struggle, and defeated the South African Transport Services (Sats) with their three-month-long strike. All of the 16,000-18,000 strikers who were sacked by Sats, and threatened with eviction from their hostels, have been re-employed. The strike started over the victimisation of one black worker and quickly spread throughout the industry and the black community as a whole when it became a battle against the apartheid bosses' attempts to subjugate the workers' struggle. Sats lost over a million workdays and the strike is estimated to have been the biggest industrial dispute in South African labour history outside the mining sector. In the course of the strike 7 SARHWU members were shot dead by apartheid police, over 500 leading SARHWU officials were detained, including the General Secretary and Justice Langa, their President (see FRFI 68).

ADAM BOWLES

The democratic movement reacted to Botha's white-only 'election' on 6 May with the most powerful display of anti-apartheid activity nationwide. The United Democratic Front (UDF), Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) organised a general strike and mass stayaway for the 5 and 6 May. South Africa was paralysed with several million people; including 1.5 million workers and 500,000 students; participating in the biggest mass protest in South Africa's history. Despite 30,000 detainees, arrested under the year long State of Emergency regulations and the bloody escalation of the racist war against the black masses: the workers, unemployed and youth and students united in resistance. The armed struggle took a marked upturn in the two day period, with at least three land mines exploding in the north of the country, explosions in central Johannesburg and a grenade attack in Cape Town. Thousands of demonstrators took to the streets in the townships, and there were numerous clashes with the security forces.

On the landslide victory of Botha's National Party in the white poll, President Oliver Tambo of the African National Congress said 'It blew the whistle for an increase in the armed struggle'.

Since the re-election of Botha, the apartheid regime has launched a new onslaught against the black masses. First he imposed new curbs on the media, and both correspondents for the BBC and ITV were expelled from South Africa. A sinister series of expertly placed bombs in COSATU HQ building has rendered the building unsafe. Attacks on COSATU officials and premises have spread nationwide. On 10 June Botha renewed the State of Emergency due to end on 12 June.

Against this background of detentions, murder, bombings and arson attacks COSATU is pressing ahead with its strategy of 'one industry, one union'. In a continued on p 7



POPPERFOTO

"I have never seen black South Africa so angry in my life"

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! is pleased to publish this exclusive interview with Thami Mazwai, editor of the *Sowetan* newspaper. The *Sowetan* has a mass circulation of 130,000 in the PWV (Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Vaal triangle) area - South Africa's main mining and industrial conurbation centred on Johannesburg. It is the daily paper of black people in Soweto, Alexandra, Sharpeville and the many other townships of the region.

In the current conditions of detentions and press censorship Thami Mazwai's agreement to give an interview is itself an act of courage allowing our readers to get a picture of political developments inside South Africa and to get the news from Soweto.

the popular movement in South Africa will just come to nought because the people have now reached a stage where they are no longer prepared to kow-tow to government pressures.

■ Are the people's organisations in some measure intact - perhaps underground? Government actions do succeed in getting a lot of people arrested, and many people are on the run and a lot of committees dismembered. But the spirit that binds the people together has now been immortalised. That is now the resistance that you get out of Soweto. It has now reached the stage where it no longer needs a leader, but the soul of the people is now leading them. One has just got to point and the people will find a way of getting there.

■ What are the forms of popular resistance? We know that there is a rent boycott in Soweto which has been going on for some time.

The rent boycott has been going for over a year. There are spontaneous stayaways. When students want to observe a particular event on a day then they just observe that particular event. In Soweto inspectors of school no longer find it easy to go and do an inspection because the students just see them as harassing their teachers. There is much of this spontaneous activity by various groups. Workers are now much more ready to go on strike as soon as a fellow worker is victimised.

Now all these are the manifestations of a community constantly on the attack and constantly looking for an excuse to express its anger at any incident.

■ The trade union organisation COSATU's offices have been under siege by the force of the state. Is the state now trying to break up the trade union resistance?

Definitely. The trade union movement has now been the one force foremost in the struggle against apartheid. Leaders of community organisations have been forc-

ed to be on the run so that the trade unions are now playing a vital role in looking after workers' interests and also playing the role that the political organisations must play. It's logical that the system must now divert its attention to the trade union federations and trade unions.

■ In this regard Moses Mayekiso, the General Secretary of MAWU who is also known in this country for organising the community in Alexandra - what is the significance of his trial with four others for high treason? (Cannot reply because of State of Emergency regulations).

■ What has the response been in Soweto and the townships to the armed actions of the liberation movements - Umkhonto we Sizwe and the Azanian People's Liberation Army have attacked in the recent period police training colleges and John Vorster Square police headquarters - what effect has that had in the townships?

The township communities have always been singing the praises of the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress - these are the two most popular organisations in South Africa. There is always graffiti that will talk about Umkhonto we Sizwe or will talk about APLA - the Azanian People's Liberation Army. At one stage because of all the competition between the two groups on one morning you'd find that the graffiti on the walls is Umkhonto, and the next week you'd find that the graffiti is APLA. In Soweto you'll find that one week everything is PAC and then the next week you'll find that everything is ANC. It's youngsters that are responsible for this. It just reflects that young people in the townships have long realised that Umkhonto and APLA are alive and kicking.

■ Under the new proclamation which makes it illegal to call for the release of

named detainees, how have the people responded to this new law from General Coetzee?

The way I interpret the law is that calling for the release of XYZ is an offence, but reporting on the detention is not an offence. I think that this was aimed primarily at the Release Mandela Campaign and also the other release campaigns that were in the pipeline.

■ We've heard about the whites only election in South Africa, there is a general election coming in this country. Do you see any change of government having any significance for the black people of South Africa?

I'll be frank - while it can be of emotional interest and perhaps political interest to the voters in Britain as to whether they want Margaret Thatcher or Neil Kinnock or David Steel or David Owen in power, I think that the interests of Great Britain are protected by P W Botha.

Although one can draw those slight distinctions that you can expect more support from this party and less support from Margaret Thatcher my first and foremost gut reaction is that whatever party is in power in Great Britain it has got its number one responsibility to the people of Great Britain and if keeping British investments intact in South Africa is the priority of the British people then obviously whatever government is in power is just going to make sure that it does that. It may give lip service to the liberation struggle but when it comes to the practicalities staying in power is its number one priority.

■ Are you confident of the long term victory of the black people of South Africa? Yes, I have been in jail several times. I was in jail in 1963, in 1981 and I have been detained several times. I still consider myself as a freedom fighter. I don't think that I would still be thinking of myself as a freedom fighter if I believed that we were fighting a losing battle. More so now that I have three children. I think that I owe it to my children to let them grow up in a free and liberated society. That's what most parents in South Africa believe. Although parents have been very conservative in the past right now the penny has dropped and parents are now prepared to lead the struggle against oppression within the country.

■ In the long term the white South Africans are never going to break the resistance of the black people?

No, white domination is going to crumble. I am from Soweto, I am from the townships. I have never seen black South Africa so angry in my life.

■ At the time of the white only elections the Sowetan held a poll for who would be the leaders of the people of South Africa. What was the significance of that poll? For the first time in the history of the country we asked everybody the ten people, most able to rule the country. This poll was everybody - people from the homelands, people from the townships, people from the white suburbs - every corner of South Africa had the opportunity to tell us who they thought should be in government. That was the first essential aspect. We thought it would be of interest to let the outside world know who the black people of South Africa regard as their leaders and how the black people of South Africa reject the leaders that are being foisted on them by the government.

■ What were the results?

It was Mandela one, then Oliver Tambo, Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak, Walter Sisulu, Joe Slovo. Then there was Frederick van Zyl Slabbert, Zeph Mothopeng, Helen Suzman, Nthato Motlana. Then there was a number of black consciousness leaders and then Johnson Mlambo, Gora Ebrahim - basically who's who in black politics.

■ So the poll showed that the real popular leaders are in prison at this time. Yes - the poll showed that they are either in prison or in exile.

■ What was the significance of the whites only election itself?

I think that it has exploded the myth that there is a liberal white element in South Africa. Black nationalists have always argued that liberal whites are only there to protect their interests, and the minute that they feel threatened they are going to run into their laager, and this was demonstrated. We have a situation where Botha is returned to power with a majority. His opposition now becomes a party to the right of him. In other words we have a situation where if Botha arrests children aged 10, 11 or 12 the opposition is going to tell him why don't you include 5 year olds? It just shows that the pattern of politics in South Africa has always been that white people are not going to relinquish power and white liberals are only there to try and regulate black politics, and where they find that black politics cannot be regulated and they feel threatened then they are going to run into the laager.

You get a place like Hillbrow where there was a report about three months ago that the population in Hillbrow was the most multi-racial in South Africa - there were blacks, coloureds, Indians and whites staying together and people were saying look how beautiful this is. Hillbrow dismissed the PFP (Progressive Federal Party) candidate and elected a Nationalist Party candidate which means that they resent staying with blacks. It gives out sinister warning of the intensity of the struggle in Azania.

■ That election was held after nearly eleven months of the State of Emergency. Can you say what the repression of black people is like in South Africa today?

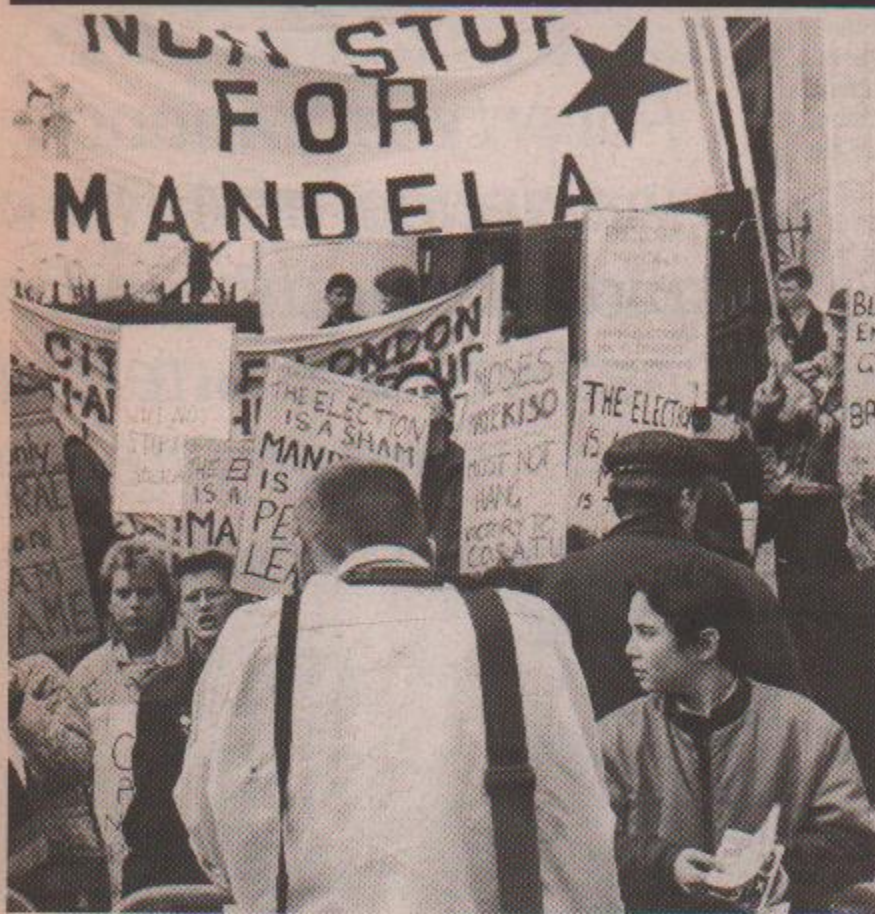
What you see overseas on television is only a tenth of what is happening in South Africa. In other words the situation is much more grim. The expulsion of journalists who dare report about confrontation between the police and the students is evidence that there is a lot of suppression of news. The Bureau for Information has played a role in suppressing the real news about South Africa. I think that by and large they have succeeded.

■ What has happened to the black people's organisations over the period of the State of Emergency, the people's committees, the organisations of people's power that were beginning to develop?

(Unable to reply because of the terms of the State of Emergency)

■ In spite of the attempt to destroy the people's organisations we've seen in the stayaway that happened recently in May that the people are still supporting the black organisations, are still coming out and fighting the repression and it's clearly an organised response.

The resistance in South Africa can no longer be suppressed. Whatever machinery the government uses to try and stop



The picket will continue in spite of the ban

HORNS VICTORY

On 10 June five members of the Horns of Jericho, the busking band who play on the Non-Stop Picket every week, were acquitted of offences under section 8 of the Westminster byelaws (Music near houses). Embassy doorman, Adams, gave evidence on how the Horns' music disturbs his 'work' (!) but the magistrate found the musicians not guilty on the grounds that the officer who had summonsed them had given insufficient prior warning. In fact, he just barged into the picket, insisted the music stop and that if names and addresses were not given everyone would be arrested. Like Adams, he clearly is not a music lover, unlike the large crowds who gather to hear the splendid anti-apartheid music produced by the band. **Let the walls come tumbling down!**

Nicky

continued from page 6

recent merger of five metal workers unions a new National Union of Metalworkers SA has been forged. Moses Mayekiso, currently facing treason charges and a possible death sentence was elected the General Secretary in recognition of his standing in the movement. COSATU has also responded to the banning and confiscation of COSATU News by launching a 'Hands Off COSATU Campaign'. In response to the declaration of war against COSATU by the regime, General Secretary Jay Naidoo said 'We warn the government that should they persist in their current approach to COSATU, they may well promote a massive collapse of the labour relations system'.

Both the metal and mineworkers union are engaged in a life and death struggle for a living wage. The mine workers are demanding a 4.5 rand an hour pay rate. Both industries are dominated by British and US multi-nationals. In gold mining alone the average profits earned by mines on a gold price of R922 in the last quarter of 1986 stood at a staggering R453m. Yet last year's wage increments failed to protect the real value of minimum black miners earning against inflation.

The apartheid regime has also directed its fire against the black townships. In protest against high rents, stooge councillors, evictions and security forces on their doorsteps, the black communities have conducted a year-long rent strike. Winnie Mandela, Albertina Sisulu and Desmond Tutu are among the thousands who have been served with eviction notices. Over 50 townships are involved in the struggle which began on 12 June, 1986 the start of the State of Emergency. Electricity has been cut off from the activists homes but the community is unbowed. The protest is estimated to have denied the state of R271 million in owed rent.

Every week since the ban, Non-Stop Picket supporters have crossed the road to protest outside the Embassy. On the evening of 6 May itself, 20 protesters, including Norma and Steven Kitson, Adrian States (Camden Councillor) and Carol Brickley (City AA convenor), crossed the road to the Embassy and were arrested under the Public Order Act (Section 14) for participating in a 'prohibited demonstration'. In the weeks since then 70 other protesters have been arrested for doing this and charged with breach of Commissioner's Directions and police obstruction. The police are varying the charges in the hope that some will end in convictions and justify their ban.

The police ban was issued using Commissioner's Directions signed by Kenneth Newman giving the police powers to close the area to vehicle or pedestrian traffic as they wish and when they wish. The excuse given for the ban was an incident early in the morning on 6 May, when 3 anti-apartheid activists, angered by the white-only election and the murders of trade unionists in South Africa, spread red paint over the Embassy doors. The police are attempting to link this incident with the Non-Stop Picket in order to provide them with an excuse to ban picketing altogether.

This is not the first time that Cannon Row police have tried to ban the pickets. In May 1984, following another paint throwing incident shortly before Botha's visit to Britain, Cannon Row police used an identical strategy, introducing Commissioner's Directions. After more than 160 arrests and 5 people imprisoned, the courts vindicated City Group's stand and ruled that the police had 'exceeded their powers' (acted illegally).

Since the start of the Non-Stop Picket, Cannon Row police have tried every means at their disposal to get rid of the picket, including the use of obsolete and obscure laws. Most of this has been done in direct collaboration with the Embassy - and most of it has failed.

This failure is the real reason for the ban on the picket. The South African Embassy is outraged that the picket has been allowed to continually expose the racism and terror of apartheid for over a year. The Metropolitan Police and the British Tory Party are anxious to appease their 'kith and kin' racists in South Africa. No doubt they all hoped that the picket would fail to survive the winter and the accompanying police harassment. They were proved wrong, and with the prospect of another summer of continuous picketing, they moved quickly to rid themselves of this menace to apartheid and racism.

The excuse for the police ban on 6 May is spurious. The Commissioner's Directions were dated 27 April - a clear indication that the police were already planning a ban. On 30 April, Chief Inspector Gilbertson of Cannon Row ordered the picket to move away from the front of the Embassy, using Commissioner's Directions and the Public Order Act, during an Embassy reception. Two people, Lorna Reid and Dele, were arrested, and Lorna was charged under the Public Order Act (Section 14). Anticipating a court case which

Police ban picket from Embassy pavement

On 6 May, the day of the all-white election in South Africa, the Metropolitan Police banned the Non-Stop Picket from the pavement outside the South African Embassy. They maintain that the ban is indefinite. City of London Anti-Apartheid Group's Non-Stop Picket has been demonstrating outside the Embassy since 19 April 1986 and is pledged to continue until Nelson Mandela is released from jail. The picket is continuing on the opposite pavement in Duncannon Street, and City Group is fighting to restore the picket to the 'point of maximum pain' - directly outside the racist Embassy.

ANDY HIGGINBOTTOM AND
CAROL BRICKLEY

DEFEND THE RIGHT TO DEMONSTRATE

Every Friday 5.30-7.30pm
on the Non-Stop Picket
outside the South African
Embassy

For more information contact
City AA, BM City AA, London
WC1N 3XX Tel: 01-837 6050

would test police powers under the Public Order Act, Gilbertson planned the police action down to the finest detail, including a police video of the operation. But despite the fact that Gilbertson is an LSE graduate, he had not reckoned with City Group.

When Lorna's case came to court on 9 June, magistrate Robins at Bow Street was quick to throw out the case, pointing out to Gilbertson (LSE graduate) that the right to demonstrate is enshrined in European law and, indeed, in the 1986 Public Order Act! Gilbertson had argued in evidence that the picket caused 'discomfort' to the Embassy's visitors. Robins pointed out that it is perfectly reasonable, and indeed the rightful purpose of such a demonstration to cause 'discomfort'.

The first move in the police strategy has failed. Nevertheless the police have continued the ban in the hope that some of the 90 cases still to be heard will succeed. Every Friday night since 6 May City AA has held a rally on the Non-Stop Picket to protest against the ban. On 5 June, a 100-strong picket witnessed Norma Kitson defying the ban for the second time. A group of protesters also walked up and down and around the Embassy, running rings round the police who were chasing after them with a megaphone trying to give the necessary warning under Commissioner's Directions. Angered at his own ridicu-

Trafalgar Square has been the scene of historic battles to defend the working class's rights of assembly. Each generation since the Chartists has joined this struggle which acts as a window on the politics of the time.

The post war Labour government, whose every action has since been mythologised as 'socialist' by middle class fairytale tellers, banned demonstrations in Trafalgar Square. Labour Home Secretary Chuter Ede reimposed the 3 month ban from 28 April 1950, but the London Trades Council proceeded with its May Day rally on Sunday 7 May. Mounted police charged, 70 people were arrested. Several went to prison for inciting others to take part in a banned procession. That was the first time that the relevant section of the 1936 Public Order Act, brought in ostensibly to curb Mosley's fascists, had been used. Mass pressure meant that Labour was unable to continue with the ban.



Norma Kitson being arrested

lous impotence and unable to get his hands on demonstrators, Chief Inspector Perry (not an LSE graduate) ordered the arrest of two photographers instead.

The trial of those arrested on 6 May under the Public Order Act is due to take place at Bow Street on 13 July. City AA is continuing protest rallies every Friday evening from 5.30 - 7.30pm.

It is no accident that President Botha was one of the first to send a telegram of support to Margaret Thatcher following her election victory. She has proved to be a stalwart supporter of white South Africa. No doubt Cannon Row police receive similar telegrams from time to time. With another five years of Tory racist rule in front of us, the best hope for dealing a massive defeat to Thatcher and her kith and kin rests with the black masses of South Africa. We can hasten the day by joining the fightback in support of their struggle. Support the Non-Stop Picket.

City of London Anti-Apartheid Group

★ MASS RALLY

Under attack we fight back!

7PM SATURDAY 4 JULY

Manning Hall, University of London
Union, Malet St, WC1.

(Nearest tube: Goodge Street)

• Speakers • City Group Singers •
Exhibition • Sambatucada Mandela
• The Horns of Jericho
ADMISSION: £1 Waged, 50p Unwaged

We are here until Mandela is free!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

City of London Anti-Apartheid
Group

10am-5.30pm Sunday 5 July

MANNING HALL, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
UNION, MALET STREET, LONDON WC1.
(Nearest tube: Goodge Street)

For further information contact City AA, BM City
AA, London WC1N 3XX Tel: (01) 837 6050

EMBASSY REPAINTED RED

On 6 May, in disgust at the racist white-only elections in South Africa three young anti-apartheid activists were arrested by Cannon Row police for throwing red paint over the South African Embassy main doors. Irene Liz and Adam were charged with criminal damage to the wall and doors of the South African Embassy, a policeman's uniform and his private property, including his shoes, socks and longjohns. A further charge of trespass on diplomatic property is being considered by the Attorney General. The Embassy main entrance was closed for three days after 6 May while the elaborate glass doors were unstuck. We note that despite massively increased policing and the ban on the Non-Stop Picket, the letters ANC have recently been painted on the Embassy side entrance.

COURT DATES

- | | |
|---------|---|
| June 29 | Tunde, Bow Street. 10am. Assault on the police. |
| June 30 | 19 defendants charged with breaching Commissioner's Directions and police obstruction. Bow Street. 10am. |
| June 30 | Tunde, Bow Street. 10am. *COURT PICKET* 9.30am |
| June 30 | Judicial Review in the High Court asking for complete re-trial with a new magistrate for 8 defendants arrested on 13 June 1986. |
| July 6 | David and Tim, Bow Street. 10am Breach of Commissioner's Directions and police obstruction. *COURT PICKET* 9.30am |
| July 9 | Helen, Bow Street. 10am. Criminal Damage. |
| July 13 | Carol, Norma, Steve, Andy, Cllr Adrian States, Bow St. 2.30pm Charged under the Public Order Act following arrests on 6 May. |

Britain blocks attack on apartheid

Mrs Thatcher's short visit to the Venice seven-nation economic summit was apparently, worth the effort. Along with her poodle Geoffrey Howe, she was able to block the issuing of a declaration on South Africa condemning the apartheid regime and calling for equal rights. Howe told reporters that this was the wrong moment to launch any initiative 'so soon after the whites only election when the South African government is likely to be particularly unresponsive'. Thatcher and Howe have an argument for letting South Africa off the hook suitable for every occasion.

Mrs T's sterling work on behalf of the apartheid regime was quickly recognised by Botha in a congratulatory telegram following her election victory. Despite the fact that Thatcher's government is 'likely to be particularly unresponsive' so soon after the election our lead will come from the black masses in South Africa who are fighting apartheid. Those who hoped that a Labour government would be an adequate substitute for the solidarity movement in Britain, will now have to get down to the real business of winning support for the struggle from the forces who will offer the only real resistance to Thatcher over the next five years - black people, youth unemployed - the oppressed masses in Britain. Neither they, nor the South African masses can wait another five years.

Carol Brickley

The virus can only be transmitted by an exchange of bodily fluids during sexual intercourse, intravenous drug injections from shared needles and contaminated blood transfusions. There is as yet no cure and no vaccine. At present prevention is the only protection against this deadly disease.

Imperialist governments have been desperately slow to act in combatting this threat to humanity. Although the US has by far the largest number of AIDS cases reported anywhere in the world there is still no national policy on the AIDS epidemic. The reason that so little has been done is simple. So far AIDS has principally affected the oppressed black people in Africa and homosexual men. Throughout history we have seen that capitalism will only respond to disease when it threatens the ruling class itself or the labour force. This was true of disease among the working class in Victorian England. It is true today for the vast majority of humanity in the oppressed nations who are still left to die in their millions of diseases long ago cured in the imperialist countries. The epidemiology (incidence and spread) of the AIDS virus has been interpreted according to 'Western values' - media disinformation, racial prejudice and homophobia have disguised the facts. The search for a cure and a vaccine for AIDS is subject first and foremost to the pursuit of profit.

AIDS has been used as yet another attack on the working class and the oppressed. The effect that AIDS has had on social and sexual relations has been seized on by the ruling class to re-inforce their reactionary ideology. The role of the media has been central. Mark Hollingsworth captured this process in his book *The Press and Political Dissent*. 'Crime? Blame the blacks. Unemployment? Blame the scroungers. Inflation? Blame the unions. Permissive society? Blame the teachers...'. He could have added - 'AIDS? Blame the gays.'

Africa

At least one million Africans will die of AIDS in the next decade. This, says the Panos Dossier is probably a considerable underestimate. In some Central African countries a fifth or more of urban people are likely to die of AIDS. In Africa AIDS is transmitted through heterosexual activity, blood transfusions, from mother to infant and through unsterilised needles. It is spread evenly among men and women. Blood surveys in Central and parts of East Africa show a rate of HIV infection among the general population of between 1% and 18%. In Uganda, health ministry estimates indicate 10% of the population is in-

'The AIDS pandemic is the most serious threat in many generations' (Panos Dossier, Norwegian Red Cross). The AIDS virus, to date, has been reported in 127 of the world's 159 countries. In the United States there were 30,839 reported cases of AIDS by February 1987. The US government estimates that 179,000 Americans will be dying of the virus in four years time. 1.5 million could die in Africa alone in the next decade. By mid-May 1987 the World Health Organisation (WHO) had been notified of a total of 49,329 cases worldwide. The real number of cases could be as high as 150,000 and up to 10 million people could already be infected.

before the outbreak in the US. These reports showed that 80% of people in the Turkana region of Kenya were HIV positive. African medics, they argued, had simply remained ignorant while AIDS had been present in their countries for years. Later investigations have shown that this extraordinarily high incidence was due to false 'positive' results. Malaria and other curable diseases, had weakened the state of the subjects' immune system showing positive results in the tests. Confirmatory tests can now be done to distinguish between true and false positive results. These false figures are still quoted in the media in order to peddle the idea that AIDS is an old African disease. As a direct result African governments have refused to allow subsequent researchers to publish their results, particularly in the western media.

Curable diseases which have been wiped out or are cured by a quick visit to the doctor in the West are still the leading cause of death in Africa. Polio, measles, tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough and tuberculosis kill 5 million children a year. A further 5 million die of diarrhoea every year through lack of a clean water supply.

AIDS and the economy of African nations

The nations of Central Africa spend around 5% of their national budgets on health compared to the 10% recommended by the World Health Organisation. An average of 25% of their export earnings goes towards servicing their international debt. Uganda has a national income of \$230 per capita. In the United States this figure is \$15,390. The cost of treating ten American AIDS patients is greater than the entire budget of Zaire's largest hospital. As many as half the patients admitted to the hospital have the HIV virus and they are discharged as soon as they are diagnosed. The African continent faces a disease so virulent and widespread that it will affect the economies of whole nations.

For the countries in Africa which have only recently achieved liberation AIDS is yet another obstacle to the reconstruction of their economies, already hard-pressed by apartheid, war and destabilisation. It alters the balance of forces once more in favour of imperialism which is attempting to regain control of these countries.

In South Africa the system of migrant

alarm. If they all develop AIDS the sick pay could bankrupt the company.

Ideology vs medical research

So far a great deal of the research into AIDS has been conducted in order to justify the racist ideology which underpins imperialism rather than as an objective process of learning about the virus in order to discover a cure. War on Want states:

'To find the source (of AIDS) could help the search for vaccines and drug therapy, but it is also possible that the prejudice arising from speculation may be a cost that outweighs medical benefits... As a prerequisite for confronting AIDS, agencies will have to deal with the prejudicial environment surrounding it.'

Imperialism, which has exploited and impoverished the African nations is responsible for the devastating effect AIDS has had in Africa. The high incidence and the rapid spread of AIDS in Africa is undoubtedly linked to poverty. Malnutrition and disease have already suppressed the immune systems of tens of millions of Africans, so much so that medics fear that, in many cases, vaccination may actually trigger off the disease it is supposed to guard against.

Disease and Capitalism

In Victorian England there was a similar reaction to disease which affected the working class. Outbreaks of cholera killed thousands but it was not combatted until it became apparent that not only the urban poor living in overcrowded conditions with poor sanitation caught the disease but the rich were also in danger. With the morality of monogamy and the repression of sexuality propounded by the church and state, VD was widespread and 'respectable' gentlemen visited prostitutes regularly. There were thousands of brothels in London and naval stations and garrison towns. Under an act of 1866 prostitutes (not their customers!) could be imprisoned for having Sexually Transmitted Diseases. It was not until 1917 that a campaign of prevention was adopted with free clinics guaranteeing anonymity. Even then after the First World War this campaign was brought to an end and a new at-

Africa faces a disease so that it will affect the economy. Poverty is undoubtedly the incidence of AIDS on the exploiters and plunderers of nations, are attempting to consolidate the forces of imperialism.



Condoms for sale at a street stall in Accra, Ghana

AIDS AND THE PURSUIT OF PROFIT

fects; some 1.4 million people. In Zaire those principally affected are infants under one year of age and adults in the 16 to 29 years age range. In Rwanda roughly 20% of AIDS victims are children. The virus is passed from mother to child during pregnancy.

The speed with which the epidemic is spread is shown by figures for Nairobi, Kenya. In 1981 1% of men attending a Sexually Transmitted Diseases clinic were HIV positive. Six years later 18% were positive. In the same period female prostitutes attending rose from 4% positive to 59% positive. Recent reports have shown that the numbers infected with the virus in Southern Africa are a great deal higher than previously supposed. It is now becoming clear that the AIDS virus is not just concentrated in Central and Eastern Africa.

The origin of AIDS

From the very beginning western medical researchers and governments wanted to 'blame' Africa for the origin of the virus. Eager to produce results that confirmed their prejudices they returned from Africa in these earlier years with a number of findings which are now highly questionable. Blood samples decades old were studied in an attempt to establish that the virus had been present among Africans

labour, which forces men to live in single sex hostels far away from their families, imposes a life of promiscuity and recourse to prostitutes. These conditions, imposed on the black majority without their consent, are the conditions in which AIDS spreads most rapidly. A recent War on Want publication *AIDS: Proposals for Action* stated 'The South African authorities are suppressing information about the spread of the (AIDS) syndrome among blacks.'

The extent to which AIDS is affecting and will affect the economies of some Central and East African countries is causing concern among certain sectors of big business who saw quite early a potentially disastrous threat to their operations. Unlike other diseases in Africa the AIDS virus attacks the breadwinners, sexually active young men and women in their twenties and thirties.

In Africa the nations' major banks and companies have invested a great deal in their skilled employees including extending sickness benefits to themselves and their families. This investment is now threatened by the proportion of the workforce sick with AIDS. In 1983 a consortium of companies donated \$100,000 to the international AIDS research programme of the Zairean Ministry of Health. A large mining corporation is regarding the level of HIV infection among its workers with

tack was launched on the working class to eliminate the 'conditions of promiscuity which lead to the spread of the disease.' It was not until the mid 1950s that syphilis was virtually defeated by the development of antibiotics and the sale and distribution of condoms. It took a hundred years for capitalism to develop and effect a cure for syphilis. The response of the Thatcher government in calling for a return to 'Victorian values' of monogamy to counter the spread of AIDS is a reactionary call for a return to the very conditions in which sexually transmitted diseases went unchecked.

'AIDS is a condom manufacturer's dream'

The question of who discovered the virus has been the subject of a three year federal case in Washington. The holder of the patent for the test for detecting AIDS will get millions in royalties.

Any speculation that a pharmaceutical company may be producing an AIDS-related drug sends share prices rocketing. On 4 March, Retrovir, manufactured by Wellcome, was cleared by the DHSS and is now on sale at a market value of \$188 for 10 days supply. It has serious side effects and must be taken every 4 hours without fail. The chemical name of Retrovir is AZT, which has been available since the



Children queue to be immunised - the needles could spread AIDS

late 1960s. Wellcome was quick off the mark. After speedy clinical trials they invested £17m in new plants. It is only a matter of time before their competitors cash in on this highly lucrative market. Wellcome shares have risen from 175 pence in August 1986 to 522 pence in February 1987.

Expensive research is a gamble. The pay-off would be a prophylactic pill which would provide protection against AIDS only if taken regularly. For the potential victim, the best cure would be a vaccine that prevented the disease. The trouble with a vaccine is that each person only needs one course of treatment. The search for a vaccine has not attracted the money of the big pharmaceutical companies, and has been mainly funded by governments. The Tory government however, has been cutting the Public Health Laboratory Service, the very service that monitors the spread of the disease and collects information (see *FRFI* 65).

At some stage, human volunteers must be found to conduct clinical trials. A vaccine is being tested now in Britain. But unless drug companies can be protected from liability for damage suits, there may never be a vaccine. In Africa, however, victims are less likely to sue.

The most lucrative sector, which attracts the big money, is still the test for AIDS which has spawned 'cowboy' outfits competing with the NHS. There is fierce

virulent and widespread epidemics of whole nations. the cause of the high fever on the continent. Now, the continent of Africa, the imperialist powers are trying to use the disease to justify their policies of reaction.



OF PROFIT

competition for the newly opened Japanese market (opened by spreading fear and hysteria) reckoned to be worth some £22m. Japan's largest condom producer, Okamoto Industries, has seen a rise in their share price from 375 yen in October 1986 to 1,600 yen by mid-March 1987. John Silverman, president of Ansell, a subsidiary of condom manufacturer Pacific Dunlop, has said 'AIDS is a condom manufacturer's dream.'

AIDS has created fear among those sections of the ruling class who stand to lose. A spokesman for Standard Life says 'Anyone who has AIDS or is HIV positive is uninsurable.' In California and Washington DC it is illegal to ask any questions about AIDS for insurance purposes, but legislation has never impeded profit-making or loss limiting. Now underwriters simply refuse to insure homosexuals, drug addicts or haemophiliacs.

The media

One of the most damaging effects of the media coverage of AIDS has been the way it has deliberately ignored all medical evidence that the virus cannot be contracted in everyday social contact. Recent scaremongering headlines screamed 'Lady Di shakes hands with AIDS patient' as if she was taking a risk. The gutter press has seized on the protective clothing worn

by visitors to AIDS patients to cause panic and fear. Their message is - AIDS patients are a threat. This is the reverse of the truth. Lady Di is presented as bravely risking contracting the virus but it is the AIDS victim who is showing bravery. In reality the special clothing is worn to protect the patient from the germs that his/her visitor may be carrying. Such reports in the press have led to gay men being attacked and grievously wounded outside gay pubs and clubs.

AIDS and repressive legislation

The ruling class have used the panic and hysteria they have created about AIDS to introduce more repressive legislation and consolidate the forces of reaction who call for greater restrictions on the freedom of individuals. Germany has introduced compulsory testing of immigrants and border guards have been turning away 'anyone who looks like they might have AIDS'. Who needs to seek justification for a racist immigration controls policy when you can whip up prejudice over an issue like AIDS and simply turn blacks and gays away from the borders without having to give a reason? Reagan is considering compulsory testing of immigrants and for people seeking a marriage licence. New York has the highest incidence of HIV virus in the western world, some 15% of the popul-

ation are thought to be HIV positive, and Reagan wants to test people coming in! Many western countries have used the issue of AIDS to justify more rigorous immigration controls.

The Labour Party

In Britain the Labour Party have, as always, responded by siding with the ruling class at the expense of the oppressed. In the run up to the General Election all the left Labour councils' policies of equal opportunities for homosexual men and lesbians have disappeared in the face of AIDS hysteria. The left labour councils have been unable to deliver their promises due to the Labour Party's refusal to oppose ratecapping. In a letter leaked from Patricia Hewitt, Neil Kinnock's press secretary, to Frank Dobson MP we get the real message. 'The "loony Labour left" is taking its toll: the gays and lesbians issue is costing us dear...'. When Brownhill, Tory leader of South Staffordshire council said he wanted to put '90% of queers in ruddy gas chambers' to stop the spread of AIDS there was no opposition from the Labour Group. We have been lumped with all those other sections of the community dumped by the Labour Party in its drive to come to power under Kinnock. Black sections were referred to by a 'senior shadow cabinet spokesman' as: '... an insidious

SAFER SEX

The virus that causes AIDS can only be passed from an infected person to somebody else if the infected body fluids (ie mainly blood or semen) come into contact with the bloodstream of another person. Sexual activity can be generally classed into three groups as regards the risk of contracting the AIDS virus.

LOW RISK

Mutual masturbation, body rubbing etc; kissing; sex between lesbians; sex between couples who have been faithful to each other over the past five years.

MEDIUM RISK

Oral sex performed on a man (high risk if he comes in your mouth and/or you have cuts or sores in or around your mouth); oral sex performed on a woman (higher risk if there is menstrual blood present); sharing of sex toys such as vibrators, dildoes etc; rimming (licking the anus).

HIGH RISK

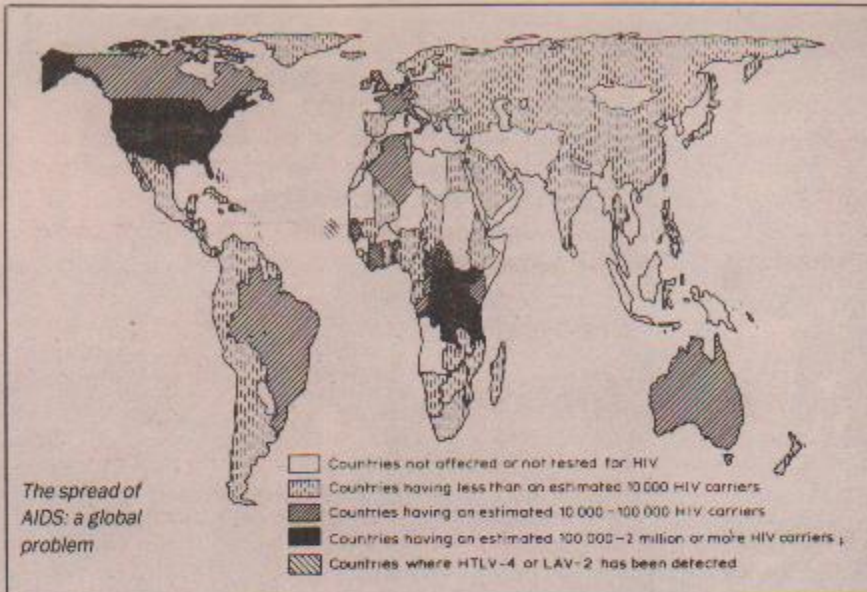
Anal sex (heterosexual or homosexual). This should be avoided if possible. If not, always use a STRONG condom (Red Stripe or Durex 'Gold') AND a WATER-BASED lubricant such as KY Jelly (from any Chemist); vaginal sex, if your partner is not wearing a condom; any sex which draws blood from either partner.

Condoms ('durex' or 'rubbers' or 'johnnies') can be obtained freely from your local Family Planning Clinic.

John Curry

For information about AIDS: Terrence Higgins Trust, BM AIDS London WC1N 3XX, 01-833 2971

JOIN THE FRFI CONTINGENT ON LESBIAN AND GAY PRIDE MARCH Meet 1pm Saturday 27 June, Tea Pavilion, by Speakers Corner Sell FRFI with us



disease that has been allowed to spread. It is political AIDS'. For the Labour Party the AIDS virus and gays are synonymous.

Fear and ignorance

The Government's £20 million campaign of advertisements designed to educate the wider public has been limited by the necessity to repress and criminalise homosexuality. They cannot be seen to condone gay relationships so with their catch phrase 'AIDS: don't die of ignorance,' they have succeeded only in frightening people, feeding hysteria and leaving people in ignorance. They cannot speak openly about gay sex and safer sex because they are more concerned to stamp out homosexuality than they are to stamp out AIDS.

The response of gay organisations

Gays and lesbians (although lesbians are in the lowest risk category) are under attack after a relatively progressive period during which the movement for gay liberation has won a degree of political power (particularly in the US) and equal rights for out gays. The response of gay organisations to the state and media orchestrated attacks has been limited to a sober and at times courageous campaign to contain the spread of the virus by educating the gay community.

The sexual behaviour of gay men has altered dramatically due to education and prevention campaigns by the Gay Mens' Health Crisis (founded 1982 in New York) and the Terrence Higgins Trust (founded 1983 in London). In San Francisco, the annual rate at which gay men were becoming HIV positive fell from 17% in 1982-84 to 4% in 1984-85. Rectal gonorrhoea (a sexually transmitted disease found almost exclusively among gay men) has fallen by 71% between 1983 and 1985. While western governments chose to ignore the spread of AIDS they were encouraging a climate in which the very sections of the community who were actively combatting the spread of the disease were being suppressed and isolated.

Undoubtedly the conditions which the state is attempting to bring about are the conditions in which the virus will flourish. Clandestine and hurried sex in public toilets, furtive relationships with strangers, casual sex without respect for the partner. AIDS is being used to regain the ground lost during the years of gay liberation and force homosexuality back into the closet. The climate has been created where it is acceptable to demand a return to the Nazis' gassing of homosexuals in the Second World War. We must organise to fight the growing attacks on gays.

Already there are signs that this is beginning to happen. The Wombourne 12 conducted a political fight, successfully mobilising nationally among the gay community and beyond to prevent the criminalisation of gay activists taking action against Nazi Brownhill. On 2 May Haringey Black Action and Positive Images united blacks and gays when thousands marched against the racist and anti-gay forces in Haringey. The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign has united the struggle of the gay community in Manchester with the struggle of black people facing racist immigration controls.

We must organise and seek alliance with the oppressed and force the government to take real action to contain the spread of the disease. We must raise the wider issues in the gay community brought to the fore by the hysteria created around AIDS, and roll back the tide of reaction which seeks once more to identify homosexuality as a disease and to criminalise the gay community.

SEX is GREAT

It takes energy and imagination to change habits you like ... even when you want to.

The reward can be discovering NEW DIMENSIONS of SEX and EXCITEMENT.

It may not be easy to change, but it is worthwhile:

DO adopt the simple guidelines suggested in this leaflet.

COOL! I WOULDN'T MIND NEGOTIATING SAFER SEX WITH HIM!

Safer Sex leaflet by Terrence Higgins Trust, derived by RCP

REVIEW

The truth about the AIDS panic

Dr Michael Fitzpatrick and Don Milligan, Junius Publications, 68pp, 95p

This RCP pamphlet is an attack on the gay movement and our response to AIDS. Under a cloak of spurious objectivity they peddle a mixture of half-truths, distortions and abstract formulae.

They wilfully confuse the government's 'safe sex' campaign - based on monogamy and heterosexuality - with the 'safer sex' campaign of the gay movement - based on more open discussion with your partner(s) of what you do in bed and making the sex you have less risky. Their false claim that gay activists have lined up with right-wing moralists is rich coming from the group that actually did line up with the government and NCB, during the miners' strike, by calling for a ballot.

They go further:

'... safe sex will not save lives as long as homosexuals remain oppressed... Both in the long term and in the short term the only way to save lives from AIDS is by rejecting the panic that surrounds it and by fighting for the rights of lesbians and gay men.' (our emphasis)

For those of us in high risk groups, counterposing the fight against discrimination to the campaign for safer sex is nothing short of suicide. But to RCP saving the lives of gays is irrelevant - unless it is done according to their dogma.

For the RCP the gay movement 'has been destroyed as a progressive force'. Only the 'left' is of significance. This 'left', they say,

'instead of its traditional preoccupation with trying to radicalise the gay scene ... should devote its energies to transforming the labour movement into an active force for lesbian and gay rights.'

Their working class movement is synonymous with the official labour movement dominated by chauvinist, racist, sexist and anti-gay politics. They dismiss the possibility of any of us fighting for our own liberation in alliance with those who are prepared to stand with us. Lesbian and gay oppression is being fought right now by the gay movement, anti-racists and those in the official labour movement who can be won to our side.

Most disgusting is their contempt for black people in Africa who are faced with an epidemic of massive proportions costing thousands of lives. They ignore the economic and political consequences of AIDS for Africa. They ignore the use of AIDS hysteria to increase racial divisions in Britain. In their preoccupation with trashing the gay movement the RCP pay scant attention to the way AIDS is used as an additional form of policing and immigration control against black people. Nor do they recognise how the AIDS hysteria against lesbians and gays has provided an opportunity for right wing forces within the black community to gain the upper hand. In a pamphlet of 68 pages black people are mentioned in only two.

Kayode

This month marks the 20th anniversary of the so-called Six Day War in June 1967 when the 'Israeli' military machine defeated Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian forces and occupied large areas of Arab land. 'Israel' seized the West Bank from Jordan, the Sinai peninsula and the Gaza Strip from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria.

EDDIE ABRAHAMS

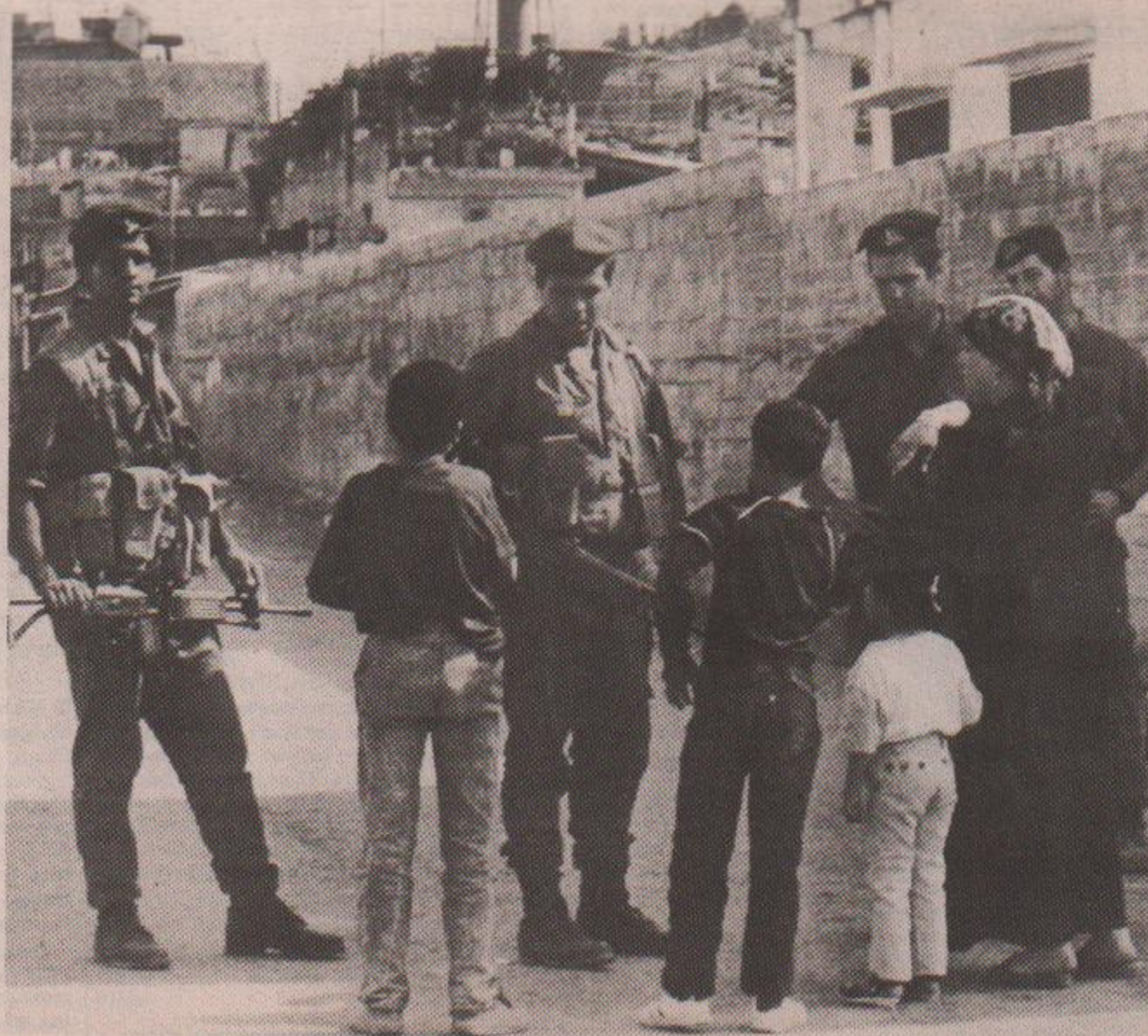
The subsequent 20 years is a catalogue of Zionist land robbery, repression, racism, murder and butchery. This period also witnessed the emergence of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) as a major force - a challenge not just to Zionism, but to Arab reaction and imperialism. As a result, for 20 years, the imperialist powers have utilised their financial, political, diplomatic and ideological assets to sustain Zionism, help it build a new apartheid in the occupied territories, justify its crimes, apologise for its murders and assist it in crushing the rock of Palestinian resistance.

Building the second apartheid

'We have become dichotomised - there are two societies and the norms of the democratic society stop at the ethnic divide. Arabs just don't count. The occupation has become an excuse for inequality; democracy applies only to the master race.' (Meron Benvenisti - an 'Israeli' working for the West Bank Data Base Project).

Imperialist lackeys depict the Six Day War as a brilliant victory by civilised, democratic David over barbarian and totalitarian Goliath. 'Israeli' democracy manifested itself swiftly. Its first principle was land robbery. Between 1967 and 1986 55% of the West Bank and 40% of the Gaza Strip was violently confiscated by the Zionists. Thousands of Palestinian families found themselves landless. Thrown into poverty they became a reservoir of cheap labour for industry in 'Israel'. Over 150,000 Palestinians from the occupied territories are now migrant labourers in 'Israel'. Rising at 3am in the morning they travel to 'Israeli' slave markets, there to offer themselves for work. They are not allowed to live in 'Israel', but have to return home each night. They pay the same taxes on a wage which is one third to half of average 'Israeli' wages, but are entitled to no state benefits. Concentrated in the already low wage construction, agriculture and service sectors, Palestinian workers are sacked at will, they cannot join the 'Israeli' trade union - Histadrut - and are replaced by a Zionist worker whenever one applies. As in South Africa, they are treated as animals by the 'master race'. A Palestinian worker explains, 'The biggest word in the boss's mouth is "donkey". There is no respect.'

This was the first achievement of 'Israeli' democracy. The transformation of the occupied territories into a Bantustan. The land that Palestinians had worked for generations has been handed to



Israeli soldiers harass a Palestinian family on the West Bank

POPPERFOTO

ZIONISM

the second apartheid

50,000 armed Zionist settlers to become sites for 112 military/agricultural settlements. Besides affording the Zionist settler-colonialists enormous material and social privileges, these settlements are strategic military strongpoints in Zionism's war against the Palestinian people and their resistance.

Zionist repression in the occupied territories

Like the apartheid regime, the Zionist authorities have constructed an enormous armoury of laws and regulations with which to control the colonised but resisting Palestinian population.

Military regulations allow the authori-

ties to arrest and detain anyone for up to 18 days without appearing in court. On the West Bank the majority of all convictions are obtained from forced confessions during these 18 days, when the detainee is not permitted access to friends or lawyers. Methods of interrogation remind us of Ireland under Newman - hooding, beating, confinement in squalid places, sleep deprivation and hot and cold showers. Palestinians are also forced to carry identity cards and the penalty for not doing so is imprisonment. Those imprisoned suffer constant brutality. In April this year, 3000 Palestinian political prisoners went on hunger strike to protest against gross overcrowding, lack of air and natural light, health hazards due to asbestos lining on their cell windows, lack of medical care, use of tear gas in cells and pressure on prisoners to become collaborators. Since 1967, over 250,000 Palestinians have passed through Zionist prisons.

The Zionists inherited from the British, and regularly use, some of its finest instruments of repression - the British Mandate Defence (Emergency) Regulations. They allow for administrative detention - up to 6 months detention without trial - house arrest and deportation. Since 1967, 1215 people - mainly trade union and nationalist activists - have been deported. In 1987, so far two activists have been deported to Jordan, 31 have been detained for 6 months and 37 languish under house arrest.

For Palestinians to do anything in the West Bank, they have to have a permit: to become a lawyer, a pharmacist, a surveyor, to work in hospitals and other civil posts, to buy land, to open a business, to import raw materials and even to obtain a telephone. The permits are issued by the military authorities, can be refused without reason and are refused to those who have been arrested.

From 1967 to 1979 all trade unions in the Gaza Strip were banned. They were then legalised... but not permitted to recruit new members or hold elections to committees. This year alone 19 union activists have been subjected to administrative detention. Union offices

are regularly raided, materials stolen and premises sealed. In 1986 the military authorities sealed the Construction and General Institutions Workers Union offices in Ya'abad for one year. The union however continues to function without offices. Despite the ban on elections, in February and April this year, the Carpenters and Building Workers Union and the Gaza Commercial and General Services Union braved arrest and closure of their offices and held elections.

Blanket repression extends from the absurd to the brutal. A Palestinian artist in the Gaza received a 6 month prison sentence for a subversive painting. Collective punishment - the destruction of the family homes of those arrested for resisting Zionist rule - has resulted in the



Palestinian women support political prisoners in the Gaza

demolition of over 16,000 dwellings in the last twenty years. And then there is the killing of young people in the streets protesting against Zionism.

Apartheid in 'Israel'

600,000 Palestinians live in 'Israel', constituting 17% of the state's population. Unlike the 1,400,000 Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip they are supposedly citizens having equal rights with their Jewish compatriots. But here too the principles of apartheid reign.

Since the establishment of the Zionist state, 80% of Arab land in 'Israel' has been confiscated. 92% of the land in the state of

Israel is reserved for Jews only. Palestinian citizens cannot buy, lease or rent those areas. In 'Israel' today, there are only two Arab towns with sewage systems. Not a single Jewish town whatever its size lacks one. Nazareth, one of the main Arab towns, has an operating budget which is 25% that of the equivalent Jewish towns. Some local council budgets in Arab towns are no more than 8-10% of similar sized Jewish towns. The Zionist government spends \$80,000 to settle one racist family in the West Bank, while the entire annual budget of Um Al-Fahm, with a 25,000 population is \$100,000.

Among Palestinians, infant mortality is double that of the Jewish population, while three times more Palestinian children die of unknown causes than Jewish children. In Jerusalem, the Palestinian sector has only four mother and child care clinics, while the Jewish sector has 28. According to Zionist newspapers, Palestinians in 'Israel' live in 'subhuman conditions, and in buildings more like stables or archaeological sites at best.' In Jerusalem, since 1967 26,000 new homes have been built for the Jewish population and only 450 for Palestinians.

'Israel' - agent of imperialism in the Middle East and worldwide

The racist 'Israeli' state, this regime of colonial oppression is, and until its destruction will continue to be, sustained entirely by imperialist capital. Since 1948, it has received more than \$28bn in economic and military aid. From 1983 it has received an average of \$3bn per annum. It has built for imperialism one of the most powerful military machines in the imperialist world and given most of its Jewish citizens an imperialist standard of living. Thus it has created a powerful counter-revolutionary force. 'Israel' is US imperialism's 'strategic asset' in the Middle East and internationally.

Besides its well known wars against the Palestinian and Arab peoples, the Zionist state actively collaborates with and aids fascist regimes in South Africa, Chile, Taiwan, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Sri Lanka to name but a few.

It is for reasons of such services that Reagan and Thatcher and all their predecessors during the last 20 years (even at the height of Zionist butchery in Lebanon in 1982) refused to take action against it. Thatcher in 1982, just when she was applying sanctions against Argentina during the Malvinas war, claimed that sanctions against Israel would be 'unworkable'. The Labour Party under Neil Kinnock has also again unfurled its banner for Zionism. Speaking in 1984 he said that as long as he remains leader of the British Labour Party 'the Israeli Labour Party can rely on support from me and my party'. He went on to add that everything must be done 'to show that we understand and contest those whose history is one of refusal to acknowledge and understand the permanence of the State of Israel'. Kinnock, alongside the imperialists, puts himself in opposition to the Palestinian masses and revolutionary forces internationally fighting to destroy Zionism.

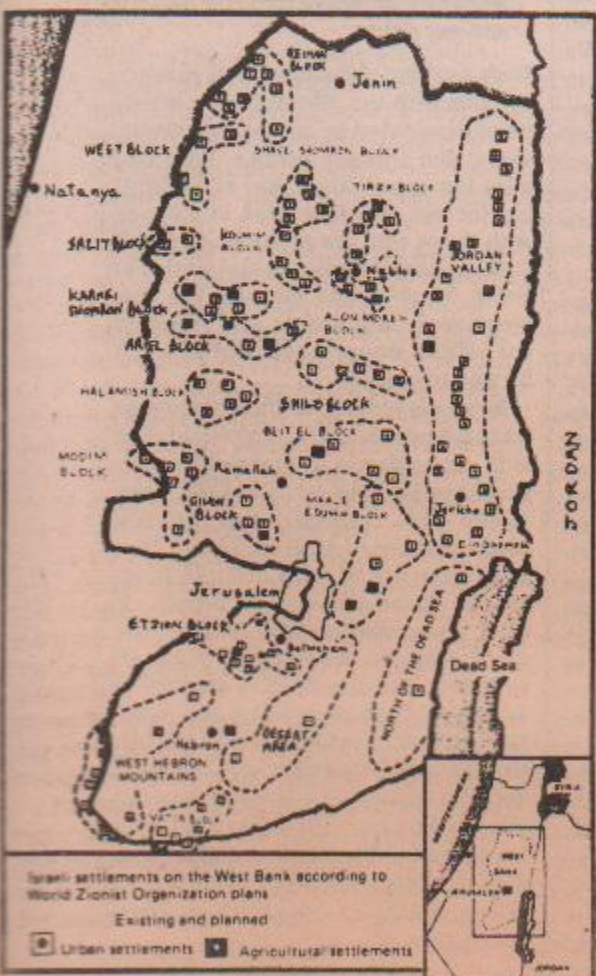
Resistance

'The odds appear hopeless, but young West Bank Palestinians continue to defy Israel.' (Newsweek)

'There is definitely a change of attitude among the new generation. They are not intimidated by the army, they are willing to lose their lives in confrontations.' (Meron Benvenisti)

Despite the terror, repression and poverty of the last twenty years, the popular movement remains undaunted. The masses are determined to fight until Zionism is destroyed. In a poll conducted at the end of 1986, 77% of respondents expressed support for a 'democratic Palestine' covering the whole of Palestine and replacing 'Israel'. 60.7% considered the armed struggle as the most effective way forward in contrast to 7.3% who chose 'diplomatic initiatives'.

As in South Africa, though not yet at the same level, mass confrontations with the occupying army are scenes of everyday life. Armed actions, organised by the PLO or individual groups are also daily occurrences. The future is in the hands of these forces who have nothing to gain from deals and compromises with imperialism and Zionism or Arab reaction.



Left: areas of the West Bank controlled by Zionist settlers

QUESTIONS

I have asked you a million times why you have not returned to me my stolen orchard, I have asked you a million times why you have searched my pocket emptying out my humanity. Beware, for today I shall not ask again.

Fawaz Turki

Hit where it most hurts: vote Herri Batasuna

The radical Basque nationalist Party, Herri Batasuna, has decided to contest the elections to the European Parliament on 10 June in Spain. Fighting on a clearly anti-EEC ticket, HB has no intention of becoming entangled in European parliamentary politics and has made its view of the EEC quite clear: an imperialist bloc furthering the politico-economic interests of multinational companies and banks. HB's main objective is to use European parliamentary facilities and infrastructure to denounce the situation of cultural, economic, and political repression suffered by the Basque people, a situation only compounded by Spain's entry to the EEC, and to spread the message of the Basque revolutionary movement throughout Europe.

However, HB's campaign has particularly important implications for the internal politics of the Spanish State. The peculiar workings of Spanish electoral politics have resulted in a nationwide 'constituency' being formed for these elections: all votes placed for each party throughout Spain are summed and seats in the European Parliament dished out accordingly. Relying on the radical nationalist vote in Euskadi it is unlikely that HB would succeed in gaining any seat and they have therefore appealed for support amongst other peoples of the Spanish State: all those who oppose the EEC; all those who wish to demonstrate their solidarity with the Basque people; all those who wish to show their discontent with the PSOE government: VOTE HB! The enthusiasm with which their appeal has been taken up and acted upon by different groups throughout the Spanish State has clearly shocked the institutional parliamentary parties, above all the PSOE 'socialists'.

Both HB and the PSOE are aware that the biggest factor motivating people outside Euskadi to vote HB is to protest. There is a

HELEN

Herri Batasuna election poster



Bases de apoyo: 100 plac.
Comité de apoyo a la Candidatura de HB al Parlamento Europeo

growing and increasingly obvious discontent with current government policies but also with the system as such given that it offers no future to many sectors of society: the unemployed, students, low paid workers, those with no fixed work contract, all those frustrated by the NATO referendum result and sickened by the PSOE's imperialist foreign policy, or by the tepid social policies of this government, all see a chance to 'punish'

the PSOE, not by abstaining but by voting for the satans of Spanish politics: the radical Basque nationalists. For this reason the main campaign slogan outside Euskadi is 'hit where it most hurts: Vote HB!'

Amongst the millions of votes to be cast on 10 June the tens of thousands that HB may gain outside Euskadi may seem irrelevant. But each vote cast for HB outside Euskadi is a direct and clear rejection of all that the PSOE stands for, and for many will be interpreted as a rejection of today's political system in Spain.

The enthusiasm with which the HB 10 June support groups are working (groups sprang up immediately in nearly every major Spanish town) is only rivalled by the savage manipulation, misinformation and distortion of facts that the PSOE is employing through its control of the mass media and the millions of pounds being spent on pro-PSOE election posters and advertisements throughout Spain. Each night specially hired thugs smother all other party propaganda with PSOE posters, in the major streets of Spanish towns, making the spray and political graffiti in the streets and on the underground an indispensable part of the counter PSOE offensive. Against all odds, against fascist provocations and attacks, in the face of government propaganda and with no mass media coverage, the message is being taken to the streets: hit where it most hurts, VOTE HB!

STOP PRESS:

Herri Batasuna has won a great victory achieving 363,000 votes, some 130,000 of these outside the Basque area, so entitling it to take up a seat in the European Parliament.

until after the summer 1988 Olympics, to be staged by South Korea.

At the same time the major opposition leader Kim Dae Jung was placed under house arrest, and thousands of heavily armed police were stationed on universities and city streets.

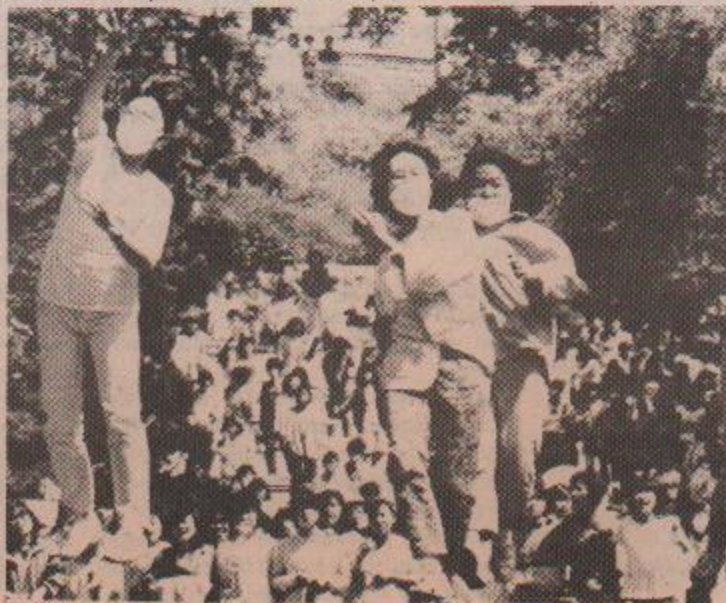
On 10 June Chun confirmed his own handpicked successor, also a former general, as Roh Tae Woo. This transformed the student protests that day at the death of one of their number through police torture into an eruption of popular anger at the US puppet regime.

Olympic hopefuls are advised to swap their high altitude training for gas mask training if Chun goes ahead with his plans.

Trevor Rayne

that all debate on the constitution and succession was suspended

Students throw petrol bombs at Korean police



POPPERFOTO

Seoul erupts

At 6pm on 10 June car horns blared and church and temple bells rang out across Seoul in a prearranged mass protest demanding democracy in South Korea. As the din continued thousands of protestors confronted 120,000 police and soldiers deployed to crush the demonstration. Sixteen police stations were attacked; police detachments overrun and disarmed; one soldier was killed; an underground train was commandeered and an international soccer match in the city of Masan was abandoned as tear gas drifted across the pitch.

Protests and street fighting were reported from 18 other South Korean cities. Some 5,000 demonstrators were arrested, others were severely injured by direct hits from tear gas canisters.

Skirmishes were still continuing on 12 June, particularly around Seoul's main Catholic cathedral, where 300 students had taken refuge. Effigies of Ronald Reagan blazed amidst cries of 'Down with the military dictatorship' and 'People's power'. Priests confronted riot police who doused the cathedral in tear gas.

The scale of the protests and the range of their participants from radical students to priests, the middle classes to urban youth, underline the degree of isolation and precariousness of President Chun Doo Hwan's regime. Chun was installed in 1980 following a military coup. In April this year he declared

Politics of Profit



Shock waves hit financial markets: Citicorp announces \$2.5bn loss

On 19 May, three months after Brazil suspended payments on its \$108bn foreign debt, Citicorp, the largest US bank announced a \$2.5bn (£1.5bn) loss in its second quarter accounts. This loss is by far the biggest ever by an international bank. It followed Citicorp's decision to increase its loan loss reserves by \$3bn to \$5bn, a recognition of the inevitable losses which will be sustained on its lending to Third World nations. By announcing this loss Citicorp has effectively declared that the real value of its Third World loans is well below their book value.

DAVID REED

Citicorp has \$14.8bn outstanding to the seven most heavily indebted Third World nations. Four countries, Brazil, Mexico, Philippines and Argentina, account for three quarters of the total. The money written off is equivalent to 20 per cent of its Third World loans. It resulted in the book value of the Citicorp group falling from \$57.13 to \$38 per share wiping a third off shareholders' equity.

Citicorp's announcement sent shock waves through the financial markets as pressure immediately built up on less well capitalised US banks such as Manufacturers Hanover Trust, Bank America and Chase Manhattan to follow suit. The share prices of the UK clearing banks fell sharply within minutes of the stock market opening. Midland, with the highest lending in Latin America, fell by 51p to 625p. Shares in Lloyds with the second highest exposure fell by 47p to 588p. Barclays were down by 19p to 559p and Nat West by 18p to 685p.

By 27 May Chase Manhattan, the third largest US bank, was forced to announce a second quarter net loss of \$1.4bn (£867m) after more than doubling the size of its loan loss reserves from \$1.1bn to \$2.7bn. Its book value fell by a third from \$53.25 to \$36 per share. Bank America which, after the Citicorp move, had insisted that it saw 'no developments which would produce a need for adjustments to this (loan loss) reserve' has now been forced to change course. On 8 June it reported a second quarter loss of \$1bn (£609m) after substantially increasing its reserves by \$1.1bn to \$3.3bn. Shareholders' funds were reduced by \$1bn as a result of these developments. On 9 June Manufacturers Hanover was said to be considering setting aside more than \$1.75bn to cover possible future loan losses in the Third World.

UK banks have so far resisted pressures to substantially write down their Third World loans. To achieve the same loan loss provision as Citicorp would require the Midland Bank to set aside some £600m, which would mean a loss of £200m on this year's profit expectations. The cost to Lloyds would be equivalent to well over half this year's expected profits. The overall estimated effect of substantially increasing the loan provision for the four major UK banks is shown in the table below.

	Latin American (loans £m)*	1986 pre-tax (profit £m)	Adjusted profit (£m)**
Nat West	1,575	1,050	825
Lloyds	2,906	700	120
Midland	3,259	434	-206
Barclays	1,645	895	650

* Four major borrowers: Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela
** Assuming 15 per cent addition to reserves for Barclays and Nat West and 20 per cent for Lloyds and Midland (Financial Times 21 May 1987)

Little wonder that on the day of Bank America's announcement shares in these banks continued their fall. Midland was down 26p to 604p, Lloyds down 3p to 532p, Barclays down 8p to 537p and Nat West 8p to 668p, well below the levels before Citicorp began the process of dramatically writing down Third World loans.

The UK bank shares have still a very long way to fall if the secondary market in loans to the Third World is any guide. In this high risk, high profit market banks sell their Third World loans at a discount to other banks and non-financial companies. About 250 banks and 50 non-financial

companies are trading in this market, the turnover of which is expected to reach \$10bn-\$15bn this year. At the beginning of June, such loans to Third World countries were traded at discounts of 27 per cent in the case of Venezuela, 37 per cent for Brazil, 40 per cent for Argentina, 41 per cent for Mexico and 91 per cent for Bolivia. The average discount for all sovereign debt of those countries rescheduling their debt is about 37 per cent. Citicorp's write off of \$3bn is below that figure, equivalent to a discount of about 31 per cent.

UK banks, unlike US banks, refuse to disclose to shareholders the value of their loans to rescheduling countries or the value of the specific and general provisions against risk of default. Recent estimates however of their Third World debt exposure show that Midland and Standard Chartered Banks would each lose more than half their shareholders' funds if UK banks were forced to write down their sovereign Third World debts to the secondary market values. Lloyds would lose 29 per cent, Barclays 14 per cent and Nat West 10 per cent.

UK Banks. Effects of writing down Third World debt to secondary market values

	Estimated exposure (£bn)	Cost of Adjustment (£bn)	Loss of equity (%)
Barclays	2.7	0.57	14%
Lloyds	3.3	0.79	29%
Midland	4.2	1.14	57%
Nat West	2.4	0.46	10%
Std Chrt'd	2.6	0.70	54%

(Financial Times 26 May 1987)

The debt crisis is far from being resolved by Citicorp's decision to substantially write down the book value of its Third World loans. Citicorp has stated that it is not its intention to write off any of its loans, rather to use the increased reserves to sell debt at a discount and engage in debt-equity swaps (converting debt into assets in the debtor country) in order to 'reliquify' its Third World loans. In other words it has made a more realistic assessment of the likely returns. It still assumes that interest payments on the rescheduled loans will continue to flow, and that major defaults on Third World debts will be avoided. In fact this is unlikely.

Total debt of Third World nations (to governments as well as banks) now exceeds \$1 trillion (\$1,000 bn). The debt has risen faster than the debtor's exports of goods and services, that is, the capacity to service it has continually deteriorated. In 1986 rescheduled debt service payments were almost half of actual service payments. Third World countries have faced an unparalleled decline in commodity prices which have halved in real terms since the late 1970s and are at their lowest point since the 1930s. The prospects are bad. Growth in the major capitalist countries has halved since 1984. In 1986 there was an unprecedented transfer of resources from the Third World to the rich imperialist countries. Repayment of old debt exceeded new inflows by some \$30bn. This has led to a collapse of investment in the Third World. Since 1980 per capita investment has fallen by a massive 35 per cent.

Time and again we have argued in this paper that the oppressed nations' debts cannot be paid back. The latest moves by the imperialist banks are simply a forlorn attempt to hold off the inevitable day of reckoning.

Judicial murder in the USA

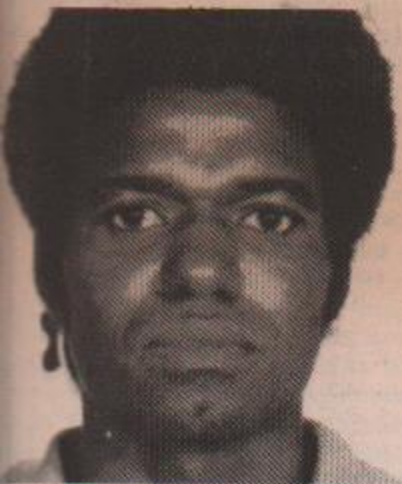
The number of prisoners on death row in the USA is the highest ever recorded at 1,900. A recently published Amnesty International report *USA: The Death Penalty* shows that the use of the death penalty is on the increase. 57 people have been executed in the last 3 years compared to 11 in the preceding 7 years. One per cent of death row prisoners are women. The report gives sickening detail of the racist and arbitrary use of the death penalty and concludes that black people, the poor and unemployed and those who live in the Southern states, are more likely to be executed than better-off whites.

ALEXA BYRNE

BLACK PEOPLE AND THE DEATH PENALTY

48% of people on death row in 1985 were black, although black people made up only 12% of the population. In some states the figures are far higher. In Alabama, 66% of death row prisoners are black. In the last 10 years nearly 90% of prisoners executed have been black people convicted of killing whites. In Florida black people accused of killing whites are 40 times more likely to get the death penalty than those accused of killing blacks. No white offender in Florida has ever been sentenced to death for killing a black person.

A Supreme Court ruling in April this year has further entrenched this blatant discrimination. A black man, Warren McCleskey convicted in 1978 of shooting a white policeman in Atlanta, Georgia, argued against the death penalty on the grounds that Georgia's laws are unconstitutional because of their racial bias. Research carried out on McCleskey's behalf showed that in Georgia 11% of people accused of killing whites received the death penalty compared to 1% of those charged with killing blacks. Black people charged with killing whites are twice as likely to get a death sentence compared to whites killing whites.



David Funchess executed 22 April 1986

Justice William Brennan, arguing McCleskey's case, noted that it is not long since the days when 'overt racial discrimination was written into Georgia law', when the murder of a black slave was considered a minor offence. Despite the mass of evidence in McCleskey's favour, the court upheld Georgia's right to carry out the death sentence. Justice Lewis Powell overruled the evidence saying 'apparent disparities in sentencing are an inevitable part of our criminal justice system.'

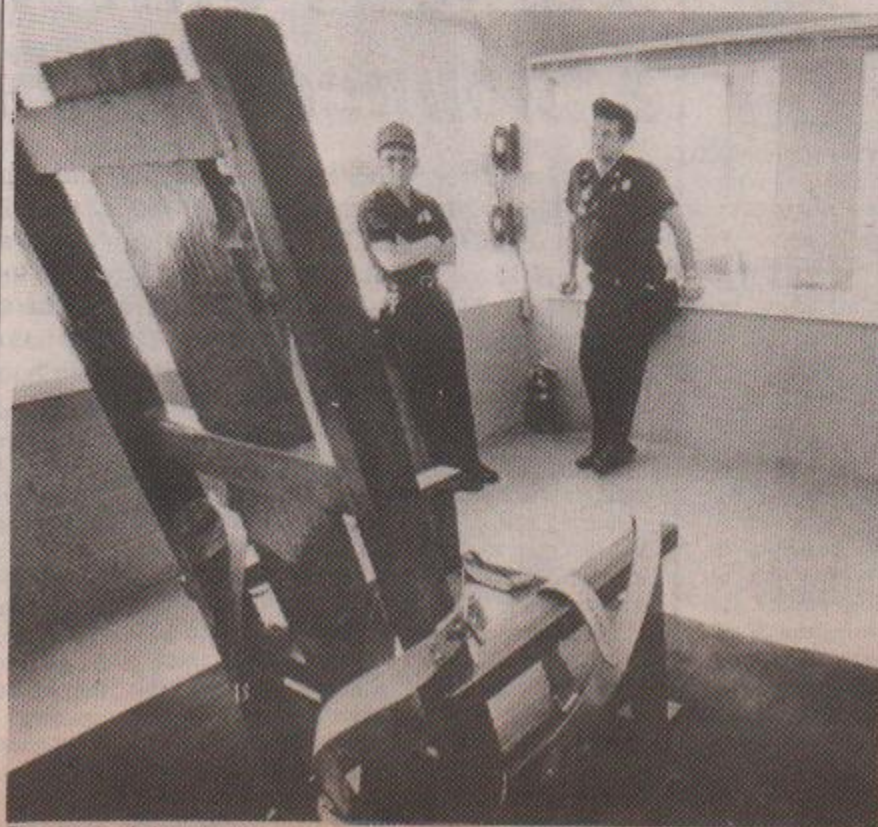
ALL WHITE JURIES

Before a capital case begins, the jury is heavily vetted. The selection procedures in most states allow the prosecution to exclude people who oppose the death penalty. This has led to 'death prone' juries. The Supreme Court in 1985 upheld the prosecutors' right to exclude any juror whose views would 'prevent or substantially impair the performance of his duties...'

The next stage is the right of prosecutors under peremptory challenge to exclude black people from capital juries. This occurs especially when the defendant is black. So, all white juries frequently pass judgment on black defendants. In Georgia in 1985, 80% of black prospective jurors were excluded from the initial jury pool. In Georgia lawyers states that 'the final jury may include no blacks, even though they constitute 20-30% of the state's population'. In Louisiana, all black people executed to date have been sentenced by all-white juries.

than 8 years on death row. In Indiana and Vermont the minimum age for a death sentence is 10 years; 12 in Montana; 13 in Mississippi; 14 in Alabama and 5 other states; 15 in Louisiana and Virginia; 16 in Nevada and 17 in Texas, Georgia and New Hampshire.

Two female juveniles are currently on death row. A white woman Janice Buttrum (now 24 years old) was 17 at the time of offence and a young black woman, Paula



The electric chair at Louisiana state penitentiary

THE POOR AND THE DEATH PENALTY

... I found that the men on death row had one thing in common: they were penniless... (ex-governor of Ohio).

60% of people sentenced to death between 1972 and 76 were unemployed. 62% were low paid, unskilled workers.

Most capital case defendants cannot afford to pay for their own counsel and are represented by court-appointed lawyers. Studies show that these lawyers are often inexperienced in dealing with the complexities of capital trials and have limited resources to work with. In some rural areas, court lawyers handling capital cases have been found to have no experience in criminal law. A study in Texas shows that capital defendants with court-appointed lawyers are more than twice as likely to receive a death sentence than those with their own counsel.

The court-appointed lawyer for Robert Wayne Williams, a black man electrocuted in Louisiana in 1983, spent only 8 hours preparing for trial. Similarly in 1984, the court lawyer of another black man, Ernest Knighton, who was executed, was handling 300 other cases at the same time.

The same conditions exist for capital defendants who appeal against execution. In most states, any state funding for legal representation stops after sentence. This leaves prisoners without lawyers to file appeals for them and apply for stays of execution.

EXECUTION OF THE YOUNG

In October 1986 there were 32 juveniles under sentence of death. Over half of them were black and several had spent more

Ronald Ward sentenced to death when he was 15



Cooper who was sentenced to death in July 1986. She was 16 at the time of offence.

EXECUTION OF THE MENTALLY ILL

On 10 January 1986, James Terry Roach was executed in South Carolina. At 17 years old he had been sentenced to death, despite the trial judge knowing he was mentally ill. During the 9 years he was on death row many appeals were lodged to save his life. A neurologist found he was suffering from a serious hereditary mental disorder. All mitigating circumstances were ignored and a final appeal to the US Supreme Court was denied without a hearing the day before his execution.



James Roach

The report gives details of at least 4 cases where mentally ill people have been sentenced to death. These include a 32 year old black farm-worker with a mental age of 8 and a black Vietnam war veteran who was electrocuted on 22 April 1986 after 11 years on death row.

THE BRUTALITY OF THE DEATH PENALTY

The 1,900 men and women now on death row face a cruel, degrading and brutal death. They may be electrocuted, gassed, poisoned, hanged or shot, depending on where they are jailed. All prisoners sentenced to death undergo the harrowing 'death watch'. The prisoner is locked in an isolated cell next to the death chamber for at least 24 hours before execution. Sometimes reprieves arrive only minutes before a death sentence is carried out. In Florida between 30 and 40 prisoners on death row have been through part of the 'death watch' process before getting stays of execution. At least one showed signs of acute mental distress afterwards.

'I like the idea of a firing squad - hanging is not bad. Or drugs. The electric chair has been very successful in America.' Peter Bruinvels, ex-Tory MP volunteering for the job of executioner if hanging is re-introduced in Britain.

None of the 3 most common methods of execution - electrocution, lethal injection or gassing - is quick or painless. In electrocution visible signs of destruction are clear as internal organs are burned. The body changes colour, the flesh swells and catches fire. The prisoner may defecate, urinate and vomit blood. Witnesses always report a smell of burning flesh.

It took three separate jolts of 1,900 volts over a 14 minute period before John Louis Evans was pronounced dead in Alabama (1983). During the second charge smoke and flame erupted from his left temple and leg.

James Autry was executed in Texas, 1984, by lethal injection. *Newsweek* reported that he 'took at least 10 minutes to die and throughout much of that time was conscious, moving about and complaining of pain.'

In September 1983, Jimmy Lee Gray was executed by lethal gas in Mississippi. Gray suffered convulsions for 8 minutes and gasped for breath 11 times. Witnesses said he did not seem to be dead when deputies asked them to leave the witness room. Four states have provision for hanging and there is evidence that death is not quick or painless. When the trap door opens 'the weight of the prisoner's body below the neck causes traction and tearing of the cervical [neck] muscles, skin and blood vessels.' The upper spine is dislocated, 'the spinal cord is separated from the brain: this is the lesion which causes death...'. The prisoner is hooded so witnesses cannot see his or her face. Experiments on animals have shown that 'their facial muscles go into spasm... and they close their eyes'.

Doctors are always present at executions and their role is as brutal as the exe-



Morris Mason executed 26 June 1985

cutioners'. In the case of a young black man Daniel Thomas, the doctor and medical assistant helped screws in 'brutally subduing and restraining him'. It took 7 white men to tie him to the electric chair.

DEATH ROW

Conditions on death row are appalling. Prisoners are kept sometimes for years, alone in small cells (5ft by 7ft) often with no windows and no natural light. No work or training facilities are available to the prisoners. Sanitation is very poor with bad plumbing and ventilation. In Florida, Louisiana and other states condemned prisoners spend only 5-7 hours a week out of their cells. These conditions are the same for young people sentenced to death.

The report is full of photographs of men and women who have been executed or are under the threat of execution in the USA. Most of the faces are black and they stand as a terrible indictment of Reagan's reactionary and vicious administration. Only the oppressed, in unity with progressive and liberal forces in the USA will be able to smash finally this barbaric system which sends them to their deaths.

Private prisons: private hell

The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee has come out in support of private prisons. In the United States private prisons have been in operation for some years. They are private hells.

The largest investor in private prisons is the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). CCA runs the Houston Processing Centre, a 350 bed detention centre, on behalf of the US Immigration and Naturalisation Service.

The prisoners are held in dormitories with 50 to 60 beds in each. There are no lockers, no privacy. Toilets and showers are unscreened and exposed to the view of male and female guards. Prisoners eat in the dormitories and spend up to 23 hours a day in them. Even the Prison Officers Association (POA) describe the guards as 'scruffy and thug-like in appearance'.

CCA also runs Silverdale, a 360 bed prison in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Silverdale has male and female prisoners serving up to seven years. Last year there was a major protest as prisoners rose up against the intolerable conditions. A police SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) team was used to put down the revolt.

A prisoner at Silverdale nearly choked to death when he was gagged with sticky tape across his mouth. This practice continues.

Toilets and showers, for male and female prisoners are unscreened. The Warden has boasted about the 'strip shows' performed by female prisoners for male guards.

Prisoners are not paid for the work they do. They get a day off their sentence for each day worked. Medically or phys-

ically unfit prisoners cannot reduce their sentences. Prisoners have to rely on money supplied by relatives to buy anything. CCA reportedly makes vast profits from the prison shops.

The county official responsible for supervising CCA's running of Silverdale was himself involved in drawing up the contract with CCA in the first place. He had campaigned for the prison to be privatised and lives permanently in the prison.

Hidden Valley Ranch, a prison housing about 80 parole violators, in Northern California, is run by Eclectic Communications Inc. Again all toilet and bathing facilities are unscreened as are the rows of beds in the dirty dormitory. There is no evidence of any education or work being available.

The Warden has openly described the prison as a 'loss leader' aimed at creating a dependence on private prisons so that a monopoly can be created. Then charges to the States' authorities would be dramatically increased and profits assured.

Many of the companies building private prisons are building 'hotel' style prisons which can be converted easily to actual hotels if they do not prove profitable as prisons. In effect the companies are building hotels paid for by the States.

CCA and its rivals are poised to make massive profits out of private prisons. But those profits can only be created by greatly increasing charges to the States and lowering conditions even further.

The private prisons are already private hells. They will get more hellish as the drive to increase profits gathers pace. This is the future that the Home Office has in store for British prisoners.

Terry O'Halloran

EIGHT VOLUNTEERS GUNNED DOWN BY DEATH SQUAD

COLD BLOODED
MURDER

Cold blooded murder. At Loughgall the real face of British terror in Ireland was shown for all to see. Eight dedicated IRA volunteers were gunned down by an SAS/RUC death squad.

JIM O'ROURKE & MAXINE WILLIAMS

Since the IRA operation which killed Lord Justice Gibson in May, the British government and its military forces have deliberately escalated their policy of terror in Ireland. Determined to revenge themselves and deliver a major blow to the IRA, the SAS was unleashed in the border areas. Their orders were to wipe out as many IRA volunteers as possible. The result was the slaughter at Loughgall.

The killing zone

Two IRA Active Service Units launched their attack on Loughgall RUC Barracks on 8 May. They had commandeered a JCB digger and had placed explosives in its bucket. Unknown to them they were walking into a deadly trap set by the elite SAS/RUC death squads. British forces had evacuated the barracks and cordoned off the area. They established a killing zone; nobody who entered the area would

come out alive. As the IRA units smashed through the perimeter wall the large SAS/RUC force opened fire without warning. Anyone within the killing zone was to be mown down and the relentless hail of bullets would continue until they were all dead.

Despite the odds against them some of the IRA volunteers managed to make a break for it. An eyewitness described what happened to them:

'Soldiers chased four of them across a field firing as they went, until the men threw up their arms and surrendered.'

The four who surrendered were then shot

in cold blood. It is also clear that some of the IRA men who lay wounded were finished off with a shot through the head. This appears to explain the bullet wound through Patrick Kelly's right temple.

No effort was made to prevent civilians entering the killing zone. Just before the trap was sprung two civilian cars unwittingly drove into the ambush. Both were raked with fire. In the first car Anthony Hughes was killed and his brother Oliver seriously wounded. The second car was also hit but the occupants miraculously escaped injury. Long after the operation the RUC was still denying that they had fired on the civilians. But press reports say that the car was hit from behind and the ground around it was littered with spent cartridges.

Chorus of Approval

The British government and its forces were jubilant about the butchery. RUC patrols went around taunting nationalists by shouting 'eight-nil' at them. Tom King boasted that the IRA had met '... a more effective response' than they expected. The British press also revelled in the bloodshed. But it was 'Britain will win' Kinnock who led the chorus of approval calling it:

'a significant victory against the men of violence'.

When Bulldog Kinnock talks about men of violence he does not mean the trained British thugs who are responsible for British terror in Ireland. The only violence that Kinnock condemns is the resistance of the oppressed.

Context of Repression

The Loughgall murders come at a time when British repression and terror has been stepped up. Just a month earlier an inquest had been held into the 1985 shoot-to-kill murders of Charles Breslin and Micky and David Devine. Despite witnesses who had heard the men shouting 'Don't shoot', despite forensic evidence which indicated that the RUC were lying in saying that the men had fired on them, despite witnesses telling the inquest they were too scared to give evidence because they had been beaten and threatened by the RUC - the verdict was simply 'death due to gunshot wounds'. Those operating Britain's 'shoot-to-kill' policy were no doubt emboldened by this verdict.

At the funeral of Volunteer Finbarr McKenna on 7 May dozens of mourners were attacked by the RUC with batons and plastic bullets. Several people were injured. Plastic bullets were again used over the weekend following Loughgall. A fourteen year old girl was shot in the face and a four year old boy in the body. On 29 May the homes of two of the volunteers murdered at Loughgall were raided by the RUC and British Army.

Alongside official terror loyalist sectarian attacks and murders have continued. Seventeen year old Gary McCartan was shot dead at his home in South Belfast on 7 May. The same night a Sinn Fein member narrowly escaped injury when nine shots were fired through his door. On 22 May, Alex Maskey, Sinn Fein councillor was hit in the stomach by a shotgun blast through his door. On 24 May an off-duty policeman ran amok in Castlewellan raking a chip shop with eight people in it with gun fire.

Today, as always the British state can only rule Ireland by terror.



Eugene Kelly, Tony Gormley



Padraig McKearney, Gerard O'Callaghan



Seamus Donnelly, Jim Lynagh



Paddy Kelly, Declan Arthurs

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! salute the memory of the eight republican soldiers gunned down by the SAS at Loughgall on 8 May 1987. They were political fighters totally committed to the struggle to free Ireland from the tyranny of British imperialism. The Loughgall martyrs gave their lives in the knowledge that their actions and their sacrifice would hasten the day of victory, not only for the Irish people but for oppressed people everywhere.

VOLUNTEER TONY GORMLEY (24) joined the republican movement after the death of his neighbour, Martin Hurson's hunger strike in 1981.

VOLUNTEER PADDY KELLY (30) fought against the British forces of occupation all his adult life.

VOLUNTEER PADRAIG MCKEARNEY (32) came from a republican family. He was jailed for political activities at the age of 17 but escaped from the H-Blocks in the mass break-out of 1983.

VOLUNTEER GERARD O'CALLAGHAN (29) served time in Magilligan prison and in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh for his republican beliefs.

VOLUNTEER DECLAN ARTHURS (21) joined the movement at the age of 16. Despite his youth, he showed exceptional leadership qualities.

VOLUNTEER SEAMUS DONNELLY (19) Like his friend and comrade Declan Arthurs, Seamus took up arms at the age of 16.

VOLUNTEER JIM LYNAGH (31) was a revolutionary soldier who led many successful operations against the British forces.

VOLUNTEER EUGENE KELLY (25) was an experienced fighter who joined the movement in 1982.

The eight revolutionary soldiers who fell at Loughgall fought for the liberation of their country and their class, the oppressed nationalist working class of the Six Counties.

'For 'tis not sleeping graves those English knives have made But unquenchable stars of freedom's light

You are toppling H-Block comrade. And because of you and many others

We oppressed men and women of no property shall realise The Irish Socialist Republic.'

Bobby Sand

LOYALIST TRADE UNIONS

For those who have always argued that trade unions in the Six Counties were loyalist dominated, there is now confirmation from an unexpected source. Merlin Rees in his book *Northern Ireland: A Political Perspective* writes:

'In Northern Ireland a trade unionist is first and last a loyalist/unionist, which is one reason why a Labour Party in the province could not succeed... Understanding this basic difference between trade unions in Northern Ireland and Britain was essential in looking at the Province's economic problems'.

DUTCH CAMPAIGN AGAINST PLASTIC BULLETS

A six month campaign against the use of plastic bullets in the Six Counties has been organised by the Amsterdam based *Ierland Informatie Centrum*. Using exhibitions, videos and a booklet, the aim is to inform the Dutch public about this deadly weapon and make it more difficult for the British government to justify its use. Support has come from a wide range of organisations and individuals. The campaign will end in the autumn with a speaking tour organised in co-operation with the Belfast based United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets and a petition will be presented to the British and Dutch governments.

SINGLE EUROPEAN SELL-OUT

On 26 May Irish people were asked to vote in a referendum on the Single European Act (SEA). In a low poll of 45% a majority of two to one voted in favour of ratifying the Act. The SEA is two linked treaties, one being an economic treaty abolishing trade barriers in the 1990s, the other a new and dangerous Foreign Policy and Defence Treaty setting up a body called the European Political Co-operation (Title III). This latter treaty is another step towards the abandonment of neutrality in Irish foreign policy. Whereas in 1973 neutrality was said to be guaranteed, now Ireland is indirectly linked to NATO. This means, for example, that Ireland can no longer demand the closure of Sellafield nuclear power plant, as under Title III, Britain can claim that Sellafield is part of the technological conditions necessary for security.

Previously, when in opposition, Haughey had opposed the ratification and supporters were amazed by his sudden change of policy in demanding a yes vote. He has proved once again that he is an opportunist who will do anything to please his imperialist masters and keep power.

Cathal

Sinn Fein defeats SDLP challenge

The 1987 General Election was a victory for Gerry Adams. He resisted the challenge from the constitutional nationalist party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), in West Belfast. Adams' vote increased by 16,379 to 16,862 to confound the bourgeois pollsters who were whispering that he would lose to a united opposition. Enoch Powell's personal occupation of Ireland was ended in South Down when he lost by 731 votes to the SDLP. Good riddance!

Overall, the Sinn Fein share of the vote remained rock solid in the working class urban areas. Elsewhere, particularly in the rural and semi-rural areas, the SDLP share of the nationalist vote went up as an indication of the effect of the Anglo-Irish Deal on sections of middle class catholic opinion, the main beneficiaries of the SDLP-crafted Deal.

The election campaign was marked by shootings and harassment of Sinn Fein election workers and supporters. Councillor Alex Maskey was shot and seriously wounded on his doorstep. Brendan Davidson was shot in the back by loyalists in a bookie shop in South Belfast.

Across the Six Counties there was a

systematic disruption and destruction of Sinn Fein election work. Men poster on the Falls Road had their ladder rammed by an RUC jeep. UDR soldiers ripped down posters and burned the Irish tricolour in Carrickmore. Candidates were detained, arrested and held at checkpoints by soldiers and police.

Gerry Adams remains the MP for West Belfast who refuses to take his seat in the British imperialist Houses of Parliament. Adams voiced the feeling of the young working class nationalists when he said after his victory:

'I think Guy Fawkes had the right idea about Westminster.'

Prison committee to picket Downing Street

On Wednesday 20 May the Free the Framed Irish Prisoners Campaign held a 50 strong public meeting in which the issue of democratic rights featured centrally. A wide platform of speakers included: barrister Mike Mansfield; Sharon Raghip, wife of Engin Raghip one of the Broadwater 3 gaoled for life; Maire O'Shea; Gareth Peirce, solicitor for some of the Birmingham 6; Fr Bobby Gilmour; Maxine Williams.

Maxine Williams, speaking for the Campaign said that the frame ups of Irish people were no longer unique, the same methods were now being used against other sections of the population. Sharon Raghip, given an enthusiastic welcome by the audience, showed that this was the case. Her husband and others had been gaoled on the flimsiest of evidence, which included statements made under duress whilst in police custody. The people of Broadwater Farm had no confidence in British justice and only by mobilising

popular support could they obtain justice.

Mike Mansfield concentrated on the escalating repression that has seen areas like Broadwater targeted by the police. Major democratic rights were threatened by this and by the new Public Order Act and threats to abolish jury trials.

Maire O'Shea reminded the audience about the cases of the framed Irish prisoners and the anti-Irish atmosphere in which they were framed.

Gareth Peirce, who had visited some of the Birmingham 6 that day, spoke of the pressing need to keep these cases in the public eye.

The Free the Framed Irish Prisoners Campaign aims to do this. It is holding monthly pickets of Downing Street and further meetings. JOIN US.

Picket Downing Street
Wednesday 24 June, 6pm.
Followed by Campaign meeting
at Camden Town Hall,
Judd Street.



Lenin speaks at the Putilov Works, May 1917 (from a painting by I Brodsky)

RUSSIA 1917

FACTORY, LAND, AND NATION

In pre-revolutionary Russia, 85% of the population lived in the countryside (in Britain at the same date, 20%) and only 5% of the labour force was employed in industry (for Britain 60%). Although the working class was small (in 1914 only 3m out of a total population of 150m) it was the most highly concentrated in the world.

Proportionately, there were twice as many giant enterprises employing over 1,000 workers, as in Germany or the USA. During the war the concentration increased, especially in Petrograd where the number of workers in large factories almost doubled. The average factory employed 2850 workers, and one, the Putilov Works, employed no less than 40,000. What a gift for revolutionary organisers!

The majority of the workers toiled for a 10 hour day for a bare pittance – a 1908 survey of working class income listed as luxuries tramcar travel and postage stamps. Workers were subjected to harsh and humiliating conditions, especially in the textile industry, where they were housed in barracks, and searched when leaving the barracks or the factory. The foremen frequently used violence without restraint; and in some places mounted guards with whips rode around inside the factory.

During the war, conditions worsened considerably. Prices multiplied 6 times between 1913-1917, forcing the working class into a constant struggle even to maintain its lowly position. On average, wages fell by about 15% in real terms from their previous low level. To add insult to injury, the capitalist class made enormous profits: in the Moscow textile industry, the average profit for 1916 was 53.1%, for the first part of 1917 it was 75.2%.

Attracted by these super-profits, English and French banks invested heavily in Russian industry. Even in 1913 33% of the capital of Russian industry was foreign-owned, but the war accelerated this process tremendously, so that the Russian bourgeoisie became little more than a junior partner of imperialism. Thus the strength of the working class was not counter-balanced by a strong native bourgeoisie.

The first test of strength between the working class and the bourgeoisie took place over the 8 hour day. In the 1905 revolution the failure to win this demand had been the first major setback. But in 1917 the capitalists were forced to give way only 3 weeks after the February rev-

olution.

The Mensheviks opposed fighting for the 8 hour day: 'A struggle on two fronts – against the reaction and against the capitalist – is too much for the proletariat.' However the workers could not see that 'freedom' was much use to them if it did not mean freedom from excessive toil for the capitalist. So in most of the big factories, the workers, led by the Bolsheviks, simply got up and left after 8 hours work – foremen who tried to prevent them from doing so were carted out of the factories in wheelbarrows.

But however well organised the working class, without powerful allies it could be isolated and eventually defeated. It found its allies in the peasantry and the subject nationalities of the Russian Empire.

THE WAGER ON THE STRONG

Although feudalism in Russia was formally abolished by the 1861 Act of Emancipation, it was not destroyed outright. Although the serfs were freed they were still tied to the feudal landlords by means of the 'labour-service' system.

The amount of land allocated to the former serfs was actually reduced after 1861, and the doubling of the population by 1900 meant an enormous pressure on the land. By 1905 in European Russia 10m peasant households owned 79m hectares, while 28,000 landlords, members of the aristocracy or the higher bureaucracy owned 66m hectares, with the crown lands amounting to 5.4m hectares, and the church 2.7m. The communal allotments amounted to 150m hectares.

The landlord system prevailed in European Russia. In the borderlands, especially the Baltic provinces, the differentiation of the peasantry was quite advanced; and the virgin lands of the north and Siberia, untouched by feudalism, were colonised by peasant farmers.

How would the conflict between landlord and peasant be resolved? History had shown two solutions (see Lenin, *CW* vol 13 p 239). Either the ruling powers control developments from above (Prussian way), and the feudal landlord economy slowly evolves into bourgeois landlord economy, while at the same time there arises a small minority of large capitalist farmers. Or the land is distributed by action from below (American way). This leads to a rapid development of capitalist farming, with a differentiation of the

PART 4: Workers Peasants and National Minorities

PATRICK NEWMAN

Marx and Engels expected the socialist revolution to begin in Europe, particularly in those countries with a large working class such as Britain or Germany. Yet the development of imperialism in the 20th century meant the spread of revolutionary movements outside Europe.

peasantry into landless labourers and capitalist farmers.

The peasants attempted the revolutionary solution in 1905. Although they were eventually defeated, they terrified the ruling classes, which realised that they must implement the Prussian solution more vigorously. The Stolypin decree 9 November 1906 aimed to promote the development of a class of large capitalist farmers, the kulaks, by giving individual peasants permission to sell their portion of communal land – Stolypin called it the 'wager on the strong'.

For Russia, it was too little, too late. In Germany it had taken decades to create a class of capitalist farmers, a reliable support for counter-revolution; but in Russia by the end of the first decade (1916), only 12% of the communal land had been broken up.

The war intensified the agrarian crisis beyond endurance. By 1916, the planted area in European Russia declined by 8.4%; and the government carried away from the countryside about 10m workers (40% of the able-bodied male population of the villages) and about 2m horses (10%).

How did the peasantry respond in the first three months of the revolution? Some seizures of land took place, but as a whole it cautiously waited to see if, like its Tsarist predecessors, the new government had reliable punitive detachments at its disposal.

Politically the peasantry supported the SRs. At the First All-Russian Congress of Peasants Deputies (4-28 May), 537 (48%) of the 1115 deputies were SRs, with only 14 Bolsheviks (1.4%). The elections to its Executive Committee gave the SR leader, Chernov, 810 votes, Lenin 20. The SRs opposed land seizures, and called on the peasants to wait for the Constituent Assembly to distribute the land.

But the peasants were becoming

impatient. Sukhanov tells of a peasant urgently asking Kerensky for a law to reserve the land for the peasantry. Kerensky gave the 'parliamentary' answer: 'The Provisional Government is already taking steps.' As the peasant remained sceptical Kerensky '... began a thorough tongue-lashing, practically stamping his foot: "I said it would be done, that means it will! And – there is no need to look at me so suspiciously!" There was every need to regard the honoured People's Minister with the greatest of suspicion.

Although the Bolsheviks were still a tiny minority, they were more prepared than the SRs to fight for the peasants' interests. As the only Russian Marxist of his time to make a serious study of the agrarian problem, Lenin had equipped the Bolshevik party with a realistic programme.

Its central demand was the *organised* seizure of the landlords estates, as they were '... the material mainstay of the power of the feudal-landowners and a guarantee of the possible restoration of the monarchy.' (*CW* 24 p 290).

Fearing, however, that the rich peasants might unite with the bourgeoisie to hold back the revolution, Lenin called for the setting up of Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies, relying on the landless labourers to carry the revolution through to the end. As it happened, just as in 1905, even the rich peasants made the destruction of the landlord system their central objective.

NATIONALITIES

The first systematic census (1897) had shown that 60% of the inhabitants of the Russian Empire were non-Russians. From the accession of Tsar Alexander III (1881) to the 1905 Revolution the Tsars followed a systematic policy of intensified Russification and the repression of national minorities, mainly in an attempt to utilize Great Russian chau-

vinism as a weapon against growing social unrest. The Poles (6.1% of the population) and the Jews (4.1%) suffered the most.

In Poland, Russian was the official language for the administration, local government and the courts. Russian Poland was ruled by governor generals, usually high-ranking army officers, who wielded absolute power. The slightest manifestation of national feeling was ruthlessly stamped out. For instance, Lenin's father-in-law, a colonel, was cashiered for having spoken Polish in public, and dancing the Polonaise.

The Jews were forbidden to move out of the Pale of Settlement, to purchase land property, or to settle outside towns. They were subject to pogroms by the Black Hundreds, fascist gangs armed and financed by the state, which were approved by the 'crowned hooligan', the Tsar himself. In the most notorious example, at Odessa in October 1905, 300 Jews were killed and thousands wounded or maimed.

On coming into power the Provisional Government established full equality of all citizens regardless of national origin; it restored the Finnish constitution (suspended 1897); and abolished the restrictions on Jews. However, it recognised the independence only of Poland, calling for 'an independent Polish State' – not a very generous concession given that the entire area of Russian Poland was then occupied by the Germans. Where it had the power to deny the right to a national minority, such as the Ukrainians (17% of the population), it attempted to do so.

The SRs and the Mensheviks responded to the demands of national minorities with their usual formula 'Wait for the Constituent Assembly'. In fact, the Mensheviks did not recognise the right of all nations in the state to self-determination. Their enthusiasm for self-determination for Georgia was aroused only after the October revolution, when it was used as a weapon against the proletarian revolution.

Only the Bolsheviks supported the right of all the nations forming part of Russia freely to secede and form independent states (April Conference resolution). In his commentary on the resolution Lenin made it perfectly clear that the *right* to secede must not be confused with the *advisability* of secession by a given nation at a given moment, which must be decided by the proletarian party having regard to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat for socialism.

BRITISH LABOUR AND BRITISH IMPERIALISM

If the Russian working class could build alliances with the oppressed in its own country, it was disappointed in its search for allies among leaders of the international working class. From the moment the Tsar was overthrown well-wishing 'socialists' from the Tsar's allies came to offer... not their international solidarity, but their demands for a continuation of the war. None were more brazen in their support for the imperialist war than the British Labour leaders.

It is difficult to gauge the response of the working class to the February revolution, but the cautious language of the Prime Minister Lloyd George records that: 'The shock that came from Petrograd passed through every workshop and mine, and produced a nervous disquiet which made things difficult in recruitment and munitionment.'

However, the ruling class had no need to feel 'nervous disquiet' when it regarded its tame socialists. Not only did they obediently fulfil their tasks, they outdid their masters in imperialist ambition. Representatives of the Moscow Soviet told the Labour delegation (19 April) that 'The Tsar made us fight for Constantinople, which is not Russian and never was...' at which one of the British delegates jovially exclaimed: 'If you don't want Constantinople', then, damn it, we'll take it!

Puzzled by their hosts' lack of imperialist appetite, taxed by them about their occupation of Ireland and India, the British delegates summed up their view of Soviet Russia: 'My Gawd, if this is democracy we don't want the bloody thing in our country!'

WAITING FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Fearing the outcome, the supporters of the Constituent Assembly were in no hurry to convene it – the special conference on the convocation of the Assembly was first held 11 weeks after the February revolution, and its proceedings thereafter were even more leisurely.

Would the workers, peasants, and national minorities wait for the Constituent Assembly? Or would the Bolsheviks be able to develop their revolutionary initiative and seize power directly, by means of the Soviets?

Screw brutality

Dear FRFI,
Just got FRFI 68. First thing I saw was the write-up of Danny Williams and, to be truthful, I saw it all, the assault [at Albany jail]. One thug (screw) had his head right in Danny's face whilst another had his foot on his head. Not only myself but another inmate saw it and got nicked for banging the door in protest. As far as I am concerned, Danny Williams is not mad or nutty. I found Danny a really nice guy and very rational. Not only myself but many of us who know Danny are worried for his safety. It was a brutal and unprovoked attack . . .
Yours in the struggle
Dave Richards
HMP Wandsworth

Dave and Danny are now in Wandsworth jail. Danny lost remission as 'punishment' for the beating he got but is now fit and well. Dave is back on 10/74 laydown.

'A third Reich'

Dear FRFI,
Should the Tories' strategy of depoliticising the electors working through the twin tactics of marginalising still further the poor and oppressed - many of whom have no vote - and the apathy of those in work, bought off by private medicine and a 'national curriculum', deliver Thatcher a 3rd Reich, it must be remembered that rule by a majority in parliament means neither the death of individual rights, nor those of human rights! In the meantime we are prey, as Gil Scott-Heron would have it, to selective amnesia. Forgetting the US invasion of Grenada, an independent Commonwealth nation; and ignoring their continued build-up of nukes in our country - in particular at Molesworth.

Having said that, I found Maxine Williams' critique of *Socialist Worker's* position on Ireland an essentially correct one (FRFI 67). It was good to read a left publication not afraid to identify the real issues of Irish solidarity work.
Yours in struggle
Brendan Moor
Newport

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 to 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

Name

Address

Tel

Return to: FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

Caring Council?

Dear FRFI,
I was at Wood Green Civic Centre on the last day of the civil service strike. What actually happened was not very well reported, but basically Haringey council did not pay out because NALGO members in the Civic Centre would not work the cash desks - despite the fact that striking Haringey CPSA members asked them to.

The result was that 150 claimants (many of whom had stated their support for the strike) were left to starve for the weekend.

But the cruellest cut was that Haringey's caring socialist council sent the police in to eject the claimants. Some claimants sat on the floor and joined hands, others stood around dumbfounded, whilst the police dragged, pulled and carried them out of the civic centre.

This is the same council which said the police 'got a bloody good hiding' and which actually considered withholding the police precept. And yet this same council set the police on one of the most oppressed sections of society.

John Atkinson
Tottenham

Prison ferry - gestapo camp

Dear FRFI,
So far 63 Tamils have been imprisoned in isolation on the Harwich prison ferry. The racist forces of the immigration office have unfettered freedom to treat the refugees like gestapo-camp prisoners . . .

When the Tamils were first taken to the ferry we disrupted the racists' smooth programme by demonstrating outside. Despite our presence two Tamil girls were dragged without a female guard from a coach to the ferry. After publicity the guards were forced to bring the girls back.

The next day our visit was received with paramilitary force and my colleague was made to leave a food parcel behind. We visited 3 Indians, 7 Tamils and one African detainee. Like vultures the securicor men hovered round us so we spoke in Tamil. All the time we were there the refugees were treated harshly and I knew they were in for a hard time.

As our visit drew to a close, darkness fell on the smiling faces of our oppressed brethren. They ignored the call for dinner to be with us longer. Then one guard shouted at them that there would be no dinner if we didn't break up then . . .

As we left, one refugee, Mr Srither Sivasubramaniam who had been harshly treated in Harmondsworth, burst out emotionally. 'You will see my body floating in the sea. Then it will be too late.' These words summed up the inhumanity of a ruthless regime that locks up those who flee in fear . . .

A hard struggle is ahead to expose this oppression to the British people and it will demand unremitting energy.
Mr S Maharasingam
Tamil Action Committee

TSGs' disorderly conduct

Dear FRFI,
On 2 May RCG members and supporters attended the 'Smash the Backlash' demonstration to protest against increasing right-wing bigotry in Haringey. The march was policed to saturation point but was entirely peaceful and there were no arrests.

At the bus stop after the march a group of police officers, mostly from the Territorial Support Group, were harassing two young boys of about 12, forcing them to turn out their pockets and take down their trousers. As the bus arrived a WPC arrested Dele, a black comrade who had been on the



Claimants left penniless. See story left

NETWORK

Labour and the election**Scargill silenced**

Dear FRFI,
Yet another case of socialism and progression being abandoned, in the lust for a Labour victory.

The local Labour Party Young Socialists called a public meeting and NUM President Arthur Scargill agreed to speak.

This proved too much for the local Labour Party. They described Arthur Scargill as an 'electoral liability' and exerted pressure in the LPYS to cancel the meeting.

Sadly the LPYS backed down and the forces of chauvinism and reaction won the day. Arthur Scargill stood by his class and his union, he fought a fierce battle against the British ruling class.

It's about time people in this country stood by Arthur Scargill and fought for him the way he fought for us.

Viva Arthur Scargill!
Long live the enemy within!

All the best
Andy Shaw
Edinburgh

The instance described by Andy Shaw was neither isolated nor an accident. Arthur Scargill speaking at the South Wales NUM Gala on 13 June 1987 condemned the LP leadership: 'It is not in the best interests of unity to have undue pressure from the top in the party to prevent me speaking at election rallies as was the case during the course of the general election.'

march. Adam and I were also arrested with 2 other women.

Dele is an epileptic and had a fit in the police van. He was denied medication and held down by the throat.

We were taken to Enfield police station and charged with either disorderly conduct under the Public Order Act or obstruction of the police. I was further charged with assault on the WPC who arrested Dele despite the fact that she punched me in the mouth.

Our trial is on 3 September at Highgate Magistrates Court and our defence is being co-ordinated by Haringey Black Action and Positive Images who organised the march.
Nicki
London RCG

No right to speak for VMDC

Dear FRFI,
We think that the article 'The way forward', that reports on the VMDC conference (FRFI 68) is an ambiguous and snide summary of the political confrontations involved.

You rightly claim that the . . . VMDC has 'organised' and 'united' those people who have no vested interest in racism or the laws that uphold it. However this is where the 'coalition' is ended. The article proceeds to patronise and 'name call'

one of these progressive and anti-racist forces, the Kings Cross Women's Centre, describing its ideology and aims as disruptive, reactionary and sectarian, without bothering to outline in any detail the political differences between the Centre and the RCG, without even describing as a counterweight the huge volume of work the Centre has and hopefully will continue to do for the VMDC. Instead your final and contradictory insult, is to speak for the VMDC which you are not empowered to do, telling the women that VMDC will go forward with or without them . . . We certainly will not build a coalition of the dispossessed by excluding a section of them from the VMDC. If the RCG are serious about the political differences between the Centre and themselves, then why don't you describe these differences politically, to reduce the Kings Cross Womens Centre to 'scandalous' and 'sectarian' shows no willingness to take them on, on any other

Yours in struggle
Adrian Levy, Sarah Ricca, Ed Jones
Manchester FRFI supporters

Reply

The RCG does not speak on behalf of the VMDC. But we will fight against anyone who tries to use the VMDC for their own sectarian ends. The Kings Cross women, by attacking the RCG as a 'white male dominated organisation' from a VMDC platform were doing this.

We will not be silenced

Dear FRFI,
At Bow Street Magistrates court on 20 May, City AA had three major court appearances, coinciding with the gross indecency case of racist Harvey Proctor. The court was surrounded with cameramen and journalists. We set up a 15 strong picket with banners and placards. We shouted slogans and speeches on the megaphone stating that our democratic right to demonstrate outside the South African embassy was being denied. The police warned us that if we didn't stop shouting they would arrest us for contempt of court.

However, when Proctor arrived, I shouted 'Harvey Proctor is a racist', and was immediately arrested with 3 other picketers. We were taken before the magistrate and released with an undertaking not to shout again. The megaphone had whistled all the way up to the court as the embarrassed officers tried to deal with it.

Once outside we made gags and

Send letters to us at FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

stood in silence writing 'we have been silenced by the Met police'.

When Proctor emerged he was rushed by 10 police to a waiting car. We started using the megaphone shouting 'we won't give up, we won't give in, we will fight until we win!' The police were too busy with their racist friend to arrest us.

City Group has the right to defend the Non-Stop picket and we will not be silenced.

Yours in struggle
Anne B
London RCG

The police and magistrate were acting outside their powers. A magistrates court is not a court of record and contempt of court only arises if the magistrate witnesses the disturbance.

GLASGOW FRFI

Glasgow FRFI is launching a new series of regular fortnightly discussion groups. For details write to:
Box 10, 340 West Princes St, Glasgow
or see FRFI sellers

LONDON VMDC**PUBLIC MEETING**

Monday 22 June
7.30pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2

**Resist immigration laws
March for Viraj!**

WARNING

FRFI has received disturbing information about Mark Leech, also known as Gibson. Whilst he was out of prison this man seriously abused the trust of those who tried to help him. In particular he caused an ex-Irish POW's relative to lose her job. He is now back in prison. FRFI has broken all connections with this man and warns all readers that he cannot be trusted

REMEMBER THE HUNGER STRIKERS

Commemoration march for the Irish hunger strikers who died in 1981

**Saturday 27 June
12.30pm, Finsbury Park (London)**

Confirmed speakers from: Sinn Fein (Ireland) and South Africa

Republican Band

For more information contact: The Bobby Sands Commemoration Committee, c/o New Era Books, 203 Seven Sisters Road, London N4

GLASGOW VMDC

Meets fortnightly at the Scottish Asian Action Committee offices, 537 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow
Next meetings: Wednesday 1 July and 14 July at 7.30pm

BRADFORD VMDC

PUBLIC MEETING
Thursday 25 June
7.30pm
Bradford Central Library
**Viraj Mendis Will Stay
Stop All Deportations Now!**

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SRI LANKA

Assault on Tamils brought to a standstill

British supplied tanks, patrol boats and helicopter gunships, British mercenaries, South African armoured cars, Israeli Mossad and Shin Bet agents and 20,000 Sri Lankan soldiers were pitted against the 850,000 Tamil people of the Jaffna peninsula.

The plan was for an all-out offensive on 26 May to overrun the peninsula within five days. Such a rapid victory would prevent world and particularly Indian popular opinion restraining the slaughter. Nine days later, with over 1,000 Tamil civilians killed, 5,000 arrested and thousands made homeless, the Tamil liberation forces were still resisting, confining the Sri Lankan occupation forces to the northern coastal rim of the peninsula, and inflicting some 200 deaths on the Sri Lankan army and as many severe injuries. These figures can only be estimates: as with the British assault on the Falklands/Malvinas and the US invasion of Grenada, a news and reporting cordon has been thrown around the Jaffna peninsula by the invading army.

STRAFING, BOMBING AND HUMAN SHIELDS

By 20 May 20,000 Sri Lankan troops were stationed in nine besieged forts on the Jaffna peninsula. Three thousand troops received orders to march north from their Elephant Pass camp, the gateway to the peninsula. They were beaten back by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. With

TREVOR RAYNE

covering aerial bombardment, strafing and incendiary devices, possibly napalm, troops emerged from their forts. Civilians were summarily shot on sight. Everywhere the Sri Lankan army met fierce resistance from the Tigers. One group of soldiers, attempting to surrender to the Tigers at Vazhalai, were fired on by a Sri Lankan helicopter gunship.

At dawn on 26 May, Sri Lankan helicopters dropped leaflets across the peninsula ordering a 48 hour curfew (later extended to six days) and telling people to take refuge in temples, churches and schools. On 31 May news reports told of 17 people dead in a temple. On 1 June 20 Tamil civilians were killed when a fighter bomber attacked the Amman temple at Alvai. In the past there have been numerous reports of ex-SAS KMS mercenaries flying such craft. They have been photographed in operation on the Jaffna peninsula. Nellyyadi Central College was occupied by the Sri Lankan army and turned into a torture centre. A convent was occupied, the 200 female students and 40

nuns taken hostage and used as a human shield to cover the troops advance.

The killing is systematic and brutal. The mother and father of Sathianathan, the Tiger's first martyr, were hacked to death, as was the elderly mother of Pandithar, the former Tiger commander of Jaffna. Some 2,000 Tamil youths have been rounded up, placed on vessels and sent to Boosa army camp in the South. Several were shot while 'attempting to escape.'

A seaborne assault by Sri Lankan troops lined up with those from the forts to occupy the northern coastal rim of the peninsula. The strategic aim is to encircle Jaffna city (population 180,000), keep the peninsula under siege, destroy the liberated areas and wipe out the liberation forces. Since 2 January, the northern Tamil areas have been under an economic blockade. Shortages of food and medical supplies have been exacerbated by the army assault. Using classic counter-insurgency tactics developed in Malaya, Vietnam, Palestine and Central America, the Sri Lankan army is trying to force the population into dependence upon it for food, water and supplies. A 'hearts and minds' operation is designed to undermine support for the guerrilla war. At the same time it is flattening villages with the overall aim of creating 'strategic hamlets' in the area it occupies. These plans are being directed by Israeli advisers: the Jaffna peninsula is to be turned in-



200,000 people celebrated May Day at a rally addressed by Kittu, the Tiger's commander in Jaffna, Tamil Eelam

to a West Bank.

In this context, the periodic bombings of Sinhalese civilians in the south, repeatedly denounced by the Tigers - the latest being the hijacking of a bus and the murder of 34 passengers including 29 Buddhist monks on 2 June - serve to stoke up Sinhalese chauvinism and support for the war drive on the Tamils. A psychological climate is created equivalent to that in Israel towards the Palestinians, facilitating genocide, population removal and settlement programmes by armed thugs and fanatics.

INDIA'S MOVE

For its own strategic reasons the ruling class in India is unwilling to allow imperialism and the Jayewardene regime to completely crush the Tamil people. However, it also fears the revolutionary potential that a Tamil victory would produce. The Indian air force relief drop of 25 tons of food and medicine into Tamil areas on 4 June was a warning to Jayewardene that

India intends to have a say in any fate being designed for the Tamils.

The onus is now on the Sri Lankan forces to crush the Tamil people quickly, while appearing to sue for peace. The prospect of a long drawn-out war is intolerable to the Sinhalese bourgeoisie. Their economy cannot sustain it. The division between the conditions of the ruling elite and that of the mass of Sinhalese workers and peasants is widening and threatening the Sinhala state with destabilisation. Armouries are being raided, banks robbed and peasant protests escalating. At the same time the Tigers are counterattacking both in the north and the east.

The Sinhalese ruling class will soon realise that a people's war cannot be crushed. In their desperation they will need to call in more foreign assistance. *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* calls on all its readers to demand the breaking of all British support for the Jayewardene regime, and to give support to the right of self-determination of the Tamil people.

BRITAIN'S PRISON SHIP FOR IMMIGRANTS



MARK CAMPBELL

INSIDE THE PRISON HULK

FRFI interviewed Mr Ghazi-Noori from the Iranian Community Centre. He was one of the people allowed onto the Earl William and gave us a first-hand account of conditions on board.

Contrary to official statistics, there are 63 Tamils and not 35 being detained, 8 Iranians not 5, as well as political refugees from other countries - more than 80 in all.

The truth about the Earl William is greatly different from the right wing press accounts of a luxury liner with sun lounges and superb sporting facilities all financed with rate-payers' money. The detainees are cooped up, 2 each in a cramped cabin. The ship is extremely noisy and the smell of diesel is everywhere. The superb sporting facilities consist of 2 table tennis tables in a hall they cannot use because the smell of diesel is so overpowering. They are not allowed in their cabin/cells between 7am and 11pm. One Muslim detainee who attempted to leave his cabin after 11 at night in order to pray was pushed back inside.

As for food, there is no concern for their specific dietary needs and they are allowed just two tokens per 24 hours for the ship's coffee machine.

The detainees told Mr Ghazi-Noori that the picket had really encouraged them. At the same time they are under a great deal of stress. Most of them have been transferred since 22 May from detention centres around London. They have been given no reason why they have been singled out to be sent to the Earl William and fear imminent deportation. They have effectively had all their rights removed since all the specialist advisory bodies and lawyers are a 2-hour journey away in London. They were anxious to stress that they were political refugees and that if they are returned to their respective countries they face torture and imprisonment, if not death.

Jan Ali

Picket supports detainees

As the picket (called by Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign) assembled on Saturday 6 June, the detainees on the prison hulk Earl William in Harwich broke out of their detention cells and came onto the decks to wave to us. In total we counted 85 detainees.

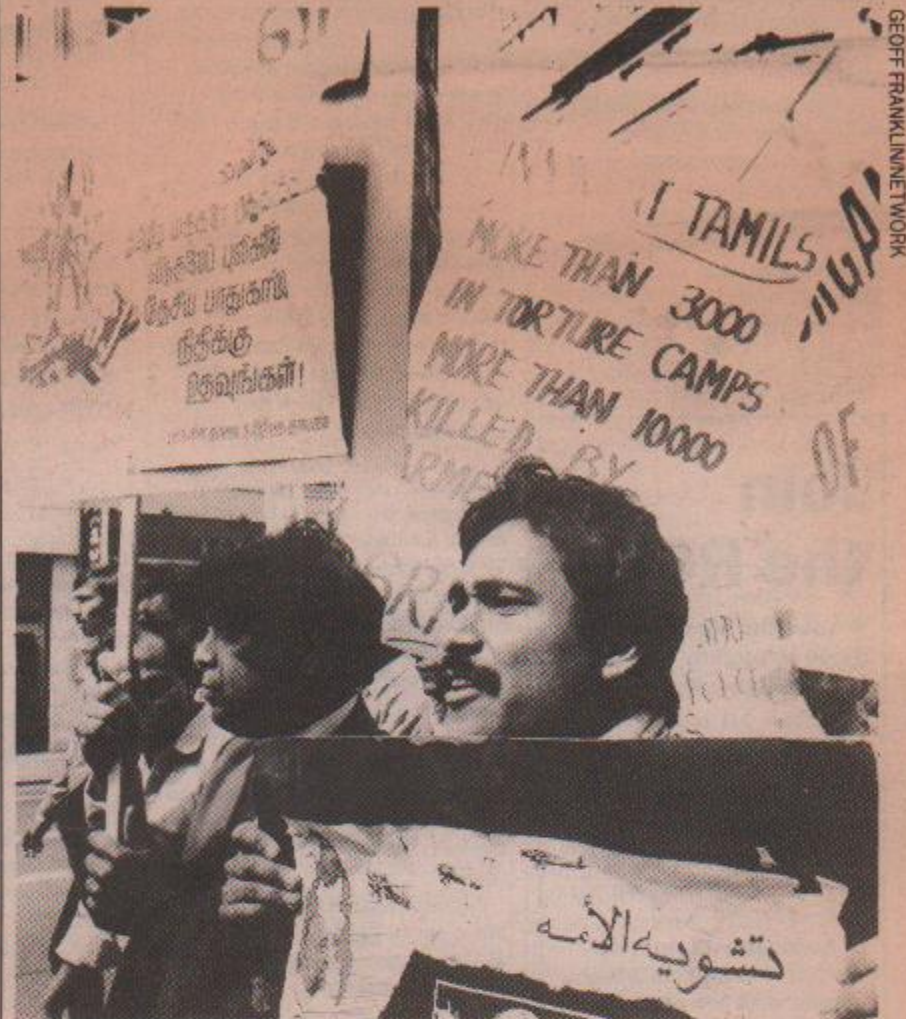
FRFI and the VMDC gave greetings to them and condemned the use of the prison ship as an institution of the racist immigration controls. The picket then took up the chant of the detainees 'We want freedom! No more deportations!' There were other messages from the Communist Party of Iran/Britain and the Tamil Refugee Action Group.

The picket was supported by other people threatened with deportation, amongst them a Peruvian, Carlos Calderon, whose appeal has just been turned down. There was a tremendous feeling of solidarity as the detainees and picketers chanted in unison 'We want freedom! We want freedom!' The chants grew louder when the detainees remained on the decks undeterred by a sudden heavy downpour of rain. The picket ended with a clear message to the detainees that this was only the first picket. There will be many more until the boat is removed from our shores and all the detainees released.

As the picket neared its end a car, licence number FEV 770M, drove straight at an FRFI comrade on the megaphone.

KEN HUGHES/JAN ALI/
MARK CAMPBELL

The police did nothing. In anger people kicked and banged the car. The police then pounced on a young black woman picketer. Another racist told us 'They should take the boat out and sink it, and drown them all.' Naturally neither the police nor the Home Office will act against the racists in the area who attacked us. The Home Office has chosen a suitable site for the prison hulk. The area is infested with racists. FRFI witnessed a cafe close its doors to some Iranian comrades but welcome in local residents. A local journalist informed us that residents in the area favoured the hulk because it 'will bring business to the town'. This disgusting, racist and selfish attitude has been echoed by National Union of Seamen General Secretary McCluskey who is reported to have said that jobs are a priority and the Earl Williams means 10 more jobs for his members. Unfortunately none of the NUS members who are refusing to work on the ferry were available for comment.



GEOFF FRANKLIN/NETWORK

TAMILS MARCH IN LONDON

Three thousand Tamils, men, women and children, marched through central London on Saturday 6 June, in solidarity with the Tamil national struggle and its vanguard the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

A representative of the Tigers told FRFI that the marchers were demonstrating 'To tell the world what the Sri Lankan government was doing... Fifteen thousand Tamils have been murdered since 1981... every bomb explosion in the south killing Sinhalese people, is filmed, blamed on the Tigers and broadcast around the world. The massacre of Tamils proceeds unseen. To carry out its genocide the Sri Lankan government is manipulating the world's media.' Saatchi and Saatchi, the Tory's election campaign agents, handle the Sri Lankan government's propaganda.

Placards on the march called for an end to the deployment of KMS Ltd by MI6, and carried pictures of the Tiger fighters and their leader, Prabhakaran. A message of solidarity was submitted on behalf of Viraj Mendis, and in exemplary fashion the organisers, the Tamil Eelam Support Committee, thanked Viraj, a Sinhalese, for his stand in defence of the Tamils' rights and his struggle against deportation.