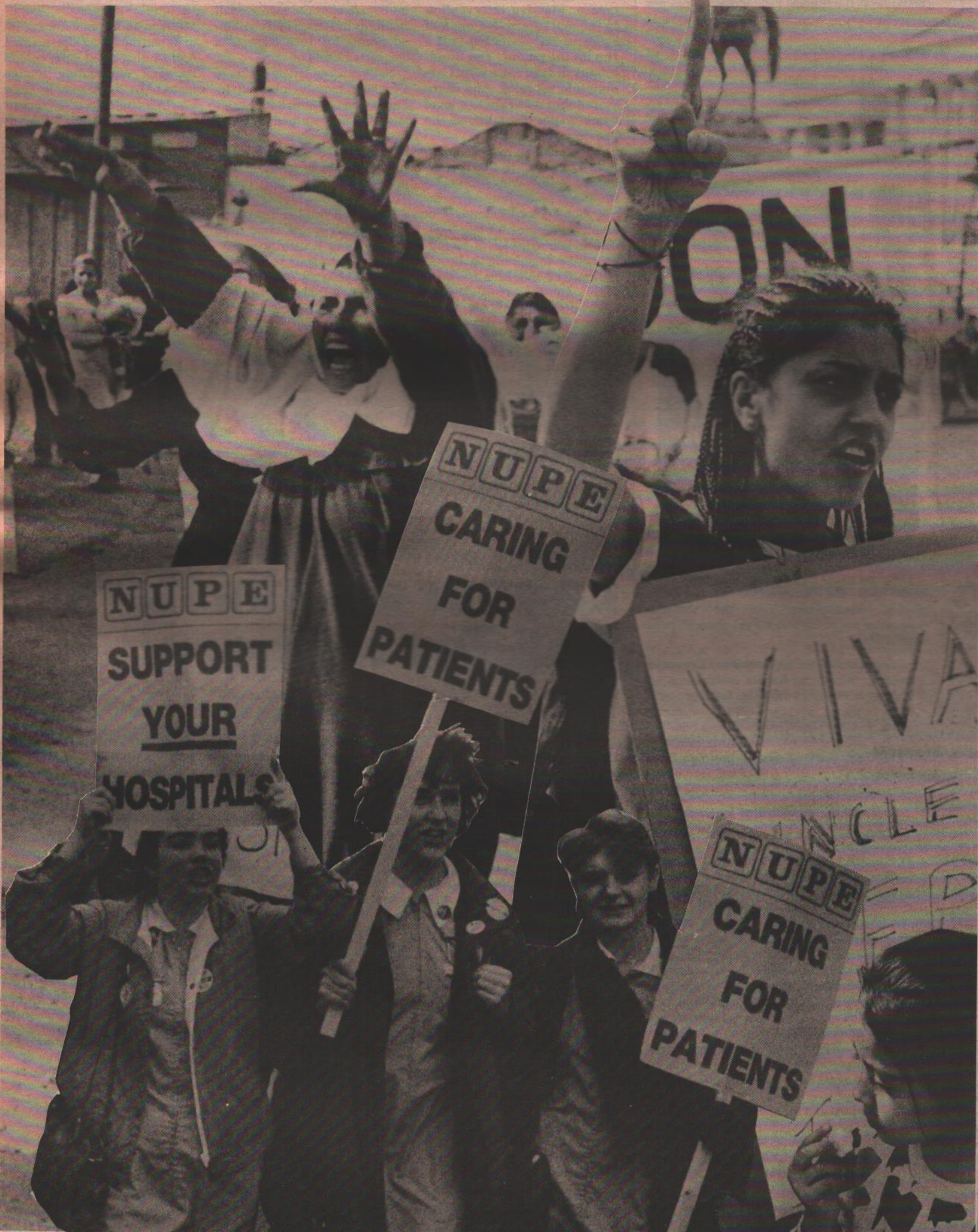


# FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Revolutionary Communist Group

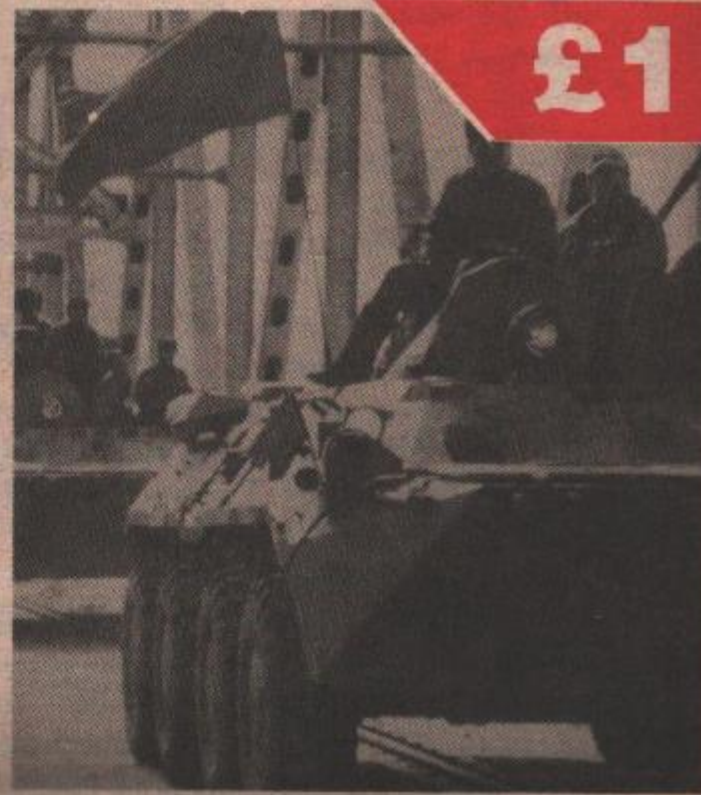
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**SOLIDARITY  
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Defend democracy  
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## Women's Day?

Women are under attack in Thatcher's Britain at home and at work. Cuts in the health service will hit women first • Women's Day? p8 • Free Health care sentenced to death p9

# In defence of Socialism

'Less than 75 years, after it officially began, the contest between capitalism and socialism is over: capitalism has won.' (*New Yorker* 23 January 1989)

'We face a tremendous historical challenge. Who will win? Who will prevail? The selfish, chaotic and inhumane capitalist regime? Or the more rational and humane socialist system? This is the challenge which now faces not just Cuban youth and the Cuban people, but the youth and people of all the socialist countries.' (Fidel Castro, *Granma* 29 January 1989)

The imperialists have never been so confident that they have won the ideological battle against communism. They are presenting socialism as a failure, as an economic system with no future, forced to accept capitalist economic mechanisms to survive.

Not only does socialism appear to be on the retreat on the economic front but politically and militarily as well. The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea and Cuban troops from Angola show how much the balance of forces has swung against the socialist countries. Revolutionary regimes like those in Nicaragua, Angola and Mozambique are also being forced to make more and more concessions to capitalist and imperialist forces in their efforts to survive.

In the socialist countries there is much talk of pluralism and multi-party systems. The Hungarian Communist Party is to legislate for independent political movements and there is talk of the 'Finlandisation' of Hungary. In Poland an important political role will soon be found for the reactionary *Solidarnosc*. There is a move to form a western-type social democratic party in the Soviet Union.

The most prominent communist leader to have practically and ideologically resisted this dangerous trend to embrace capitalist economic mechanisms and political values has been Fidel Castro. He is seen by the imperialists as a hardliner who is determined that Cuban socialism will not be 'tainted with "deviationist capitalist tendencies"'. (*Financial Times* 17 February 1989).

Castro reminds us of certain political realities of the world in which we live. The revolution daren't lower its guard and must be ready to fight as long as imperialism lasts and as long as its warmongering, threatening philosophy lasts. The imperialists will never give up the idea of liquidating socialism worldwide. While recognising the gains made by the Soviet Union towards peace and disarmament he warns that the imperialists will interpret peace in their own way.

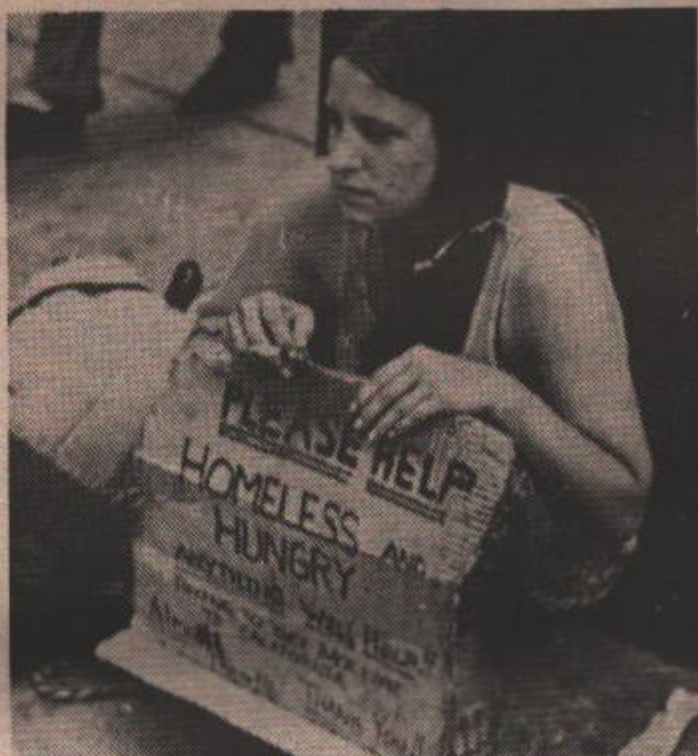
'... it's almost certain that the way that the empire conceives peace is peace among the powerful, peace with the Soviet Union and war with the small socialist, revolutionary, progressive countries or simply independent countries of the Third World; peace with the powerful countries and open or covert wars, dirty wars like in El Salvador or low intensity conflicts - as they call them - with other countries.' (*Granma* 18 December 1988)

Hundreds of thousands of people die in wars perpetuated by the imperialist countries and millions live in abject poverty because oppressed people are forced to defend themselves against counter-revolutionary forces sustained and armed by the United States and Britain. This is the reality of imperialism for most people in the world. As Castro says 'developed capitalism deserves the sad credit for having impoverished four billion people in the Third World' (*Granma* 12 February 1989). It kills 120,000 children under one year old every 72 hours - the same as the number of people killed by the atom bomb at Hiroshima in 1945.

Capitalism has always been, and always will be, a system that creates massive poverty for the majority in the midst of enormous wealth for the few. Even in the United States, the wealthiest country of the world, there are about two million homeless and some 30 million people living in poverty - and this is after a period of economic boom. 3.4 million men and women - 1.4 percent of the popula-

tion are locked away in federal, state or city prisons. New York, a city of 7.3m people, achieved a new record rate of 5 murders a day. One eighth of its population is on public assistance, 500,000 of them people under 18. In Britain nearly 16 million people live in poverty, up to 200,000 family households are either homeless or threatened with homelessness. Britain has the highest prison population per head in Europe and many basic democratic rights including those of free speech and assembly are fast disappearing. So much for capitalist mechanisms.

And what of capitalist democracy, the multi-party system and parliamentary democracy? Has it ever served anybody but the rich and powerful? Haven't social democratic parties played just as ruthless a role in defending the capitalist system, supporting imperialist barbarity and perpetuating racism as the other capitalist parties? Is it not clear that the imperialists want to see the emergence of such parties in the socialist countries as a vehicle for perpetuating their own counter-revolutionary ends?



Poverty in the USA - a capitalist mechanism

The aims of the imperialists are clear. They know that the introduction of capitalist market mechanisms into the socialist economies paves the way for the restoration of capitalism.

'... successful market socialism has never existed, which is hardly surprising. A market is not even feasible, let alone efficient without clearly defined property rights, the key requirement being exclusivity and transferability. But such property rights are, of course, the essential characteristic of capitalism.' (*Financial Times* 28 February 1989)

They are seeking the political forces to complete the process and restore capitalist property relations.

The socialist countries are faced with many problems of a political, economic and social character. Imperialism appears confident that it is winning the battle. But it is precisely at times like this that communists must raise the banner of socialism and defend it against imperialism's ideological offensive.

As Castro says we must not be discouraged. Even small countries are capable of taking on the empire and winning and he reminds us of Vietnam. The social and material successes of socialist Cuba blockaded by the United States for 30 years are even grudgingly acknowledged by the imperialists. Cuba's internationalist fighters in Angola have changed the balance of forces in Southern Africa. People in the oppressed nations and the socialist countries are well aware of the material benefits that socialism has brought about.

Castro has raised the banner of resistance, the true banner of socialism and Marxism-Leninism.

In Britain, while Thatcher and her supporters exude confidence in the face of a deepening economic crisis, the British left is in headlong retreat. However, the section of the working class experiencing poverty, racism and cuts in living standards is daily growing. The time will come when they will fight back. Communists must prepare for these times by raising the principles of Marxism-Leninism: the need to overthrow the capitalist system, socialist internationalism and the struggle against opportunism. The RCG is fighting to keep such principles alive.

# News

## Banks rake it in while Lawson trembles

DAVID REED

Lawson just about made it. The third worst balance of payments deficit ever recorded for January was not apparently bad enough to trigger off another interest rate increase. Massive intervention in the markets by the Bank of England just about held off a run on the pound. The Bundesbank did not raise West German interest rates. And share prices shot up again to a level some 2 per cent above the previous week.

The trade deficit rose to £2.1bn from £1.76bn in December. Record exports of £7.4bn, a rise of 7 per cent, fell even further behind record imports of £9.5bn, a rise of 9.5 per cent. The invisible surplus was estimated at £0.4bn giving an overall deficit of £1.7bn. Britain is presently running a balance of payments deficit of over £20bn

at an annual rate on the basis of January's figures. Lawson's room for manoeuvre in the budget is rapidly being narrowed down.

While high interest rates are reducing profits of industry and the incomes of homeowners, the banks are happily raking it in. The four clearing banks are back on course after the massive fall in profits in 1987. Their combined profits for 1988 came to a staggering £4,443m.

NatWest doubled its profits to £1,407m, closely followed by Barclays at £1,391m. Both Lloyds and Midland returned to profits this year after being the first clearing banks to register losses in 1987 due to massive bad debt provision against loans to the Third World. Lloyds made £952m and Midland £693m. Most of the profits came from the booming British economy. Barclays once again became the biggest clearing bank with assets of £105bn overtaking NatWest at £99bn.

	1988 (£m)	1987 (£m)
Barclays	1,391	369
NatWest	1,407	704
Lloyds	952	248
Midland	693	-505
	4,443	320

Midland added an extra £201m to its bad debt provision to bring it to £1.4bn, or 32.6 per cent of its total outstanding foreign loans of £4.2bn to mainly Third World countries with serious economic problems. Lloyds added nothing. Given recent developments in countries like Venezuela where British banks have an exposure of over £1bn even Midland's provision appears far too little. The shareholders are, however, also raking it in. Dividends were increased by 14.4 per cent (Midland), 15.3 per cent (Barclays), 18 per cent (NatWest) and 27 per cent (Lloyds). ■



The Tory Party - what next in store for the working class?

# Labour administers Poll Tax robbery

LORNA REID

130 people in the Central Region of Scotland, including Labour MP Dennis Canavan and Councillor Michael Connarty leader of Central Region District Council, have had their bank accounts arrested by Sheriff Officers for not paying the £50 fine for non-registration of the Poll Tax. An additional £16.01 fee has also been deducted.

No prior notice was issued. Pensioners, single parents and claimants are included in those who have had their money stolen in this way. All have been

told they could be fined an additional £200 for continued failure to register.

Labour controlled Central Regional Council has attempted to wash its hands of this daylight robbery and claims it was completely unaware that the bank accounts were being frozen. However, shortly before, the Regional Council had issued 206 letters containing warrant threats after discussion between councillors and senior officials.

John Maxton, Labour front bench spokesman on local government, said, 'It's very regrettable that the government is forcing local authorities into such actions'. Meanwhile Glasgow District Council has re-issued

application forms for housing benefit asking for each applicant's Poll Tax registration number. Those who have not registered will be denied their housing benefit.

It is 'very regrettable' indeed that Labour controlled councils are persecuting working class families for failure to register for the Poll Tax, a tax they cannot afford to pay. Central Regional Council cannot wash its hands of this affair. It is a direct consequence of the Labour Party's failure to mount effective resistance to the Poll Tax. Whilst Labour councils whine about remaining within the law, council thugs are openly robbing the working class of their money. ■

# 26 face death for 'common purpose'

SIMON CLARKE

A year ago in South Africa, 26 people were convicted for the murder of a municipal policeman in November 1985: all now face possible death sentences. 25 of them were convicted on the basis of common purpose - the infamous principle used in the case of the Sharpeville Six - for being present in the crowd when the policeman's house was stoned.

During the township unrest of 1985 hundreds of people attend-

ed a meeting in Paballelo township to discuss crippling rent rises. They were dispersed by the security forces with tear gas: as the crowd fled they were fired on by a local policeman, Lucas Sethwala, from inside his house, wounding a small boy. The crowd, incensed, started to stone his house. Sethwala fled, was caught by the crowd and killed.

The 26 defendants range widely in age, from 21 to 64, and include a nurse, a teacher and a councillor, as well as friends of the policeman killed. Only one

of them has been linked directly to the killing. The use of 'common purpose' to convict people who protest is yet another weapon used by the racist regime to perpetuate its barbarous system of repression. It is used, in effect, to criminalise political protest and protect the stooge councillors and policemen who do the work of the apartheid regime.

Pleas of mitigation for the defendants are now being heard. It is essential that progressive forces in this country campaign for justice for the Upington 26. ■

Extracts from some of the many messages received for the Memorial Meeting for Terry O'Halloran.

**Tony McNeill and others, Portlaoise gaol, Ireland**

'I hope this small note of sympathy for comrade Terry O'Halloran reaches you before your memorial meeting in the Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre on Thursday. Having recently heard of the death of Comrade Terry O'Halloran a number of comrades both here in Portlaoise and outside, suggested that someone lift a pen and send a few lines and extend our deepest sympathy at the sad loss of Comrade O'Halloran. Normally, we just try and let these things pass and hope that this great class fighter will be replaced soon, that things will improve again quickly. Not easy! A man of Terry's ability and revolutionary spirit is not easily found everyday. The interest and feeling of loss of a true friend and fellow socialist class fighter amongst my comrades and I has compelled me to say something about it.

First, I'd like to express our deepest sympathy to Terry's family, his friends and his comrades especially the RCG and FRFI. Even though we never met Terry personally, we recognised him as a genuine internationalist and a true friend of Irish freedom. I also regret that I never read his work, his articles etc far sooner. But I have heard plenty about him and so much of what I heard, I admired. So it is with great sadness to write this on his sudden death. I know my comrades and I had so much hope in him. To us he symbolised everything new in the communist organisation in Britain and its awakening from official communism. At a time when much of the British left found itself in crisis, Terry along with his comrades in the RCG were providing revolutionary leadership on many issues, particularly within the prisons. This work is considered by many on the left as beneath their 'style' of standing. Under Terry's guidance FRFI opened its columns to all anti-imperialist prisoners. Prisoners for the first time (no matter what their cause, political or whatever) were given a voice and through the columns of FRFI many prisoners were introduced to socialism. The class analysis of FRFI helped many to identify with what they read and also to declare themselves socialists. Many began to live in the realm of ideas, which heightened their awareness of the class fight

and became better human beings for it.

As a Marxist, Terry supported the fight for the total liberation and unification of Ireland under scientific socialism. He recognised early in his political life that Irish nationalism could be a progressive part of building a mass proletarian movement. Reading this month's FRFI (84) this is confirmed through Comrade Reed's appraisal of him. Comrade Reed says, amongst many things, that without Terry his book *Ireland: the key to the British revolution* could never have been written. By studying our struggle through participation he recognised the powerful force of the Irish national liberation movement and its positive role towards our strategic goal of working class power. While the cowards of the British left stood aside, he was one of the brave who made their choice and chose to support Irish liberation, because of its deep significance, because of its inevitability and necessity to world progress.

Terry will be remembered by those Irish political prisoners who read his articles in FRFI either under his own name or his 'nom-de-plume' Marlowe. But he will probably be best remembered for his tireless work amongst the PoWs particularly those who suffer most, the Irish PoWs in England.

I think without doubt we will hear plenty more about Terry O'Halloran. There will be much to be discovered of his unselfish work for socialism.

I will postpone comparing Terry with others; I could think of many notables from the Marxist tradition I could call upon. For his vision within the communist movement in Britain; his articulate abilities as a true proletarian journalist; his influence and the major role he played in building the RCG and the mass movement in Britain are among many of his fine qualities. Reading about him in FRFI this week it is interesting to note where Comrade O'Halloran was a few days before his death; standing on another picket outside Pentonville prison for Comrade Viraj Mendis. I cannot add any further to that comrades, but just Rest in Peace Comrade O'Halloran.

From your comrades in Portlaoise jail'

**David Reed, RCG**

'Future generations of revolutionaries will remember Terry because they will recognise that his writings and his political practice showed them the path they had to take to build a principled communist movement in Britain. Terry's contribution to developing the politics of the RCG was crucial... he helped rediscover a political tradition and political principles that had long been cast aside by the traditional left movement in Britain... Terry pointed out that Marx and Engels after deeper study of the Irish question had fundamentally altered their position on the relationship of the British working class to the Irish liberation movement. Terry cited Marx: "The English working class will never accomplish anything before it has got rid of Ireland. The lever must be applied in Ireland".'

Terry recognised the revolutionary implications of this point. He wrote: "The essence of imperialism is the division between the oppressed and oppressor nations. The fight against national

oppression is, therefore, the starting point of the revolutionary struggle today."

The rediscovery of this position in Britain was almost a revolution in political thought analogous to the effect that Copernicus must have had on scientific opinion in his day... That the British working class is no longer at the centre of the revolutionary struggle worldwide is a proposition still resisted by nearly all organisations on the British left.

Terry knew from the Irish struggle how imperialism had corrupted whole layers of the British working class... He argued that the future communist movement had to be built among the less privileged layers of the working class. The RCG is alone amongst socialist organisations in arguing for the need to build a movement based on the more oppressed sections of the working class. Terry played a central role in developing this political standpoint.

Viva Terry O'Halloran  
Long Live Communism'

**Bernie Corbett, Vice Chair NUJ Freelance Branch**

'We knew that we had to share Terry... We know now that if Terry wasn't at the NUJ meeting it was because he was somewhere more important, whether his political work, his prison work, his campaigning for justice in so many different fields... But it's still true to say that he came along and did more in the NUJ than probably 95 per cent of its membership even with all the other commitments he had. What a difference Terry made to the NUJ. A lot

of people, especially those who disagreed with his politics, found it quite difficult to understand how somebody whom they might want to categorise as some kind of extremist, was so reasonable and persuasive when they met him.

Terry was a natural trade unionist. He didn't just come along, as some people do, seeking a vehicle for some special area, to peddle a line on Ireland, although he did influence the policy of the NUJ towards the Irish question.'

**David and Norma Kitson, Zimbabwe**

'His fight for justice - encompassing as it did the oppressed everywhere - included not only Nelson Mandela, Zeph Mothopeng, Bobby Sands and his Irish comrades, but also David Kitson and it was through his efforts that the Justice for Kitson Campaign was given an extra dimension both in the press and at Labour Party and TUC Conferences.

It is for his earnest and dedicated commitment to the struggle that Comrade Terry O'Halloran will always be remembered.'

**Mary and Patrick McLaughlin, North of Ireland**

'He did so much, wrote to and helped PoWs. His memory will live on. And people should keep his memory alive always by the work that he did. His spirit will live on in the heart of the revolution.'

**John Bowden HM Prison, Winchester**

'At the moment it's still extremely difficult for me to absorb and take in what has happened, and contemplating on the immeasurable loss that his death represents as far as prisoners especially are concerned is very painful.'

**Liz Palm, Federal Republic of Germany**

'I am certain that his death is a great loss to the communist movement but the work must continue in the spirit and example laid down for us all by Terry.'

**Joan Lewis and Ted Talbot, Nottingham**

'With Terry's death an important fighter for the revolutionary position has been lost. Nothing else need be said.'

**Dave Leadbetter, Inquest**

'Terry was on our committee for quite a while and we always looked forward to those meetings. We miss him. Viva Terry O'Halloran.'

**City of London Anti-Apartheid Group**

'Terry did great work in City Group as press officer... At our last AGM Terry moved a motion condemning the government's ban on Sinn Fein and he ended his speech "We are all Sinn Fein" and that was the chant on the picket that night... We miss you, Terry.'

**Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign**

'The esteem in which he was held was shown on the 4 February national demonstration when the rally of 3,000 stood in silence as the Republican Band Alliance played the *Soldiers' Song* in Terry's honour.'

**THE TERRY O'HALLORAN MEMORIAL FUND**

To commemorate Terry's life and his political work, we have established this Fund. Terry played a key role in fighting for the rights of all prisoners. He wrote and spoke about their struggle and corresponded with prisoners. For several years he edited FRFI's Prisoners Fightback page.

The Terry O'Halloran Memorial Fund will be used exclusively to provide books and publications for prisoners at their request.

Each book sent will have a bookplate with the name of the Fund on it.

The Fund will have many requests from prisoners and will need to be large if it is to meet their needs. After just one week, the Fund had raised £400.

All donations to the Fund will be gratefully received.

Cheques/POs should be made payable to The Terry O'Halloran Memorial Fund and sent to: The Terry O'Halloran Memorial Fund, c/o BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.



**TERRY O'HALLORAN**

On 16 February the Revolutionary Communist Group held a memorial meeting for Terry O'Halloran, who died suddenly on 23 January 1989. It was a mark of the respect and affection in which Terry was held that over 150 people came to the meeting to pay tribute to Terry's work and life; a life that, though short, was dedicated to the task of building a communist movement in Britain.

The RCG organised the Memorial to celebrate Terry's life and his contribution. Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre was decorated with masses of daffodils, photographs of Terry's political life and a banner proclaiming *Long Live Terry O'Halloran*. And the point was repeatedly made throughout the meeting that Terry, having made a major contribution to the forging of a communist movement in the real tradition of Marx and Lenin, would live on through that movement and its achievements.

speaking for the RCG, was scathing in his attack on a Communist Party that had failed to support the Irish people. From an Irish working class background himself, he was passionate in his support of the Irish struggle and of the need to build a communist movement in Britain. The test of that movement would be whether it supported the Irish liberation struggle. In hearing Terry's voice in that debate we heard the voice of genuine communism, which stands against imperialism and with the oppressed, contrasted with the



Terry on an ISM platform with Elizabeth Hill, mother of Paul Hill, one of the framed Guildford Four

Terry had spent all his adult life working to build the Revolutionary Communist Group, as David Reed from the RCG pointed out. He helped to forge its position on the Irish struggle, on prisoners' rights and had written tirelessly on these issues. As the meeting heard comrades recounting episodes from Terry's political life and reading extracts from his writings, it was clear that we were also listening to the story of the RCG, its standpoint and its struggles.

Perhaps this point came out most clearly when part of the recording of a debate on the Irish question between the CPGB and the RCG was played. The debate took place in 1981 just after the end of the hunger strike in which the British government murdered ten Irish PoWs. Terry,

tired voice of a CPGB which had abandoned communism.

It was a testament to Terry's wide-ranging work that many organisations and individuals came to the meeting to speak or sent messages. We heard the NUJ's Bernie Corbett pay full tribute to Terry's work as a trade unionist defending his members and as a principled fighter for his political standpoint in the union. Had he lived, Terry would probably have soon won a place on the NUJ National Executive. Prisoners from Ireland and Britain sent messages including a moving tribute from the Republican prisoners in Portlaoise. Dave Leadbetter of Inquest spoke of Terry's work in that organisation and in the NCCL.

City of London Anti-Apart-



Terry on an ISM march in support of Irish PoWs in English gaols

heid Group paid tribute to his work as their press officer and a tribute from Norma and David Kitson in Zimbabwe was read out. The VMDC spoke of Terry's skills in editing their pamphlet and other material. The WRP *Workers Press* also spoke of their recognition of Terry's contribution to the communist struggle. The Scottish Republican Socialist Party praised Terry's non-sectarianism.

Politics was the core of the meeting because it was the core of Terry's life. But he was a many-sided individual. Many speakers talked of his wit and humour and of his love of literature. His great love was Dickens and a passage from Dickens' *Dombey and Son* was read brilliantly by Richard Roques and greeted with laughter and appreciation by the audience. Others read poems and told anecdotes such as Gerald Denver's story of getting arrested with Terry seconds after some less-than-revolutionary onlookers had claimed that only in Britain would revolutionaries be allowed to speak about Ireland on the streets.

It was an evening full of deep emotion for Terry's family, comrades and friends. After Lorna Reid ended the meeting with a reading from Connolly, everyone rose and sang the *Internationale*. The communist movement is far from fighting its 'last fight', in the words of the song. We have lost a comrade whose talents and experience cannot be replaced. Our tribute to him will be to carry on the struggle.

Maxine Williams

## What freedom for Namibia?

ANDY HIGGINBOTTOM

Estate agents in Windhoek report booming business as Foreign Offices around the world search for premises. Attention is focussed on Namibia's capital following the South African/Angolan/Cuban agreement. Elections to a Constituent Assembly will take place on 1 November leading to political independence. Imperialism is moving rapidly to minimise the effect on its own interests.

United Nations Resolution 435 provides the framework. Its shortcomings are becoming clear. On 1 April all control will pass to the South African-appointed Administrator General until 1 November. Apartheid's illegal occupation will be granted legal status in the form of direct colonial rule.

Of Pretoria's 50,000 troops, 1,500 are supposed to remain. But South Africa will regroup in its base in Walvis Bay. Locally recruited forces - the SWATF, the notorious Koevoet counter insurgency unit and 10,000 South African controlled police - will not be required to withdraw or disband. In fact, 'primary responsibility for maintaining law and order in Namibia during the transition period shall rest with the existing police forces'.

There are up to 70,000 refugees in Angola and Zambia, another 30,000 in Botswana. Control of their return and

registration as voters is a critical issue. South Africa has already infiltrated hundreds of Unita counter-revolutionaries to pose as Namibian voters.

Under Resolution 435 the UN is meant to ensure free and fair elections. Yet the UN Security Council has accepted the US proposal to cut the UNTAG supervisory forces from 7,500 to 5,500. This cut will save the Council's permanent members £180 million. Britain's contribution of 25 million is but a fraction of the annual profits of companies like Rio Tinto Zinc (uranium) and Consolidated Goldfields (copper) that have robbed Namibia's wealth. Mindful of South African dirty tricks interfering in the elections the Non-Aligned Movement of Third World countries vigorously opposed the UNTAG reductions. They were overruled. India has a population fifteen times greater than Britain's but it has less say at the UN. Formally equal, but with real power in the hands of a privileged few, is the type of democracy imperialism aims to bestow on the future Namibia.

The Namibian masses, and their liberation movements SWAPO and SWANU, will have a lot to say about that in the coming months. Imperialism is keeping its antennae alert. So too must the anti-apartheid forces in readiness for solidarity and assistance to the Namibian working class as they enter this crucial period. ■

## Winnie Mandela targeted

CAROL BRICKLEY

One of the most striking points about the rumours surrounding Mrs Winnie Mandela and the 'Mandela Football Team' is the way the British press has gleefully reported the affair. *The Guardian* announced, proudly, that it was the first British newspaper to break the 'news'. Whilst all news from South Africa is produced under draconian censorship laws (most media have ceased to remind us of this), oddly enough there has been no restriction on reporting the 'Mandela affair'.

No television pictures from the townships have been seen on British television for nearly two years, but when the police raided Winnie Mandela's house it was surrounded by journalists and TV cameras, and lit up like a stage set.

Hostility in Soweto to the Mandela Football Team has been growing for the last few months, and members of the group now stand accused of the murder of a 14-year-old ex-detainee, Stompie Mokhetsi.

In South Africa, a joint statement was issued by leaders of the UDF and COSATU, under the name of the Mass Democratic Movement, condemning Mrs Winnie Mandela and the Football Team who have served as her bodyguards. The statement called for the 'shunning' of Mrs Mandela and that she revert to using her maiden name in order to distance herself from Nelson Mandela.

Mrs Winnie Mandela states

that she has not been involved in these events and that once again the regime is trying to frame her. Her record of militancy and her name make her a clear target for the regime.

The Soweto community is very angry at the use of violence within the community and the regime is certainly using the events to undermine the anti-apartheid struggle. At least one of the members of the Football Team has been implicated as a police informer and may well have instigated these events.

In Britain the right-wing and South African agents have been organised to maximise the affair. On 23 February a group of agents distributed a bogus leaflet in central London purporting to come from City of London Anti-Apartheid Group. The leaflet called on the ANC to discipline Winnie Mandela and the football team. Further, a few days later, *FRFI* received two leaflets in the post which featured pictures of Winnie Mandela and Myra Hindley, 'the Moors Murderer'.

It is quite clear that whatever the truth about the death of Stompie Mokhetsi, the hand of the apartheid regime is evident. They have been the only ones to benefit from the undermining of Mrs Mandela, and thereby of Nelson Mandela and the anti-apartheid struggle.

In Britain, our task is to continue to give solidarity to all in South Africa in their fight against apartheid, including the Mandela family, and to organise to prevent the racists, whether British or South African, from undermining the struggle. ■

# Apartheid's detainees hit back

CAROL BRICKLEY

On 23 January twenty detainees in Diepkloof prison, Johannesburg began a hunger strike against their detention without trial. The spark had been lit. By the first week in February a further 171 detainees in Diepkloof had joined the strike, and the protest was spreading to other prisons in Port Elizabeth, Durban, Witbank and Leeuhoef. By 15 February 300 detainees were on hunger strike, with some already admitted to hospital. The detainees were demanding unconditional release. The regime's powers under the State of Emergency allow detainees to be kept in prison or police stations indefinitely with no access to family, friends or lawyers and with virtually no rights. Many of the detainees have been incarcerated for more than two years with no prospect of release or trial, and no reason given for their detention. The regime also used Emergency powers to prevent any reporting of the plight of the detainees, and any action to support them. Faced with this barbarity, the detainees had no choice but to launch a hunger strike, with the prospect of death. They had nothing to lose.

This is the 32nd known hunger strike to take place since 12 June 1986 when the State of Emergency began. The difference this time was that the protest rapidly spread to prisons throughout South Africa, reflecting the desperation of detainees throughout the country.

A statement issued by the Diepkloof strikers stated:

'The regime . . . closed up whatever existing legal channel there was to secure our release . . . campaigns and calls for the release of detainees were also declared illegal . . . We insist that we have committed no crime . . . We shall go on with our hunger strike for as long as it takes to secure our release, whatever the consequences.

'We are detainees from all walks of life: workers, students, youth, teachers, trade unionists, Christians, parents, etc. Amongst us there are breadwinners and children under age . . . We also demand the release of all other detainees held under the State of Emergency.'

Lawyers, civil rights activists and church leaders began sympathy fasts when Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok declared that he would not be blackmailed into releasing detainees and banned all demonstrations and sympathy meetings in support of the hunger strikers. As the number of detainees swelled, however, the regime was forced to meet legal representatives.

Archbishop Tutu and Dr Allan Boesak also started sympathy fasts and the church became prominent in negotiating with the regime. On 17 February Vlok announced that provided the hunger strike ended 'a substantial number' of detainees would be released within the next two weeks. Im-

mediately the church leaders called for an end to the hunger strikes, and themselves ceased their fasts. Many of the detainees suspended the hunger strike, but pledged to resume fasting if their demands were not met.

British journalists have drawn the connection between this hunger strike and the hunger strike of Irish prisoners in the H-Blocks in 1981. The Irish hunger strikers, although fewer in number conducted their own negotiations with the British government. But the British government was able to allow ten to die because solidarity in Britain remained at an appallingly low level, and support in the north of Ireland could be confined. In South Africa the situation is very different. Despite the draconian powers of the regime, the detainees would not be allowed to die in silence.

Nevertheless, it is yet to be seen if the regime will honour its pledge to release 'a substantial number'. As we go to press 118 detainees have been released, but 99% of them have had severe restrictions placed on them, forcing them to report to police stations twice daily and effectively banning them from any political activity. Meanwhile, despite censorship which is preventing any news about detainees, it is known that further hunger strikes have been started.

While even one detainee remains incarcerated, it is vital that the detainees are not forgotten and that protests against their plight continue. ■



Hunger strikers under guard at a Johannesburg hospital

HOPPER/OTO

# Free speech and a free society?

VIRMAN MAN

It was not until four months after the publication of *The Satanic Verses* that Ayatollah Khomeini issued his 'death sentence' against Salman Rushdie. With this pronouncement attention was instantly diverted from an economy shattered by eight years of war; the ignominious defeat by Iraq; and the thousands of political opponents imprisoned, tortured or executed.

Muslims internationally had been demonstrating and burning copies of the book well before Khomeini chose the moment to reassert his loosening grip on the political situation in Iran. His virulent attack on *The Satanic Verses* had less to do with religion than with the power struggle between various factions in the Iranian government.

Whilst Salman Rushdie took refuge under police guard, Tories and the right-wing press called for the deportation of Muslims, referring to them as fanatics, uncivilised and backward. The gutter press demanded tighter security - for which read 'targeting black people' - at airports in anticipation of numerous 'death squads' entering Britain and suggested that Iranian students in British universities had already formed a hit squad. Salman Rushdie was, all of a sudden, a true Brit, to be

defended against hysterical murderers.

Thatcher kept silent until 21 February, when she declared, 'Freedom of speech and expression is a fundamental part of a free society'. Douglas Hurd, with exquisite irony, told Muslims at Birmingham's Central Mosque not to 'urge Govern-

ment to take powers for censorship and suppression which, once they exist, can be misused - particularly against the views of minorities'. But the truth is that Thatcher's Britain is neither free, democratic nor tolerant.



Khomeini condemned Rushdie to die; but who are the real enemies of free speech?

ment to take powers for censorship and suppression which, once they exist, can be misused - particularly against the views of minorities'. But the truth is that Thatcher's Britain is neither free, democratic nor tolerant.

The Rushdie affair has thrust a

strange and unlikely role upon the Thatcher government - censors defending free speech! The first instincts of Empire twitched into life against 'Muslim fanatics' threatening to kill a Brit. But then another set of instincts awoke. After all, Rushdie isn't white and has attacked Britain as racist. Moreover the inci-

dent threatens to deny Britain the lucrative markets it sees in Iran. Caught in this dilemma Thatcher and Howe rapidly began to distance themselves from Rushdie who, not surprisingly, now fears that he will be 'dumped'.

The recent record of Thatcher

and Co on free speech includes the banning of Sinn Fein from the airwaves. Their human rights record includes sending scores of asylum-seekers back to death in Iran. Is it any surprise that they cannot even defend the rights of one prominent and wealthy author? Nor can the opportunist Labour MPs like Max Madden who, with his large Asian constituency in mind, has absurdly lobbied to have the blasphemy laws either extended or abolished altogether - very helpful. Madden has also called on Rushdie to cancel the next edition of the book. As usual it's votes before principle for the British Labour Party.

What, then, are the principles at stake? Opposition to censorship of literature on religious grounds; opposition to anyone using this episode to whip up racism; and opposition to the archaic and reactionary blasphemy laws - no religion has the right to force others to bend to its views.

The real threat to free speech in Britain comes not from Ayatollah Khomeini. It comes from the Thatcher government. To defend free speech in Britain today means more than defending Salman Rushdie. It requires that the attack is met where it has been most concentrated - on the Irish people. It would be a big step forward if all those defending Salman Rushdie also began actively to fight the Sinn Fein media ban. ■

# Afghanistan – defend democracy

EDDIE ABRAHAMS

The withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, which was completed on 15 February, represents a serious setback for the country's democratic and progressive forces. It has substantially reduced the ability of the PDPA (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) to resist the counter-revolutionary Mojahedin.

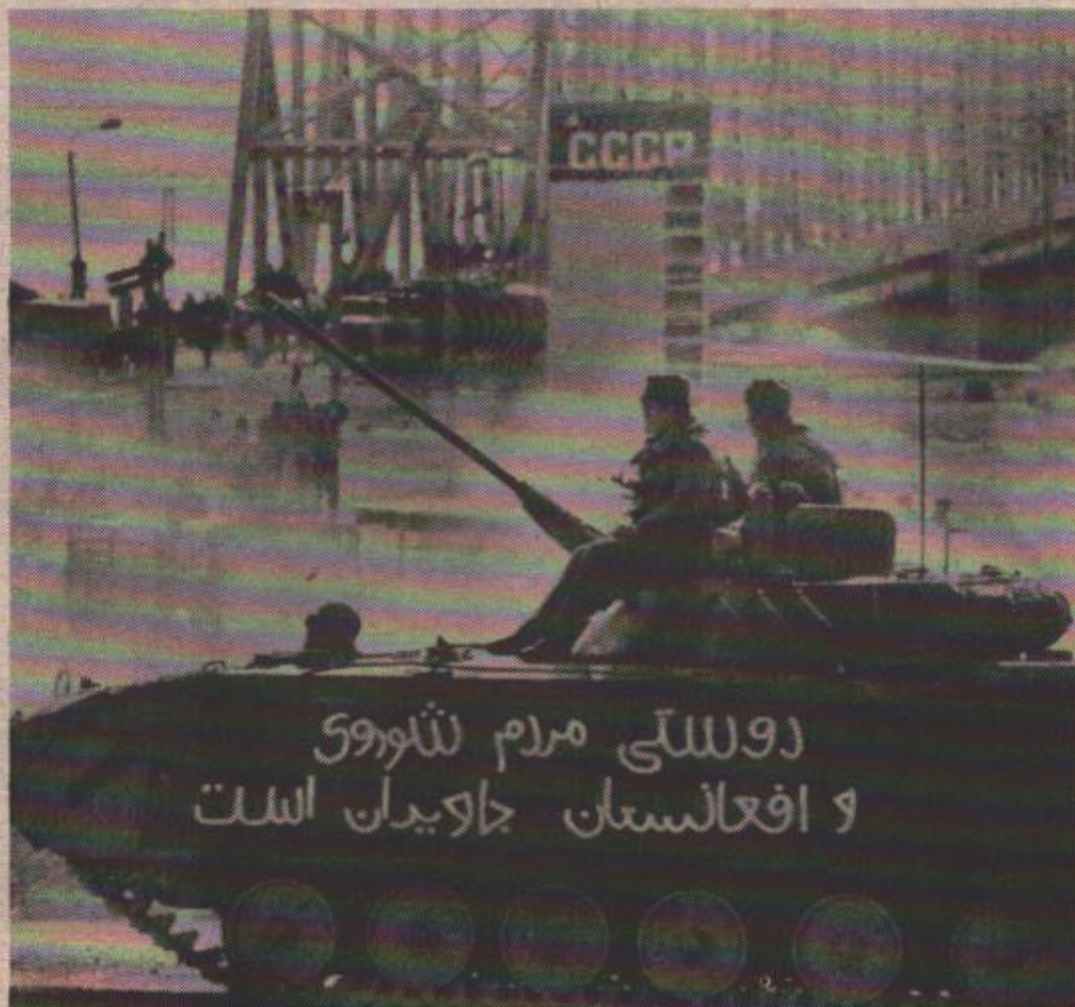
The imperialists are gloating. They are predicting and, indeed, working to bring about the collapse of President Najibullah's government. As Soviet troops withdrew British and US imperialists, hoping to whip up popular opposition to the government, prevented desperately needed UN food aid reaching Kabul. In breach of the Geneva agreements President Bush has just advanced the Mojahedin another \$200m to continue its reactionary war against the Afghan government.

Nevertheless, President Najibullah has declared the PDPA's determination to resist. So far the Mojahedin, split into a dozen factions, have failed to capture any of the country's four main cities – Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar and Herat. Their victory is by no means inevitable.

Let there be no mistake: if the PDPA does fall and if power passes into the hands of any combination of Mojahedin factions, it will mark a major defeat for communism, the working class and the democratic movement.

## Revolution . . .

When the PDPA came to power in the April 1978 revolution, Afghanistan was desperately poor with a per capita income of \$157 per annum. Ninety per cent of the population lived in the country where the land was owned by a tiny number of feudal landlords. The people were plagued by poverty, disease and hunger.



Soviet tanks leave Afghanistan

The new revolutionary government enacted a major land reform programme. It confiscated 1.5 million acres for distribution among the poor and landless peasants and cancelled the staggering peasant debt of 31 billion afghanis (50.6 afghanis = \$1). It launched major water reform, literacy and health care programmes. It also gave equal rights to women, a measure detested by the counter-revolutionary and fundamentalist Mojahedin. And for the first time in history, trade unions were legalised.

However, a series of ultra-left mistakes by the PDPA and mounting counter-revolutionary terrorist operations put the revolution in serious danger. In December 1979, Soviet troops entered Afghanistan to help defend the social and democratic achievements of the Afghan revolution. . . . Counter-Revolution

Even before the Soviet military presence, the Reagan administration, assisted by Thatcher, began nurturing and developing the Mojahedin – bloodthirsty, anti-communist killers. They are intent on restoring the power and wealth of the rich and privileged landlords, capitalists and their hangers on. The biggest recipients of CIA funds – over \$2 billion in 10 years – they have been armed with the most sophisticated weapons including British Blowpipe and US Stinger missiles.

After their 1975 defeat in Indochina, the imperialists were not willing to see the consolidation of yet another revolutionary state. They used the Mojahedin to terrorise the population and destroy their achievements. Between 1981 and 1984 they burnt 30 hospitals and 100 health clinics to the ground. From 1981 to 1985 they destroyed 1,864 schools. Attacks on the country's irrigation system, its agricultural and industrial projects caused damage worth more than 40 billion afghanis.

This war has left the country devastated with its economy in tatters, 1 million dead and 5 million refugees. Reagan, Thatcher and Bush didn't care about these consequences. Their aim was to 'teach the Soviets a lesson'.

... and friends of counter-revolution

Given these facts, it is sickening to see some 'socialists' welcoming the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The SWP said that 'All socialists should welcome it' and incredibly added that 'Russia's defeat' is a 'boost for our side'. Whose side, exactly, is the SWP on?

In the class struggle there are only two sides – the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary. At a time when the democratic PDPA needs all the solidarity and support it can get, the SWP is actually making a counter-revolutionary alliance with Thatcher, Bush and the Mojahedin. 'Welcoming' the Soviet withdrawal is tantamount to urging on the Mojahedin to seize power. If they come to power there will be a massacre of communists and democrats. Women will be forced back into a condition of slavery. The Mojahedin will destroy everything dear to socialists: the land reform, trade unions, women's rights and all other democratic achievements of the Afghan revolution.

For its part, the RCG can have nothing to do with the SWP style of 'socialism'. This 'socialism' expresses not the interests of the oppressed British working class, but that of the petit bourgeoisie and labour aristocracy which at every critical turn in the class struggle openly displays its opposition to the real socialist and democratic movement.

The RCG calls on all socialists and democrats to extend support and solidarity to the Afghan people and the PDPA in the coming period. ■

## PARAGUAY

# Dictator overthrown

TREVOR RAYNE

Paraguay's General Stroessner was overthrown in a military coup on 3 February. Stroessner had ruled with torture and fear since 1954.

The *Times* (4 February 1989) found some merit in the man: 'Stroessner has brought benefits to his country . . . he introduced a long period of stability which has allowed the economy to grow'. While Paraguay's national product has shrunk since 1982, its foreign debt has doubled to \$2 billion.

Perhaps the *Times* is referring to the Scotch whisky sales that amount to three quarters of Britain's exports to the country, Paraguay, with a population of 4 million people whose annual average per capita income is £500, is one of the world's biggest importers of whisky and perfume, or maybe it is referring to the cocaine trade; chemicals used in processing coca base into cocaine are another of Paraguay's major imports.

Either way, Stroessner did bring 'benefit' to Auschwitz's 'Angel of Death' Josef Mengele to the 'Butcher of Lyons' Klaus Barbie; to François Chappelle head of the 'French Connection'; to heroin kingpin August Ricord; to Chiang Kai Shek's drug smuggling officers; to Anastasio Somoza; and so on, all of whom sheltered in Stroessner's Paraguay and share something of Rupert Murdoch's sense of social responsibility. ■ (FRFI will carry a feature on Paraguay in its next issue)

## YUGOSLAVIA

# Albanian nationalism or Serbian reaction

DALE EVANS

In the Yugoslav province of Kosovo, over 30 local leaders, including members of the Communist Party (Yugoslav League of Communists – LYC) have been arrested. They have been accused of fomenting Albanian nationalism in the province.

Yugoslavia is a socialist federation of six republics and two autonomous provinces attached to Serbia, the largest republic. These provinces – Kosovo and Vojvodina – were granted autonomy in 1974 when the late President Tito introduced a constitution to limit Serbian power.

1988 saw the resurgence of Serbian nationalism; demonstrations of 3½ million demanding an end to autonomy for Kosovo and Vojvodina. Under political pressure, the province's leaders were forced to resign. However in Kosovo the masses fought back against Serbian chauvinism.

Kosovo has a population of 1.9 million, of which 1.7 million are

Albanians. Serbian chauvinists maintain that Albanians are, by means of terrorism, deliberately driving out Kosovo's Serbian population.

Serbian officials replaced Kosovo's Albanian leaders who had been forced to resign. This led to demonstrations of 100,000 people. The LYC quickly clamped down by banning all protests. Then in February, 1500 local miners staged a sit-in calling for the resignation of the Serbian stooges. The miners were supported by a general strike. When the Serbian stooges were forced to resign, LYC leader Slobadan Milosevic rallied half a million Serb nationalists to demonstrate in their support.

Since then thousands of troops have moved into Kosovo, and many people have been arrested, falsely accused of being agents of Albania and of organising nationalist groups against 'socialist Yugoslavia'. In reality, the reactionary force is that of Serbian nationalism which denies the people of Kosovo the right to be a republic within the Yugoslav federation. ■

# Venezuelan poor turn the tables

TREVOR RAYNE

As the Finance Minister sat down to lunch with the IMF's managing director in Washington on 27 February, the hungry and poor of Venezuela stormed out of their shanty towns and began emptying the food stores and supermarkets. The Finance Minister signed a 'letter of intent' bringing Venezuela \$4.3 billion credits through to 1991; the poor decided they were not going to pay the price.

Venezuela is known in Latin America for having the highest per capita income in the region, for political stability and democracy. Oil money, \$19 billion in 1981, was the basis of that stability. In 1988 it dwindled to \$8.4 billion, and the foreign debt of \$33 billion (\$1 billion of which is owed to British banks) consumed 40 per cent of this in repayments. Result: food shortages and a 38 per cent drop in wages over the last five years, plus a demand for more debt repayments.



Friends carry the bodies of two men killed in the Caracas riots

The protests were against President Perez's intended IMF plan: 90 per cent petrol price increase, 30 per cent on transport fares, removals of food subsidies and a currency devaluation which would worsen the current 35 per cent inflation.

The mass rising swept across

17 cities. The fighting came not from the organised working class, linked with the ruling Democratic Action party, but from 'the teeming masses driven from the countryside' (*The Economist*): first and second generation urban working classes, crammed into the shanty towns

that sprawl every major Latin American city – a dangerous class! Perez ordered a curfew, suspended the right to free speech and assembly, and sanctioned the military to detain anyone on sight. Eight cities were placed under military rule. In the shanty towns police and army shot to kill. Sniper fire was returned. After three days of rising hundreds were reported dead, and thousands wounded. Shops, banks, schools and universities were shut. Perez was forced to announce a freeze on basic goods and transport prices and an across-the-board wage increase. Communist and socialist offices were raided, organisers taken away.

3 March saw 'wild confusion' reigning in the main financial centres after Perez announced an end to debt repayment. Hours later this was denied as President Bush promised over \$600 million to meet imminent payments. Whatever else was on the menu at the Washington lunch Venezuela's masses were not: they sent the signal – overturn the tables. ■

## JAMAICA

# Manley aims to please

GARY ROSE

Michael Manley (People's National Party) who was Prime Minister of Jamaica from 1972-80 was re-elected in a landslide victory over his rival Edward Seaga (Jamaica Labour Party).

Manley was defeated by Seaga in 1980 as Reagan was sweeping to power in the United States – it was no coincidence. Manley had expressed sympathies with Cuba and anti-imperialism.

It was the US which, in 1980, halted loans to the ailing Jamaican Government. The IMF made austerity measures a condition for further loans.

The imperialist intervention was not limited to economic pressures. The CIA, with George Bush at its head, launched a \$10 million destabilisation campaign against Jamaica, smuggling

in weapons and agents, in alliance with Seaga's JLP. Seaga earned the popular nickname of 'CIAga'.

The imperialist alliance then set about terrorising the poorest sections of the community (900 people were killed) and left-wing activists. Manley did nothing in response. Seaga was ushered into office with the direct backing of the US, as the tool for US policies in the region.

The economy is now devastated, only Haiti and the Dominican Republic are worse off in the region. There is a \$4 billion foreign debt, which is accounting for almost half of all export earnings. Unemployment has risen sharply and the poor are being hit hardest.

This time, Manley went out of his way to reassure the US that he would be their ally: no messing around with Cuba this time, was his message. ■

## Wandsworth POA dispute servicing brutality

NICKI JAMESON

For 10 days from 30 January Wandsworth prison was run by police while the Prison Officers Association were locked out after refusing to implement 'Fresh Start', the government's new pay and working hours structure. It was the first time since 1919 that the police have staffed a jail. During the 10 days 19 incidents of 'violence' were reported.

The dispute begs a number of important questions:-

1. Can Prison Officers and prisoners share a common interest in fighting the Governors and Home Office?
2. Should progressive trade unionists defend the POA in their fight for 'pay and conditions'?

The liberal bourgeois press has covered the dispute as a straightforward trade union issue - the POs are doing a difficult job under pressure; prisoners are dangerous; desperate and special skills are needed to 'control' them.

Without linking it to Thatcher's overall onslaught on the working-class, *The Guardian* and *The Independent* articles pay lip service to the issues of overcrowding, Victorian conditions and a constantly escalating prison population.

The left has been uncharacteristically silent. Only Militant has dared to come out with a position of support for the POA consistent with their obsession that the 'organised working-class' (by which they mean the official Labour and trade union movement) are the only ones capable of political struggle and should be supported.

Predictably Militant latch on to banners hung out on the first day of the dispute which read, 'Support the Screws. Old Bill Out.' They do not mention other signs which appeared later proclaiming, 'Disband the POA.' When I spoke to visitors outside the prison they told me their

relatives were glad of a rest from the POs' brutality.

It is well known that the POA numbers NF members among its ranks. The incidences of racist and generally brutal behaviour are legion.

The 'overcrowding and understaffing' myth, needs examining. Prisons are overcrowded. Despite projected new jails, despite the overflow in police cells, Britain's prisons are full to bursting. But since 1971, for every two new prisoners, there have been three new members of staff. 'Understaffing' is a convenient excuse for curtailing education and recreation; it gives the POA a get-out clause for disturbances and escapes and it has allowed some officers to get rich by manipulating overtime hours.

There is no doubt that the government does want to smash the POA as part of its streamlining of the prison service as a machine for state repression. There is little difference between police and prison officers other than the right to strike. The Home Office will undoubtedly negotiate with the new no-strike Prison Service Union whilst continuing to soften the POA's capacity for 'militancy'.

FRFI stands neither on the side of Home Office, prison officers or police. We support the interests of the prisoners. The POA represents what George Jackson so aptly called 'the pig-class', a section which protects only its own interests, which thrives on the oppression of the working class. Its claim to be the voice of organised labour against 'the bosses' is as phony as the pretensions of all-white South African trade unions to be progressive. Our answer to both questions above is no. There can be no solidarity between the victims of a repressive machinery and those who service the machine. No trade unionist with any class politics can consider the Wandsworth officers as brothers in struggle. ■

## Licence to commit crime

CAT WIENER

Only the Thatcher government could have constructed so complete an assault on all our liberties and got away with it: the Secret Services Bill and the Official Secrets Bill, both shortly due to become law, simultaneously legalise the criminal activity of the government's agents in MI5 and criminalise the interest, safety and rights of the public. The Secret Services Bill, which places MI5 on a statutory footing, provides that 'no entry on or interference with property shall be unlawful if it is authorised by a warrant issued by the Secretary of State'. The following activities are specifically not excluded: theft; criminal damage or destruction of property; arson; procuring information for blackmail purposes; the leaving of planted evidence.

There can be little doubt that MI5 has been engaged in such activities for years, in addition to bugging communications, opening mail and burglary. Now all is 'legal'.

But even were MI5 to step out-

side these far-reaching parameters, their activities will be protected absolutely from disclosure by the new Official Secrets Bill. This Bill, as Douglas Hurd has boasted, fits closely with the other.

It imposes a blanket ban on all members of the security services from disclosing information, and on the media from exposing any activity in which MI5 and MI6 are engaged and any official information obtained from abroad: this could include issues of public safety, fraud, malpractice - it makes no difference. There is no public interest defence. Only disclosure need be proved, and conviction carries a two-year jail sentence.

The new tribunal and Commissioner to be appointed to deal with complaints from members of the public provide little reassurance. Its predecessor, the Intercept Tribunal, investigated 32 complaints in the last eight months of 1987: no contraventions were found. In the face of the government's license to endorse and cover-up criminal attacks against the public, we are guaranteed no rights and no redress. ■

# Loyalist squads set up to kill

MAXINE WILLIAMS

Loyalist death squads have murdered six people in the first two months of 1989. Despite an upsurge in official British state terror, the loyalists are not satisfied and are using sectarian murders, both random and carefully-targeted, to attempt to cow the nationalist people.

In February four nationalists were murdered.

9 February - 33-year-old Tony Fusco was shot dead in a Belfast street, five bullets hitting him in the head and chest.

12 February - Leading Belfast lawyer Pat Finucane was murdered after assassins broke into his home. They shot him five times in the body and head in front of his family. His wife was wounded. Finucane had a long history of representing Republican defendants and had recently won an important legal victory which would compel RUC men who shot three IRA volunteers in 1982 to attend the inquest.

14 February - 61-year-old John Davey, veteran Sinn Fein member and councillor, was shot dead as he drove up the lane to his house. A prominent Republican interned in the 1950s and 1970s he suffered constant harassment, threats and other attempts to kill him.

20 February - 32-year-old Patrick Feeney was shot dead at the gate of the factory where he worked. His killers fired five bullets into him at close range, killing him instantly.



The wreckage of Janet Donnelly's kitchen after an army raid

The murder of Pat Finucane hit the headlines both because his was the first such murder of a solicitor and also because it became clear that Home Office Minister Douglas Hogg had helped to prepare the ground for his murder. Speaking in the House of Commons five weeks before Finucane's murder, Hogg had said that some Northern Ireland solicitors were 'unduly sympathetic to the cause of the IRA'. This was nothing less than an invitation for the loyalists to direct their campaign at a new target - solicitors who have been troublesome to the British government. Given Finucane's prominence this statement was tantamount to a death sentence.

Finucane's widow has said she believes Hogg's statement 'was instrumental in Pat's death'.

Various muted calls were made for Hogg's resignation but he remains, fitting well into a government which planned and directed the coldblooded murder of the Gibraltar 3. However the incident indicates how neatly the British state can use 'unofficial' forces to carry out deeds - killing solicitors - that would be unacceptable to public opinion were they carried out by British troops.

There are other clear indications of official collusion with the loyalist murder gangs. Whilst nationalist areas are swamped with British forces,

the murderers always manage to 'escape'. It is also known that loyalist gangs receive information directly from the Army/RUC files. A 'hit list' dropped by the UDR in Armagh was found to contain names, addresses and photographs. Recently a UDR officer was given six months for passing information from British files to loyalist paramilitaries. The brother of a nationalist killed last September has also accused the RUC of passing a photograph of him to the UDA. The photograph, taken in Castlereagh, appeared in the latest edition of the UDA magazine.

As well as the dangers of sectarian attack and murder the nationalist community is still experiencing heavy raiding. On 14 February the Green Vale Estate in Cookstown was sealed-off for two days. Homes were raided and two families were particularly worried by the British army drawing detailed sketches of the inside of their homes. Dermot Coyle, whose house was sketched, recently won a case in the European court against seven-day detentions. The estate was again raided the following week and extensive damage done to the 30 houses searched. Well over 6,000 families have now suffered such raids in the last year.

Despite both official and unofficial British terror the nationalist people are continuing the struggle. The IRA has once again brought the fight to the British doorstep with their daring attack on the Parachute Regiment barracks in Shropshire. ■

## New PTA breaches human rights

MAXINE WILLIAMS

A government guillotine on debate has ensured that the new PTA will become law by late March. Despite the recent European Court ruling that seven-day detentions are a breach of human rights, the new Act will retain this provision.

In addition, the Act renews old powers and incorporates new ones: the right to serve exclusion orders; the right to seize funds of individuals or organisations suspected of being used for 'terrorist purposes'; the power for British forces to arrest anyone they suspect is or has been

concerned in the 'commission, preparation or the instigation of acts of terrorism'; the power for the RUC to detain a person in part of a house or vehicle while other parts are searched. This creates a new offence of 'wilfully disobeying' an order to remain in such a place with a penalty of two years' gaol; the cutting of Irish prisoners' remission from one half to one third.

In 1988 170 people were detained under the PTA. Only 10 were charged under the Act and 136 were not charged with any offence. The new PTA is yet another attack on the rights of Irish people and their political organisations. Alongside it goes the ban on media interviews

with Sinn Fein. The purpose of all this is to harass and silence the Irish people.

The arrest and exclusion of Eamonn Mullen, IRSP member under the PTA as he travelled back to Ireland after attending a VMDC march is an example of the purpose of the PTA. Mullen had attended the demonstration and spoken there of the comparison between the seizure of Viraj and the raids on nationalist homes in Ireland. He called for unity between the Irish people and anti-racists.

During his four-day detention Mullen was interrogated and offered money to spy on the Manchester Martyrs Committee. On 9 February he was served with

an exclusion order banning him from entering Britain for a minimum of three years.

Intimidation, intelligence gathering and attempting to drive Irish people out of political activity - these are the real aims of the PTA. During Eamonn Mullen's detention protest activities were organised by the VMDC and Manchester Martyrs Committee and supported by the RCG and the Irish Freedom Movement. A strong united national movement will be needed if the PTA is to be effectively challenged. ■

Information on Eamonn Mullen was supplied by Kitty Atkin and Debbie Grew

## United campaign against stripsearching

NATHLY PARKER

On 16 February 1989, the United Campaign Against Strip Searching handed in a national petition at the House of Commons, voicing its objection to this form of victimisation. Only five per cent of the 16,022 people searched between July 1987 and March 1988 by customs officers were found to be in possession of anything illegal. Many people are also stripsearched in police custody but the Home Office conveniently keeps no figures on this.

Jeremy Corbyn MP, a supporter of the campaign,

regularly visits Paul Hill, one of the four framed for the Guildford bombing. Corbyn complained that before Paul Hill was allowed a half hour visit he was stripsearched at least twice. On one occasion he was stripsearched four times and made to change his clothing twice.

According to the Code of Practice an intimate search should only be carried out for one of the following reasons:

- If an article which could cause physical injury has been concealed;
- If the person has concealed a class A drug, with intent to supply or export;
- In either case if an intimate

search is the only practicable way of removing it.

In the majority of cases police, prison and customs officers use this form of searching as a method of intimidation. It is a well-known fact that the people most likely to undergo this torture are Irish or black. Asian women are particularly targeted when trying to enter Britain. There is only one reason why this takes place: it is purely to degrade and is used as a racist deterrent.

Stripsearching has long been used as a form of psychological and physical torture against women Republican prisoners in Ireland. Those campaigning against this at

the time warned that this practice would be used against oppressed women in Britain. ■

### EASTER MESSAGE

*Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* commemorates the anniversary of the 1916 Easter Rising and sends greetings and solidarity to the Irish people and all Irish POWs in Ireland, Britain, United States of America and Germany.

JOHN BOWDEN

## INHUMAN TREATMENT OF REMAND PRISONER

# 'A gross perversion of the process of justice'

It is an unarguable fact that of all European countries Britain possesses one of the worst records of human rights abuses against prisoners. It is equally true that the treatment of unconvicted prisoners in Britain - people who have been neither tried nor convicted of anything - is probably far worse than in most other places in the so-called civilised world. The case of Kevin Brown is a graphic and horrific illustration of this.

Brown was arrested on 24 May 1988 and charged with armed robbery and firearms offences. The evidence was extremely flimsy and obviously fabricated and, in spite of magistrates at Chatham committing him for trial on the police evidence, Brown remained confident that a trial by jury would eventually clear him of the offences.

In the meantime he was remanded in custody at Brixton prison, expecting a relatively quiet and uneventful period before his trial, preparing his defence and consulting his lawyers. As Brixton prison is fairly close to his home he was reassured by the hope that contact with his wife and children would be frequent.

At 6am the day after his committal Kevin was woken by a large group of warders and ordered to prepare for transfer. Understandably confused and anxious, he asked why he was being moved. No explanation was given and he was simply told they had been instructed to move him to another prison. He asked where he was going and was told that such information couldn't be divulged. He then asked if his wife, who was expected at Brixton that day, could be informed of his transfer. This they agreed and he gave his home phone number to the senior warden in

charge of the gang.

Kevin Brown's wife wasn't phoned and she went to Brixton that day expecting to see him. She sat in the visiting room until the close of visits and was then casually informed that her husband was no longer in the prison.

Brown was transferred to Bristol, 150 miles away where in spite of repeated inquiries, he was simply informed that 'P3', a prison department responsible for 'Category A' prisoners, had decided that he should be moved.

Conditions at Bristol are even worse than at Brixton. Brown's wife was subjected to physical and degrading searches and allowed only 15 minutes with her husband. Gathering the concentration to work on his defence became virtually impossible for Brown.

After two weeks at Bristol, Brown was again moved, to Durham. In effect he was now on the 'ghost-train' or, to give it its more official title, a C1 10/74 Circuit. The 'circuit' is probably the most inhumane and spiteful instrument of control and repression yet devised by the prison department and is, in most cases, used against convicted prisoners with a record of consistently demanding

their rights or refusing to accept prison authority. It involves constant movement between different prisons, rarely keeping the prisoner in any one place for longer than 28 days. It is designed to disorientate and dispirit him until he either 'gives in' and 'comes to terms' with the system or is psychologically damaged to the extent where further resistance is destroyed. The human rights implications are obvious; it is a recognised and recognisable form of torture. When used against unconvicted prisoners the issue takes on an even more serious and horrific character.

In Durham, Brown again sought out a governor and demanded the reasons for his transfer there. He was simply told that he was on remand and awaiting trial. The governor agreed that Brown had committed no disciplinary offences but he gave no reason why he had been moved first to Bristol and then to Durham.

Brown's wife made the 400 mile journey to Durham to visit her husband and was only allowed to see him through a perspex screen for 15 minutes. It was explained to Brown that in Durham all Category A prisoners were subject to 'close visits.'

On her second visit, Brown's wife was kept waiting over 2½ hours. She

was in an extremely emotionally disturbed condition and wept constantly. Brown finally snapped with pent-up anger and frustration and smashed the dividing screen between himself and his wife. He was taken back to his cell where he began a dirty protest; as far as he was concerned he had nothing further to lose by protesting openly and directly about his treatment - he had, after all, been punished for doing absolutely nothing.

He was taken to a sensory deprivation cell or 'strong-box', stripped of his clothing and locked inside. The bright overhead light remained on all night and the heating was turned full up. By morning he was wringing with sweat and completely disorientated. He describes the night as 'pure torture'.

The following day he remained in the 'strong-box' while a disciplinary adjudication decided he would lose 28 days remission on any sentence he might receive if found guilty at his eventual trial. To adjudicate on a prisoner confined naked to a 'strong-box' and reduced to the physical condition of an animal is without doubt the most disgusting violation of natural justice imaginable. Apart from loss of future remission, Brown

was 'awarded' 3 weeks loss of 'privileges' which meant he was now confined to the prison's punishment block - one of the worst in the entire country.

The punishment cells at Durham are generally believed to be the smallest in the entire system. A prisoner standing in the centre is barely able to stretch his arms to their full length on either side of him. Apart from a mattress on the floor, they contain no furniture and are unheated. In winter they are freezing. It was January when Brown was confined in one.

On his first day in the block Brown was ordered to 'box-up' his bedding military style. He refused on the grounds that he required a blanket to protect himself from the cold. He was placed on report for 'refusing a direct order' and taken before the governor. Brown had established that a prison standing order specified the temperature of a cell and, inevitably, the temperature within the Durham punishment cells fell significantly below it. He cited this in his defence and added that he would ask his solicitors to issue a *mandamus* against the governor for administrative neglect.

Two days later Kevin Brown was informed that he was yet again being transferred, this time 'south' which he hopefully interpreted to mean Brixton. He was wrong; he was moved to Winchester prison and placed in solitary confinement.

Kevin Brown is an unconvicted prisoner awaiting trial yet since May 1988 he has been able to consult with his co-accused who are in custody in London only three times. In its scant regard for his legal needs the Home Office is clearly guilty of a gross perversion of the process of justice. In its barbaric treatment of him more generally it has been guilty of the very worst violations of his civil and human rights. ■

## Suicides in Armley prison

AURIEL FERMO & GORDON TEAL

24 hours after MPs met Douglas Hogg, Home Office Minister for prisons, asking for urgent action to stop more suicides in Armley jail, Philip Beckett, aged 18, of Woodhouse, Leeds, was found hanged from the bars of his cell. On 16 February Philip became the fifth remand prisoner to commit suicide on the youth wing. Alan Skey (17), Michael Elliot (18), David Littlewood (19), Charles Greechan (19) and now Philip all hanged themselves in this wing in the last nine months. Frances Crook of the Howard League for Penal Reform said 'Action should have been taken months ago. The blood of five young men is now on the conscience of the Home Secretary'.

Official reports state that there have been 19 attempted suicides in Armley prison since January this year. The real figure is probably far higher. Recently in one week alone there were reports of 13 attempts.

The conditions at Armley are foul. Massive overcrowding prevails with 1,300 men in cells built for 650; on the youth wing it is normal for three prisoners to share a cell designed for one; there are no toilets in the cells, just one pot which the prisoners have to share and keep in the cell until 'slopping out' time - sometimes 23 hours at a stretch; a local TV report stated that some of the remand prisoners only spent 2½ hours a week out of their cells; only one shower a fortnight is permitted.

Brutality from the prison officers is rife. The mother of one young remand prisoner told *FRFI* that on one visit she could not embrace her son as he was in such pain from a beating. Simon Purchas, solicitor for the Beckett family, told us he'd known of many accounts of brutality rang-

ing from serious assaults to "petty brutality" ... verbal abuse and a quick clip round the head is a very common complaint on the youth wing ...

Despite all these facts, Home Secretary Douglas Hurd said 'I have no evidence to suggest that this death is to be explained by poor conditions or poor treatment at the prison'. He has asked for an enquiry into the youth wing to be carried out by a former governor of the jail and deputy director general of the prison service, Brian Emes. The outcome? 'Although Mr Emes has come up with some specific recommendations, his overall conclusions are that Armley is a good prison, well-run and the staff are doing well' (Douglas Hogg, Home Officer Minister for Prisons).

But, as Simon Purchas stressed, 'A confidential report to the Home Secretary is too little, too late. There should be a full public enquiry.' A campaign has been set up to build support for this.

To protest at Philip's suicide and the conditions in Armley, RCG comrades held a street meeting in Roundhay, a working class area of Leeds. With placards and a petition demanding a full public enquiry into the suicides and that the jail be closed down, we collected over 250 signatures and sold 102 copies of *FRFI*.

Support was equally strong when we petitioned visitors to the jail. Having waited for hours in the freezing wind, with children and babies, to see their relatives and friends, many visitors stopped to sign. One young woman complained how 'screws treat the visitors like criminals'. Another mother said that along with the brutality, the prisoners 'are stripped of all their rights. You send a radio in and it takes three weeks to get through because of tormenting by the screws

Janet had accompanied her friend who is pregnant and because she is under 16 cannot go alone into the jail to see her boyfriend. As Janet said, 'You feel like standing on the streets and shouting it all out. It's absolutely disgusting ...' It is from this anger of working class men and women who have to live the nightmare of Thatcher's prisons every day that the campaign to expose Armley jail will receive its most powerful impetus and strength. ■

For more details about Armley Prison Campaign, write to: APC, Box 240, 52 Call Lane, Leeds, LS1 6DT.

### IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS' BIRTHDAYS

Peter Jordan (H22338): HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs. WR11 5TZ 21 March

## Brutal transfer from Long Lartin

John Bowden, who is a regular writer for *FRFI* and author of this month's article about Kevin Brown, has himself been the subject of severe harassment.

Last year John began organising at Long Lartin to compel 'liberal' governor, Joe Whitty, to hold an open democratic forum on prisoners' rights. Outside speakers were invited, including Jimmy Boyle, barrister Mike Mansfield, Una Padel of the Prison Reform Trust, Anarchist Black Cross and Radical Alternatives to Prison. Whitty vetoed the latter's choice of a speaker, Geoff Coggan, and categorically denied *FRFI* any representation. (We take this as a compliment!) John managed, however, to secure an invitation for Terry O'Halloran, before his death, in his capacity as a freelance journalist. The forum was due to take place on 1 March; on 31 January, John Bowden and John McGranaghan (see last month's *FRFI*) were moved without warning to Winchester.

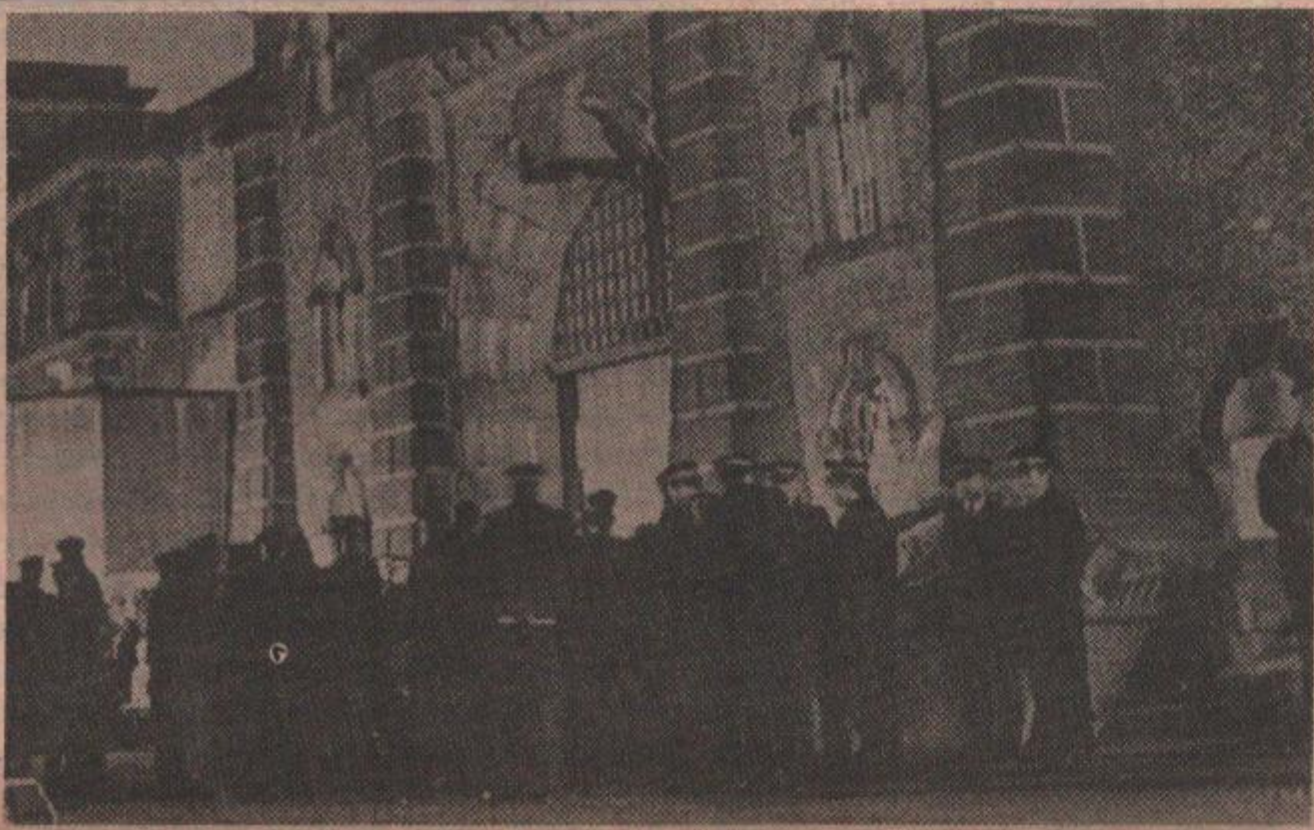
The reason given for the sudden transfer was involvement in food protests. But there is no doubt that the at-

mosphere around the forum had become far too explosive for the Long Lartin authorities to handle. John Bowden is a politicised prisoner who could have spoken knowledgeably about prison conditions, repression and brutality and who would have deliberately placed the prison struggle in its wider class context. With a strong likelihood that *The Bandung File* will screen films of the forum, Joe Whitty had to unstack the odds against him.

The removal of John Bowden to Winchester prison was effected with extreme violence. He sustained serious injuries and for a while feared losing the sight of his right eye. As is common practice when a prisoner is assaulted, John is himself being charged with assault on a prison officer. He is of course contesting the case.

Solidarity greetings to John Bowden B41173, HMP Winchester, Romsey Road, Winchester SO22 5DF. Read next month's *FRFI* for news of the forum. ■

Nicki Jameson



The screws screwed! See article on the Wandsworth prison dispute, page 6

### STOP PRESS

## WINSTON SILCOTT

Winston Silcott, framed for the murder of PC Blakelock in the 1985 Tottenham uprisings, is being brutally treated by the screws in Albany prison.

He went on a 10-day hunger strike after being directed to unsuitable prison work. He was then sectioned, registered temporarily insane, and is now in isolation. His family are very worried about his condition.

All readers are asked to write to the Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, SW1, to demand information about Winston's condition. HMP Albany can be phoned on 0983-524055 ex 215 or 284, or write to the prison: HMP Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 5RS. Winston Silcott's number is B4053.



'I'm oppressed as a woman but I'm also oppressed because I'm Irish. Everyone in this country is oppressed and we can't successfully end our oppression as women until we first end the oppression of our country. But I don't think that's the end of it. It happened before where women took a back seat. But today, women have gone through too much, no way will they allow that to happen. Once we remove the British that isn't it. That's only the beginning.'

Mairead Farrell, IRA Volunteer murdered by the British government in 1988



'While Ireland is not free I remain a rebel, unconverted and unconvertible. . . I am pledged as a rebel because I am pledged to one thing - a free and independent Republic. . . A state run by the Irish people for the people. That means a government that looks after the rights of the people before the rights of property. . . My idea is the Workers Republic for which Connolly died.'

Countess Markievicz, one of the leaders of the Easter Rising 1916. Her advice to women befitted a woman of action: 'Dress suitably in short skirts and strong boots, leave your jewels in the bank and buy a revolver.'

CAROL BRICKLEY

In 1975 the RCG made a major contribution to the theory of women's liberation, examining the root cause of women's double oppression at home and at work. We said that it is the very nature of the capitalist system which perpetuates women's oppression. Working class women are the superfluous appendages of the capitalist system. A reserve army of labour which can be included in or excluded from the labour force as the system moves from boom to crisis, from war to peace, and back again. In periods of boom when women workers are needed, or crisis when we are not, nevertheless it will be women who labour unpaid in the home as cleaners, cooks and childcarers. And the nation's rulers will have the appropriate ideological tune to accompany our progress between home and work, and back again.

The 1980s have proved the points which we made. Since 1971 women have accounted almost entirely for the 2.3 million rise in the labour force, despite a decline in the number of women in full-time employment between 1981 and 1985. The rise in the number of women at work is accounted for by part-time jobs. By 1987 20% of all employees were part-time women workers compared with 13% in 1971. This trend has had advantages for the ruling class - part-time workers have fewer rights and

unpaid domestic slaves, both at home and at work. The Thatcher government has woken up to the fact that the number of 16-year-olds entering the labour force is about to decrease dramatically. Who better than women to fill the gap in the future workforce?

Ironically in the same year that the Prime Minister and Home Secretary were extolling the virtues of staying at home ('. . . very few jobs can compare in long-term importance and satisfaction with that of housewife and mother. For the family is the building block of society. . .') Norman Fowler, Employment Secretary, was declaring that the 1990s will be the 'decade of the working woman'. A recent white paper on employment has predicted an increase of 750,000 women workers by 1995. A Ministerial Group on Women's Issues, chaired by John Patten, Minister of State, is due to report soon on how our paths can be smoothed between home and work. Several national newspapers have speculated on the possibilities of workplace creches etc, to be supplied by employers anxious to win women back to work.

While it might be the case that professional, middle-class women and those with special skills will be awarded such incentives, the reality for the rest of us will be very different. The main attraction of women workers for most employers is that they are cheap labour, and this is especially

low pay, as growing numbers do, fall below the threshold for national insurance payments. This not only keeps the employers' wage bill down, it also disqualifies women from unemployment and invalidity benefits, statutory sick pay, maternity pay, paid holidays and retirement pensions. Qualifying periods for benefits like maternity pay have recently been increased to two years, along with entitlement to protection against unfair dismissal. All the April 1988 changes in state benefits adversely affected women disproportionately. With the added burden of the poll tax on working class families, women will have little choice but to seek work outside the home - often as low paid cleaners, carers and child minders in the service sector.

The last ten years have seen no changes in the burden of domestic work - it is still overwhelmingly the responsibility of women, even though more and more go out to work. Furthermore the Thatcher government has systematically shifted the burden of unpaid caring onto working class families, and thereby women. In 1981 Mrs Thatcher set the scene:

'... the primary sources of support and care for elderly people are informal and voluntary. These spring from the personal ties of kinship, friendship and neighbourhood. . . it is the role of public authorities to sustain, and, where necessary develop - but never displace - such support and care. Care in the community must increasingly mean care by the community.'

(Growing Older: White Paper on services for elderly people, 1981, HMSO)

For community, read women. The proportion of elderly people in the population is growing. A high proportion are women, themselves living in dire poverty because government pension and benefits provision is designed to exclude them. The burden of care for the elderly, disabled, mentally ill and sick is being shifted, quite deliberately, onto working class families who cannot afford private care. One in four women over 45 is already caring for an elderly relative, and in the 1988 benefit changes long term carers were the only group to lose the higher long term benefit rate without any compensation.

The reality of the statistics that show more NHS patients being treated in fewer beds (12 per bed in 1971, 21 per bed in 1987) is not improved medical efficiency, but that the provision of convalescence and longer term care is now the responsibility of women in the family.

It is ironic indeed that Britain's first woman Prime Minister has presided over such an onslaught on her own sex. But, in some ways, thank goodness. There was never a more explicit demonstration that the oppression of women is a class question. In Britain the Women's Liberation Movement has failed to build a movement to fight back against the attack on working class women, preferring to explore patriarchy and mysticism. Even the abortion law reform introduced in the late 1960s annually teeters on the brink of obliteration. On this 8 March, Women's Day, we need to remember the working class women who have bitterly fought against oppression: the Bryant & May Matchgirl strikers who fought against industrial disease and death; the working class suffragists who gave their lives and health in the struggle for the vote; the miners' wives and the wives and families of P&O strikers who have fought so hard for their communities; the women freedom fighters in oppressed nations like Ireland, South Africa and the Philippines who have chosen to fight alongside men in the struggle against imperialism. Their banners will need to be taken up in Britain by the working class women who bear the brunt of the Thatcherite 'post-industrial revolution'. ■

8 March is Women's Day. It is as well that we all have a share in one day of celebration every year - the other 364 are getting worse

# Women's Day?

'I regarded the rousing of the East End as of utmost importance. My aim was not merely to make some members and establish some branches but the larger task of bringing the district as a whole into a mass movement. . . This was the meaning of Herbert Gladstone's challenge to the Suffragists in 1908. . . Not by the secret militancy of a few enthusiasts, but by the rousing of the masses, could the gauge be taken up which not merely some Cabinet ministers, but history itself had flung to us. . . The creation of a woman's movement in that great abyss of poverty would be a call and a rallying cry to the rise of similar movements in all parts of the country. . . I was anxious too, to fortify the position of the working woman when the vote should actually be given; the existence of a strong, self reliant movement amongst working women would be the greatest aid in safeguarding their rights in the day of settlement. . . I wanted to rouse these women of the submerged mass to be, not merely the arguments of more fortunate people, but to be fighters on their own account. . .'

Sylvia Pankhurst, Socialist and fighter for women's rights.

'On "Women's Day" the organised women workers demonstrate against their lack of rights. But some will say, why this singling out of women workers? Why special "Women's Days", special leaflets for working women, meetings and conferences of working class women? Is this not, in the final analysis, a concession to the feminists and bourgeois suffragettes?'

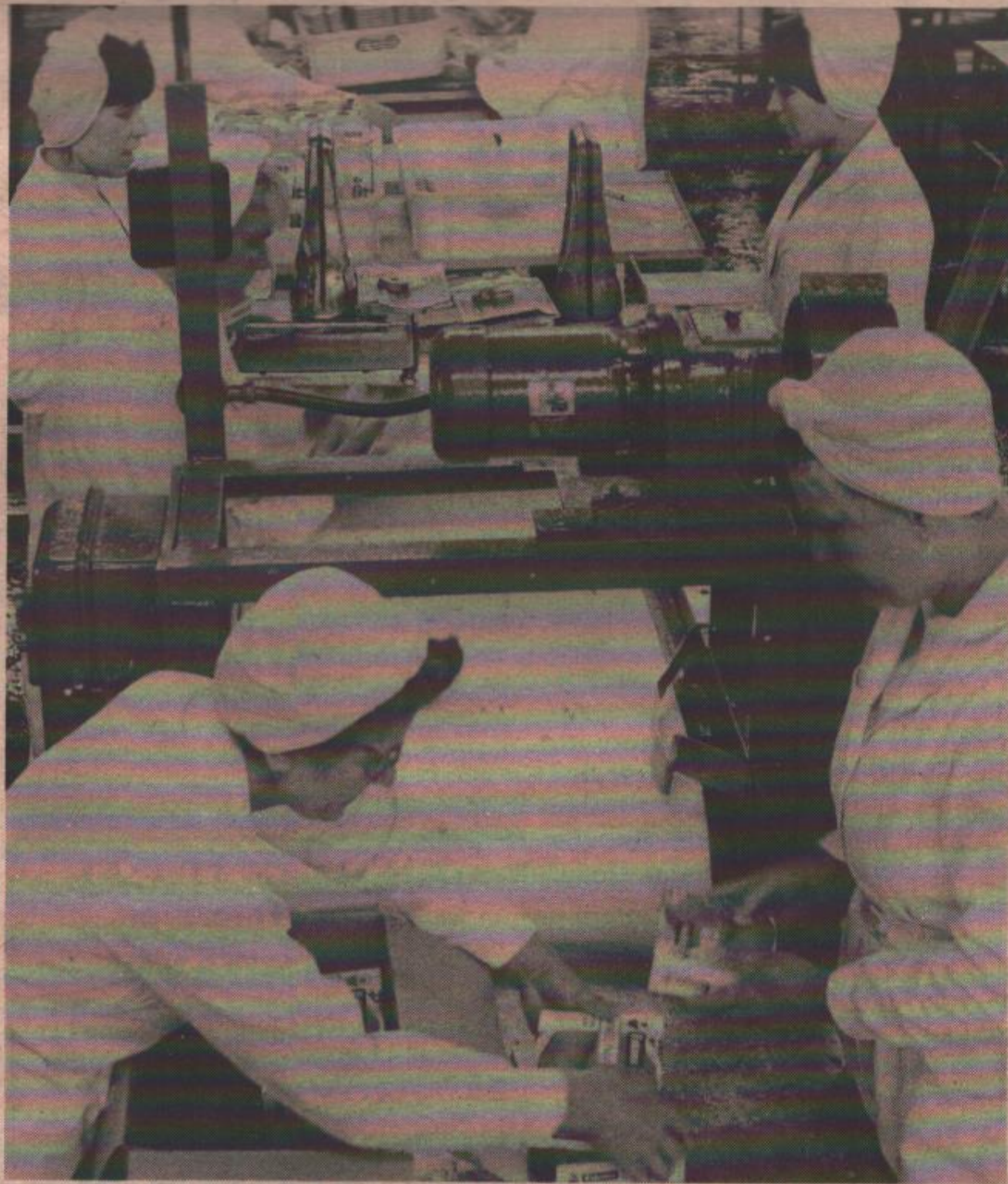
Only those who do not understand the radical difference between the movement of socialist women and bourgeois suffragettes can think this way.

What is the aim of the feminists? Their aim is to achieve the same advantages, the same power, the same rights within capitalist society as those possessed now by their husbands, fathers and brothers.

What is the aim of the women workers? Their aim is to abolish all privileges deriving from birth or wealth. For the woman worker it is a matter of indifference who is the "master" - a man or a woman. Together with the whole of her class, she can ease her position as a worker. . .

Let a joyous sense of serving the common cause and of fighting simultaneously for their own female emancipation inspire women workers to join in the celebration of Women's Day.'

Alexandra Kollontai - Bolshevik - written in 1913.



CHRIS DAVIES/NETWORK

Packing fish-fingers in Hull: the oppression of women is a class question are paid less on average per hour than full-time workers.

Alongside this, between 1971 and 1987 the number of employees in manufacturing industries fell by 37%. Today, 82% of women workers are employed in the service industries. Both sets of figures confirm trends which we recognised in 1975. Despite Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination legislation introduced in the 1970s, women's pay is still only 66% of men's (average gross weekly earnings for full-time workers). Part-time workers' pay is even lower, reflecting the realities of work in the service sector - women are cheap labour.

The ruling class has more in store for us low-paid women workers and

the case in the service sector. The recent strike by NHS workers to win a decent wage, only to be swindled with a re-grading system which robbed the poor to pay the poor, is just one example of Government strategy as far as the vast majority of women are concerned.

Far from workplace creches, we can expect that the Thatcher government will pursue its pernicious methods, tried and tested over the last ten years - women will be forced out to work out of dire necessity and will have to make whatever arrangements they can for childcare and domestic work. The trend to part-time work will increase. Women who work less than 16 hours a week on

The 'Bow Militants' - Sylvia Pankhurst and the Lansburys





# Free health care is sentenced to death

After a carefully-orchestrated campaign of leaks and misinformation, the government has finally published its 'review' of the National Health Service. The White Paper heralds a new attack on the conditions of the working class; its implementation will end comprehensive health care for the most oppressed, and especially for the old and chronically sick. ROBERT CLOUGH examines its implications.



Outpatients at Guy's Hospital, London. Where will they go when Guy's opts out?

To grasp its significance, we have to examine its major proposals. These can be summarised as follows:

1. All hospitals are to be encouraged to 'opt out' of direct NHS control, to be run as 'self-governing' NHS Trusts under the control of boards of directors. The White Paper originally said that only the 320 largest would be allowed to opt out; within two weeks, all 2,000 were said to be eligible.
2. Such 'self-governing' hospitals will be able to earn income by selling their services to Health Authorities, general practices, private patients or their insurance companies, and to private and other self-governing hospitals.
3. Such hospitals will be free to employ whatever staff they need at whatever rates of pay or conditions they wish. They will also be able to raise capital on the private market.
4. Large GP practices – those with over 11,000 patients, which cover a quarter of the population – will be entitled to hold their own budgets to 'buy' services from the NHS or private sector. Such practices will be able to plough any savings they make back into their practice.
5. Local Authorities will no longer have the right to appoint members to District Health Authorities. Instead, the Authorities will be reconstituted along the lines of management boards. Their main purpose will be to contract with opted-out hospitals and the private sector to provide health care for their catchment population.
6. There will be tax relief for those over 65 taking out private health insurance.

Of course, the government has stated that these proposals will not mean the privatisation of the hospital service.

The anger aroused when the secretive review body was learned to be considering such a step in 1988 caused such ideas to be hurriedly – and equally secretly – dropped. But these plans lay the basis for such a step as far as a portion of the hospital service is concerned, for what will appear over the next three years is a two-tier service, one oriented towards the demands of the wealthy, the other offering a minimal service for the poor and oppressed. It is the thought of these rich pickings which caused the shares of American Medical International, the largest private hospital group in Britain, to leap by a quarter in January.

The Thatcher government is committed to minimising expenditure on healthcare for the working class, since it is a net drain on profits. Yet despite its underfunding, the NHS is still too successful: private hospitals can scarcely compete with it, and are running at 50% capacity.

The concept of self-governing hospitals has been devised to provide centres of excellence which will encourage the middle class and better off sections of the working class to pay for a better service. Such hospitals may, for instance, offer patients operations on the NHS, but charge for extras such as better hotel facilities, or the choice of admission time with the ability to queue-jump. They could even offer their own health insurance packages, perhaps to the over-65s with their tax concessions.

In short, what will be central to the operation of these hospitals will be the generation of income, not the treatment of patients. A hip operation will be the same whichever hospital you go to. But if you pay, you can have it now and not in two years. If your local hospital cannot do it, then you

will have to pay anyway, to travel elsewhere for it. And if you pay, you can have a decent ward, and if you pay even more, you can have decent food as well.

The White Paper conceives of an 'internal market' within the NHS, where opted-out and NHS-managed hospitals will have to compete. The laws of competition will therefore apply. The first opted-out hospitals will also be the largest. They will therefore enjoy economies of scale. The NHS-managed hospitals will be smaller, cash-limited and unable to borrow capital. In the face of these disadvantages, they will have to cut their most significant costs – staff – even further; they might even face closure. Such a fate might equally be the lot of smaller, less 'efficient' opted-out hospitals. Services would be concentrated in fewer and fewer hospitals, which would merge ever closer with the private sector.

The implications of the Review have not been lost on the Guy's Hospital Gazette. Guy's has achieved notoriety by apparently being the first to wish to opt out after a succession of visits from ministers and senior civil servants in the months prior to the Review. The Gazette reassures those who feel that competing for patients is an anathema that there 'is no immediate prospect of Guy's increasingly touting for business from private patients.' (Our emphasis.) Naturally, it stresses its commitment to the local community, 'although we will have to wait to see how this can be met in the event that an internal market brings a greatly-increased demand for Guy's services for patients referred from outside the area.' One thing is certain: the local community will have no say in whether Guy's opts out. That lies in the hands of its

board of directors and consultants alone, as will the decision on the future of any other hospital.

The establishment of the Review Body was a response to the hospital funding crisis of 18 months ago. Yet it says nothing about the level of resources the NHS can expect. For that, we have to look elsewhere – to the White Paper on public expenditure published days earlier. That predicted the following pattern over the next three years for the hospital service in England and Wales:

Year	Amount (£millions)	Increase	% Increase
1989/90	13,896	905	7.0
1990/91	14,590	694	5.0
1991/92	15,090	500	3.4

The increase will be provided in large part by the NHS itself, through proposed income-generation schemes and scheduled cost improvements. Of the £500 million extra in 1991/92, cost improvements will provide £150 million, and income generation £70 million. Funding of the hospital service needs to rise at 2% over the rate of inflation each year just to allow existing services to be maintained. Assuming 6% inflation in 1991/92, an extra £1,170 million would have to be found; there is a shortfall of some £700 million, with a shortfall of over £400 million the previous year. This is the real pressure to force hospitals to opt out, so that they can be 'increasingly touting for business from private patients' and sending them to the top of ever-lengthening queues.

The proposals for GPs managing their own budgets are perhaps the most indicative of the cynicism underlying the Review. GPs will be allocated a budget to spend as they choose. By allowing them the oppor-

tunity to plough what they save each year back into their practice, they will have a positive incentive not to treat patients. A patient will never be certain if the treatment is the best or merely the cheapest, whether they are missing out on tests just for a down-payment on a computer. And of course it will be those less willing or able to question this – the old or chronically sick – from whom the potential savings will be greatest.

The response from the unions has been verbally hostile, practically non-existent. For all their concern about privatisation, they have missed one vital point: they will have to be completely smashed if the Review is to succeed. Indeed, their total defeat is the first step in its implementation, since opting out means an end to Whitleyism, national pay review bodies, and job security. No longer will representatives of the labour aristocracy sit on Health Authorities. Thatcher has found even their timid and feeble opposition too much to stomach. Now it is to be open war, with the destruction of unions such as COHSE and NUPE the prelude to the ending of a decent hospital system for the working class as a whole.

It is evident that the sort of movement that *FRFI* has argued for consistently, uniting the oppressed both within and without the NHS, is the only force that can prevent hospitals opting out. Without community support, the unions will be isolated in their fight against the coterie of managers and consultants that will front the ruling class attack. Their current leadership is tied to the 'new realism' of Kinnock *et al*, and will not offer any serious resistance. The next two years will see the government preparing the ground for opting out. We have to prepare the resistance.

# Activists face prison

Nineteen Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign (VMDC) activists face the prospect of prison sentences and massive fines. Since the kidnapping of Viraj Mendis, they have appeared in court on charges ranging from highway obstruction, failure to comply with a notice, police assault and conspiracy to cause criminal damage.

Nine of the arrests arise from the protests following the kidnapping, whilst others date back 14 months. Many of the arrests were violent - one activist had a hardly healed broken arm broken again, others have been kicked and punched suffering head injuries and concussion.

Leading VMDC members Sonia and Adrian appeared in court on 2 and 3 March charged on four counts of police assault, three of police obstruction and another charge under the Public Order Act.

Both comrades face the possibility of at least 6 months, if not a year's imprisonment if the courts and police get their way. Sonia, a black activist, has been targeted in particular. She has been arrested five times in a period of 12 months.

Both Sonia and Adrian were arrested on 29 October 1988 by 15 police officers. Sonia and Adrian were at a bus stop waiting to get home after doing some shopping. They were threatened, abused and detained for 43 hours.

In the court on 2 and 3 March they were treated as major criminals.

Police officers stood guard at the court entrance harassing VMDC members attempting to get into the public gallery, searching their belongings and turning them away. They were trying to reserve seats in the tiny public gallery for the half dozen police officers who came to listen to their fellow hooligans give evidence.

In their usual style the police concocted their evidence. They claimed that Adrian punched a police officer in the face after repeatedly shouting 'you fucking fascist bastards'. Both were accused of spitting, kicking, pushing and punching the 15 officers who assaulted them. Their case has now been adjourned to 20 March.

In another case, that of the Bonsall Street 8, eight VMDC activists appeared before the notorious stipendiary Fairclough from 6-10 February. Fairclough quizzed Derek, one of the defendants, on why he 'affirmed' instead of swearing his oath on the Bible. 'I find it strange,' he said, 'that a campaign that is based around a church has so many people in it who don't believe in God.'

The Bonsall Street 8 were arrested in February 1988 when they left a VMDC demonstration to go to the assistance of a black person being attacked by the police.

Five of the eight comrades were found guilty on a variety of charges of obstruction of the highway and the police and given conditional discharges with costs. Sonia and Derek were found guilty of assault and are awaiting sentence pending a social inquiry. They will appear for sentencing on 9 March. Fairclough has already indicated that he wants to give a custodial sentence.

The seven comrades arrested at Gatwick airport in London on the day of Viraj's deportation have had their trials postponed and a date has yet to be fixed for them.

Two comrades in London, Dominic and Jay, were charged with conspiracy to cause criminal damage to the Sri Lankan High Commission. The Commission was daubed with pro-Viraj slogans. Having failed to arrest those who actually did the painting, the police picked on Dominic and Jay because they happened to have VMDC leaflets and pamphlets in their possession.

The VMDC is mounting a major campaign to get all these charges dropped. A leaflet and petition have been produced, all the court hearings are being picketed and the public galleries packed with supporters.

We have to ensure in particular that Sonia and Adrian are not sent to prison. The police are using all their lying techniques to have the comrades sent down. They are looking for revenge. Following Viraj's deportation they are trying to criminalise political activists who resisted them for four years. They are looking for revenge. We must ensure that they do not succeed.



Eamonn Mullen, IRSP member, at the VMDC rally, see article on the new PTA, page 6

## Responding to racists

On 4 February, 3,000 VMDC supporters demonstrated in Manchester against Viraj's deportation. A long line of mounted police flanked over 50 contingents who marched from the Church of the Ascension to Manchester city centre. The broad, fighting forces that the VMDC had united were all present proclaiming their determination to continue the struggle against deportations.

At the final rally, Father John Methuen to thunderous applause congratulated the VMDC for putting the issue of immigration controls at the centre of British politics and ended with the slogan 'No More Deportations!'. Eddie Abrahams speaking on behalf of the RCG highlighted the contribution the VMDC had made to the British working class movement and committed our organisation to

defending its achievements. In a final rallying speech Sarah Ricca read a message from Viraj in which he said: 'It should not be forgotten that the vendetta the Home Office has against me is because I am a communist, a member of the RCG... without the role played by the RCG, it would not have been possible to launch such a successful fightback... without a strong communist current there cannot be an effective anti-deportation movement.'

The demonstration was a resounding response to the racist press who thought they could celebrate Viraj's deportation without opposition. It silenced those hooligans who, once Viraj was deported, sang anti-Viraj songs in pubs and restaurants. They have been silenced.

## Sri Lanka today

Sri Lanka's 15 February general election, the first for 12 years - a very democratic country indeed - witnessed an unprecedented eruption of reactionary violence. In the eight weeks preceding the elections over 700 people were killed in political assassinations carried out overwhelmingly by Government death squads and the JVP. In the bloodiest polling day in its history, 39 people were killed on 15 February alone.

Sri Lanka's ruling United National Party won 125 out of the 225 seats and will rule for another six years. This is the party that has been responsible,

along with the Indian army, for the genocidal war against the Tamil people. This is the party which is letting loose death squads against its opponents. UNP leader and President Premadasa gave the world an idea of the UNP's 'democratic' character when speaking of the Tamils he said 'Unless we kill every one of them, all talks are useless.'

Is it any wonder that Viraj Mendis must still remain in hiding? Just a few weeks after the election, Sri Lankan police raided the home of Viraj's family, as if warning that they are after him.

## Policing the VMDC

In February Manchester's Chief Constable, James Anderton, presented his report on the police operation against Viraj. It yet again exposes the Government's hypocrisy and duplicity.



According to Anderton, plans for the kidnapping began as early as 6 January when 'a request was received... for assistance in the enforcement of the Deportation Order against Mr Mendis.' (item 13). This request from the Home Office came only days after the very same Home Office had offered *not* to raid the Church if Viraj agreed to go to a third country. The request was made on the same day as

the Home Office was officially notified that Viraj had agreed to their offer.

The report also reveals how the police function as a political force keeping a close record of all VMDC public speeches and statements. It noted that the VMDC had not dropped its defences following the Home Office 'offer': 'On 5 January they (the VMDC) issued a so called 'emergency bulletin' to 'resist the latest Home Office threat to remove Viraj... and defeat the campaign' (item 22). The report goes on to state that: 'on the most recent marches speakers and protesters had openly... called for violent (*sic*) action against any attempt by the authorities to remove Mr Mendis.' (item 24).

The most interesting aspect of the report is its assessment of the period immediately following Viraj's kidnapping: 'policing the aftermath was, however, a major operation... over a protracted period' (item 67). It goes on to state that: 'The potential for major disorder remained high for several days...' (item 68).

Despite what the VMDC's detractors claim, the VMDC built a force powerful enough to cause serious concern within the bastion of the British ruling class's defenders - its racist police. ■



VMDC and supporters marching in Manchester

# The way forward

On Sunday 26 February the VMDC held an extraordinary General Meeting following the kidnapping and deportation of RCG member Viraj Mendis.

The main resolution from the campaign committee proposed making the defence of 19 VMDC supporters arrested and charged by the police a top priority. It was pointed out that the police would use these trials to gain revenge for the VMDC's four and a half years of resistance.

The VMDC will also continue working to secure Viraj's safety and well-being and will launch a major National Fund Appeal to help pay debts and all the forthcoming court costs.

Following the completion of these tasks, the VMDC will maintain its relationship with the anti-racist and socialist movement through monthly meetings and a monthly bulletin. Its experience will thus be available for any individual or organisation who needs assistance in Manchester and nationally.

During the course of the day's deb-

ate, the RCG's strategy, which so effectively guided and sustained the campaign, was criticised by comrades from the WRP (*Workers Press*) and Steve Cohen, a prominent anti-racist solicitor working with the South Manchester Law Centre.

The comrades congratulated the VMDC on its enormous achievements. Oddly however, they went on to claim that all along the VMDC had had the wrong strategy! They argued that it did not have any 'orientation to the labour movement' and did 'not mobilise its rank and file'.

It was pointed out that the VMDC had attended hundreds and hundreds of trade union and Labour Party meetings and as a result won enormous support from the labour movement.

Our critics knew this, but still persevered with their criticisms. By an 'orientation to the labour movement' they meant that we should subordinate ourselves to the opportunist official labour movement, that we

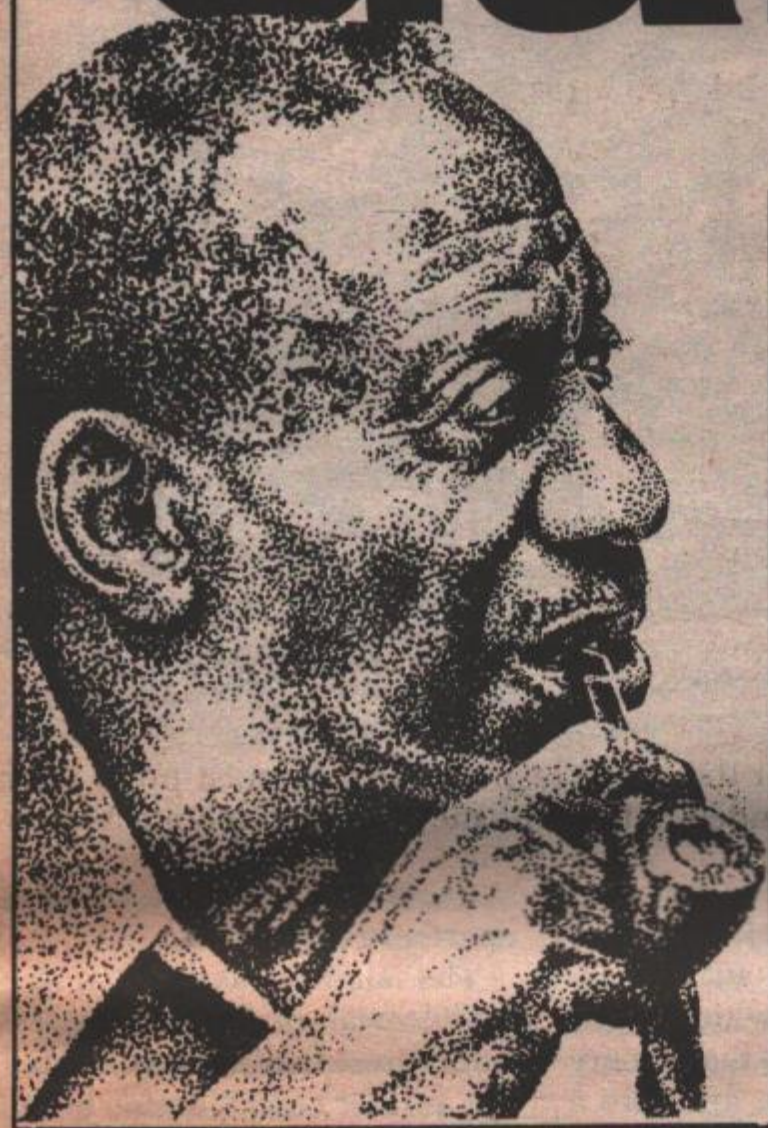
should allow it to dictate the character and pace of our work. This the RCG has refused to do. We knew from their racist record, from their scabbing on the miners, print workers, nurses and seafarers that they would also have scabbed on Viraj and betrayed him.

The RCG's strategy of organising and mobilising first among the working class communities and other forces independent of the deadening grip of the official labour movement is what allowed the VMDC to bring the issue of the racist immigration controls to the centre of the British political stage.

The overwhelming majority of voters rejected these criticisms by voting down amendments the comrades had put to the main VMDC committee motion. The comradely debate ended with everyone, whilst holding to their own position, supporting the main resolution and committing themselves to work for defence of all comrades arrested and charged by the police.

THIS PAGE WAS COMPILED BY EDDIE ABRAHAMS, MARK BROWN, ED JONES AND SARAH RICCA

# Marcus Garvey



In the first part of this century, Marcus Garvey (right) built a powerful black organisation in the United States, Harry Haywood (left) of the Communist Party of the USA, called Garvey's UNIA the 'first great nationalist movement', but criticised its diversion 'into reactionary separatist channels'. Today, the debate continues. Labour opportunists and black nationalists are promoting Garvey's outlook as a guide for anti-racist action today. EDDIE ABRAHAMS and SUSAN DAVIDSON examine the communist standpoint on the heritage of Marcus Garvey.



1987 and 1988 were important anniversaries in the struggle for black liberation. In 1838 slavery was abolished in the British Caribbean colonies. In 1887 Marcus Garvey, an outstanding pioneer of black nationalism, was born in Jamaica on 17 August. These anniversaries were used by a variety of Labour Party opportunists and black nationalists to present Marcus Garvey's political outlook and contribution as a valid guide for the struggle against racism and imperialism today.

Garvey dedicated his life to the fight for his people, 'the mighty Negro race' as he put it. He was a writer, publisher, newspaper editor, political organiser and agitator. To this day many claim to be following in his footsteps.

Within the communist and anti-racist movement there continues to be fierce debate about Garvey's actual political outlook and its contribution to the struggle for black liberation and socialism. This debate dates back to the height of his influence when he was leading the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) - a truly popular movement based among the impoverished black masses in the USA during the post-World War One era.

Garvey's ideas retain a resonance among sections of the petit-bourgeoisie and Labour Party engaged in the fight against racism today. Thus it is all the more necessary for communists to understand the significance and contradictory character of Garvey's heritage.

## GARVEY - POLITICAL ORGANISER

In 1909, at the age of 22, already an accomplished journalist, Garvey left Jamaica for a tour which took him through Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Columbia, Venezuela and Panama.

In all these countries he witnessed first hand the appalling poverty, suffering and exploitation of fellow Jamaicans forced to leave their homes in search of work and livelihood. In

Panama he was particularly shocked by the conditions of workers constructing the Panama Canal.

As he travelled he lectured and harangued workers in the tobacco fields, the mines and factories attempting to organise them to improve their conditions.

He returned to Jamaica in 1914 where he took his first major step as a political organiser when he founded the UNIA. His travels had convinced him that the scattering of African people throughout the world at the mercy of white exploiters was the source of their weakness. The UNIA's founding statement proclaimed that it aimed 'To unite all Negro people in the world in one great body to establish a country and a government absolutely our own.'

Garvey was to extend his vision of black liberation to include the liberation of Africa which was then divided up among the major European imperialist powers. He adopted the slogan 'Africa for the Africans - At Home and Abroad'

Whilst the UNIA did not initially grow in Jamaica, it became a mass movement in the United States very rapidly after Garvey arrived there in 1916. This success led to an immediate clash with the then dominant organisation amongst black people - the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People). By 1919, the UNIA had over 30 branches in different cities and claimed a membership of over 2 million. Garvey's newspaper, *The Negro World*, was printed in Spanish, French and English and had a large international distribution. In many colonies it was banned. Penalties for possession were usually five years. In French Dahomey it was life.

## GARVEY AND THE BLACK WORKING CLASS

The UNIA that Garvey built in the USA represented a mass break-away of black people from the bourgeois NAACP. The rift between the bourgeois leadership of the NAACP and the actual conditions of poverty, unemployment and racism faced by the mass of black people after the first

world war led the rising movement of black people to look elsewhere for leadership - they turned to Marcus Garvey and UNIA.

However, neither Garvey's organisation nor politics were capable of dealing with the masses' democratic and social demands. Black communist Harry Haywood spoke of this 'first great nationalist movement' being 'diverted into reactionary separatist channels' which: 'under the generalship of Garvey... was diverted from a potentially anti-imperialist course into channels of "peaceful return to Africa"':

In preparation for such a return to Africa, the UNIA held a conference in 1920 when 25,000 delegates packed Madison Square Gardens to discuss its practicalities. In an almost carnival atmosphere Garvey was proclaimed Provisional President of Africa to rule with the aid of a court of dukes and nobles created by the movement in the image of the European aristocracy.

Garvey enthusiastically sponsored the development of black capitalist enterprises. Profits from these were to finance the 'return to Africa'. In 1919 the *Black Star Shipping Line* was established, followed the next year by a Negroes' Factories Corporation which developed a chain of grocery stores, restaurants and laundries to be managed only by and for black people.

Whatever its idealistic intentions, this programme actually served the immediate needs of the black petit-bourgeoisie in a period of economic crisis which had devastated the ghetto economy. Additionally the UNIA's lack of democratic organisation prevented genuine representatives of the black working class, including communists, taking leadership positions in the movement.

## GARVEY, CAPITALISM AND COMMUNISM

One reason for Garvey's phenomenal, though passing, success was the inability of the newly formed Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA) to make central the question of racism and the leading role of the black working class in any communist movement in the USA. There were

those within the CPUSA who even denied the existence of racism and viewed all matters only as 'class' issues. Thus they deliberately turned a blind eye to white chauvinism and the racism of the labour aristocracy. The revolutionary trend in the CPUSA were forever having to conduct fights against the racism of large sections of the Party membership. So in effect, the labour movement in the USA, and the CPUSA in particular, failed to unite with the emerging black working class, which therefore quite naturally supported non-communist, indeed anti-communist and black separatist forces such as Garvey's UNIA.

While communists and Garveyites did on occasion make alliances in social struggles, they were more frequently engaged in bitterly hostile confrontations. As communists developed their work in black areas such as Harlem and began to have success in organising working class people, Garvey launched an openly anti-working class and anti-communist campaign.

Garvey opposed black and white workers organising together. While communists fought to organise and improve the conditions of all workers, black and white, Garvey was advising black workers to sign no-strike deals and to scab. He declared:

'... the only convenient friend the Negro worker or labourer has in America at the present time is the white capitalist... If the Negro takes my advice he will organise by himself and always keep his scale of wage a little lower than the whites until he is able to become, through proper leadership, his own employer...'

In 1924, at the UNIA's International Convention, Robert Minor, a communist, proposed an alliance between the UNIA and CPUSA to fight racism in the trade unions and together to declare war on the Ku Klux Klan. Garvey opposed these.

He didn't merely oppose communists fighting anti-racism, he actively collaborated with the racists. He called communist attacks on the KKK an 'act of political suicide'. It was in this same year that Garvey met

Colonel Simmons, Imperial Grand Wizard of the KKK and invited John Powel, organiser of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs to address the UNIA. This criminal collaboration was undertaken in the belief that it could hasten the repatriation of black US citizens to Africa.

The UNIA which in its first period gave thousands upon thousands of black people a sense of dignity and confidence disintegrated rapidly because of Garvey's petit bourgeois politics; his escapist programme of 'return to Africa' was an obstacle to a militant fight for democratic rights in the USA. His separatism led him to say:

'We are not organising to fight against or disrespect the Government of America.'

In the meantime, the example of the sheer determination of communists to fight on in campaigns ranging from 'No Work, No Rent' and anti-lynching demonstrations, fighting the police, risking arrest and imprisonment in daily activity won to their membership many who became disillusioned with Garvey's schemes. However, the CPUSA failed to make the issue of black liberation central to its platform and gradually succumbed to the chauvinism of the USA labour movement. Thus, the CPUSA lost any support it did have among the black working class. It was left to a few isolated communists such as Harry Haywood, and later in the 70s George Jackson, outside of the CPUSA, to develop the correct communist position which placed the black working class and the struggle against racism at the very centre of a revolutionary working class movement.

Despite Garvey's petit-bourgeois politics, the US ruling class could not tolerate any significant black organisation with a mass base. The FBI therefore framed Garvey, jailed him for two years and then deported him to Jamaica in 1927. Until his death in 1940 in London, Garvey remained active in black politics but never with the same mass following he enjoyed in the USA. ■

## RCP - racism understood?

**Under Siege - Racial Violence in Britain Today**, Keith Tompson, Penguin, £3.99, 204pp.

Keith Tompson presents examples of racist attacks, police harassment and deportation threats - showing that black people are indeed under siege. The defence of black people in East London and the campaigns of George Roucou and Metso Moncrieffe against deportation make for good reading. However, it is when Tompson attempts to introduce the RCP's politics that *Under Siege* runs into problems.

Communists seek to understand and explain the material foundations of racism. Tompson does not: 'imperialism' gets no mention in a chapter headed 'Racism: roots and development'. Instead, racism is given a dynamic all of its own: 'at its inception, British racism was the property only of a patriotic elite... by the close of the nineteenth century, however, racism had permeated most sections of society and had begun to influence significant parts of the working class' (p55). Just how racism 'permeated' is anyone's guess. Perhaps it happened to be 'out in the open air' (p65) waiting to be unsuspectingly inhaled.

Whilst racism hovered around, 'for the first time a substantial fraction of workers began to identify with the nation-state: it seemed that their

livelihoods, jobs and welfare depended on Britain's remaining top dog' (p56). The question crying out to be answered - ie, which 'fraction' of workers - is not addressed by Tompson. Three pages later we are given the discovery that 'it is employers, not workers, who benefit from racism'. Tompson simply refuses to recognise the deep divisions in the working class.

Communists understand that a section of the working class gains materially from imperialism's plunder of oppressed nations. The chief political expression of this privileged stratum is the Labour Party and the trade union movement. Racism is vital to the interests of this labour aristocracy - preserving its privileged status and ensuring that black people continue to do the worst jobs with the poorest pay and conditions and least rights. Tompson does not recognise this reality of British politics.

*Under Siege* smacks throughout of the RCP's own inimitable brand of racism and arrogance: 'no anti-racist movement can be successful unless it moves large numbers of white people to oppose racial violence' (p152, my emphasis); and 'the real issue is not for black self-defence, and even less of police intervention, but for the mobilisation of white people so that they want actively to eradicate harassment' (p139, Tompson's emphasis). For the RCP black people are merely the

passive recipients of solidarity from the (white) labour movement, to whom exclusively *Under Siege* is addressed: 'our appeal must not be to humanitarianism but to self-interest' (p137). The RCP poses as 'a credible alternative to Mrs Thatcher' (p153). This empty posturing reveals that, whilst its theory is ultra-left, the RCP's practice is opportunist. The RCP looks to the labour movement to form the basis of an anti-racist struggle. It has yet to absorb the thoroughly racist history of the labour movement and learn that the fight against racism can only be built outside of it.

To racism and arrogance, add sectarianism. The campaign to stop the deportation of Viraj Mendis is deliberately omitted. The RCP not only did nothing to contribute to the campaign - it actively organised attacks on it. A leaflet distributed by the RCP at a VMDC conference in April 1987 dismissed Viraj's sanctuary as little more than 'the heroism of a minority'. When black people are under threat and fight back against their oppression they are only a 'minority' - much more important work awaits the RCP in the white working class.

Read this book for the case studies. If, however, you want a political analysis of racism and its significance in British working class struggle, you will be frustrated. Better material exists elsewhere. ■

Virman Man

## Sectarians' guide to South Africa

**The Struggle for South Africa: A Reference Guide to Movements, Organizations and Institutions** compiled by Rob Davies, Dan O'Meara and Sipho Dlamini. New edition published by Zed Press. Volumes 1 and 2, each £7.95 in paperback.

The authors intend to provide both 'a coherent analysis of the current struggle in South Africa' and 'a reference manual to provide information on specific organisations'. Volume 1 covers overall history, state structures and ruling class organisations. Volume 2 goes into the liberation movements, trade unions and other forces of opposition.

Armed with a 'Marxist perspective' the authors set off with a crisp step: 'The national oppression of black people in South Africa is a product of, and was indeed the necessary historical condition for, the development of capitalism in that country' and 'Apartheid... is much more than a system of intense racial discrimination... it is a system of economic, social and political relations designed to produce cheap and controlled black labour, and so generate high rates of profit (p2).'

So far, so good. But the direction wavers: 'Both the historical development and contemporary functioning of the apartheid system can only be understood through an analysis of, the contradictions around and the interlinked processes of capital accumulation, class struggle and national liberation.'

What does this ambiguous formulation mean? A Marxist perspective is certainly necessary to elucidate these 'interlinked processes', not simply to understand the history or functioning of apartheid, but from the point of view of the oppressed black working class, ie the class which is driven to finding a solution to its problems by destroying all vestiges of the apartheid system. Marxism teaches that the black working class will only be able to resolve these contradictions through its conquest of political power, and that to build a socialist society the forces of racism and capitalism will have to be suppressed by a new state power. However, the authors never manage to bring into focus the discussion on the alliances of the oppressed classes required to abolish apartheid and replace it with a socialist society.

One device of those who wish to disconnect the fight against apartheid and the fight to destroy capitalism is to emphasise the discontinuities before and after 1948 when the Nationalist Party was elected by the whites. Before 1948, the argument runs, South Africa was a British neocolony under the direct control of the mining magnates, but the plebian Afrikaners took South Africa in an extreme racist direction counter to the interests of the English-speaking whites and British democracy. From then on anti-fascist Britain had a potentially progressive role to play in pressurising the Afrikaners in the direction of reform. To isolate apartheid the progressive forces must strike a strategic alliance with the British establishment and liberal white opposition. Even though both sections support the preservation of capitalism, they are opposed to apartheid. In concrete political



action the separation between apartheid and capitalism is complete. The *Guide's* authors accept their model which leads them to obscure the reactionary role of imperialism, and into a sharp sectarianism to those black liberation forces who do not accept its constraints on their right to self-determination.

Davies *et al* write of the 'historical development of racial capitalism, 1652-1948'. Thereafter there is no clear reference to racial capitalism. Once it had developed into its modern form, evidently, it ceased to exist. 1948 did not see an end to racial capitalism. Apartheid's onslaught, the intensification of the national oppression of black people, came in the immediate post-war period. The British Labour Government was installing fascist regimes across the world. Britain required guaranteed supplies of gold and uranium from its South African dominion, and the mine owners demanded a crackdown on African labour. While the Nationalist Party cut average black wages over the next five years (p22), and raised *all* whites to the status of incredible privilege, British investment leapt by £500 million.

Apartheid's post-war boom was concentrated in manufacturing and commerce, and in the transformation of agriculture into huge 'agribusiness' white capitalist farms. The *Guide's* economic analysis does highlight one critical point:

'Given that the manufacturing sector is fundamentally dependent on imported capital goods, and... a net user of foreign exchange earned by other sectors', South Africa's capitalist economy 'depends on its receipts of foreign exchange, firstly through the sale of its exports - particularly of minerals, and above all, gold - and secondly the influx of foreign capital' (p53).

Unfortunately, this observation is not carried through to its consequences. Because gold is the international money commodity, its production not only ties South African monopoly capital to the Bantustan cheap labour system, it is the umbilical cord

connecting imperialism with apartheid capitalism.

The authors show that the withdrawal of foreign capital from direct investments has led to a further consolidation of the local monopolies. In 1981 the top eight South African companies controlled 61.66% of the total assets of non-state corporations; by the end of 1985 the top six controlled 79.5%, and Anglo-American's acquisition of the subsidiary of Barclays Bank for R526 million in 1986 centralises capital ownership even more. But the implication does not follow that imperialism has a diminishing stake in the preservation of apartheid's fundamental structures. Imperialism remains apartheid's banker. The loans granted Botha by Western financiers do not get a mention in the *Guide's* analysis of the 1984-86 upsurge, yet politically they were crucial in giving the apartheid state the means to execute its repression.

The entries in Volume 2 of this 'reference guide' on the PAC, Black Consciousness Movement, AZAPO and the Unity Movement show no attempt to let those organisations speak for themselves. They are written in such a mean-minded fashion that I am forced to conclude that the authors' aim is to spread misinformation on any of the 'various individual organisations' from the liberation struggle who do not fall within the sphere of influence of the South African Communist Party or the African National Congress. While the ANC's guiding programme, the Freedom Charter, is reproduced in full, other documents (the 10 point programme, the 1949 Programme of Action, the Manifesto of the Azanian People) which provide alternative perspectives are merely referred to selectively to make a criticism.

To travel a difficult journey to its final destination one needs a reliable guide, but this is not it. I would rather recommend *History of Southern Africa* by J D Omer-Cooper, *Apartheid: The Story of a Dispossessed People* by Motsoko Pheko and *South Africa: Time of Agony, Time of Destiny* by Martin Murray. ■

Andy Higginbottom

## Poems from Nicaragua

**Nicaraguan New Time.** Poems by Ernesto Cardenal, Translated by Dinah Livingstone, illustrated by Armando Morales. Journeyman £3.50, 96pp

This is an excellent collection of the poems of Ernesto Cardenal, priest, revolutionary and Minister of Culture in the Nicaraguan government. Dinah Livingstone's introductions says:

In September more coyotes were seen round San Ubaldo.  
More alligators shortly after the triumph, in the rivers near San Ubaldo.  
More rabbits in the road and grisons...

The bird population has tripled, they say, especially the tree duck.  
The noisy ducks fly down to swim where they see the water shining.

Somoza's men also destroyed lakes, rivers and mountains.  
They diverted rivers for their estates.  
The Ochomogo dried up last summer.  
The Sinecapa dried because of the great landowners' tree-felling.

The Matagalpa Rio Grande ran dry during the war,  
over the plains of Sebaco.  
They built two dams on the Ochomogo and capitalist chemical waste crashed into the river whose fish staggered like drunks.

The River Boaco has filthy water.  
The Moyuá lagoon dried up. A Somoza colonel stole the lands from the peasants and built a dam.  
The Moyuá lagoon for centuries so lovely where it lay.  
(But now the little fishes will come back.)  
They felled and dammed.

Few iguanas in the sun, few armadillos.

Somoza sold the green Caribbean turtle.  
They exported sea turtle and iguana eggs in lorries.  
The caguama turtle is becoming extinct.

'The Nicaraguan Ministry of Culture sees the Revolution's job as restoring their whole past and present culture to the people - whose wealth it is - just as it is restoring their land.'

One of the poems, *New Ecology*, illustrates this point beautifully:

José Somoza has been putting an end to the sawfish in the Great Lake.  
Extinction threatens the ocelot with its soft wood-coloured pelt, and the puma and the tapir in the mountains (like the peasants in the mountains).

And poor River Chiquito! Its disgrace shames the whole country.  
Somoza's ways befouling its waters.  
The River Chiquito of León, choked with sewage, and effluent from soap and tanning factories, white waste from soap, red from tanneries, its bed bestrewn with plastic junk, chamber pots and rusty iron.  
That was Somoza's legacy.  
(We must see it running clear and sweet again singing its way to the sea.)

All Managua's filthy water in Lake Managua and chemical waste.  
And over in Solentiname, on the isle of La Zanata a big white heap of stinking sawfish bones.

But now the sawfish and the freshwater shark can breathe again.  
Once more Tisma's waters mirror many herons.  
It has lots of little grackles, garganeys, tree ducks, kiskadees.

And flowers are flourishing.  
Armadillos are very happy with this government.  
We are recovering forests, streams, lagoons.  
We are going to decontaminate Lake Managua.

Not only humans longed for liberation.  
All ecology groaned. The revolution is also for animals, rivers, lakes and trees.



# The lives and times of Marx and Engels

Karl Marx was born 171 years ago on 5 May 1818 in the German town of Trier. Frederick Engels, two years younger, was also born in Germany, in Barmen, on 28 November 1820. EDDIE ABRAHAMS opens the series of articles on the basic principles of Marxism with a biographical sketch of two communists who shook the world.

These were stormy times. The French Revolution was just three decades into the past. In 1789 the French bourgeoisie had seized political power and under the leadership of Robespierre ruthlessly destroyed the feudal aristocracy. Despite the modern bourgeois distaste for 'exporting revolution', Napoleon successfully did this, until his defeat in Russia in 1812. The path was thus opened for capitalist development. Capitalism which had developed substantially only in Britain, began to make rapid progress throughout Western Europe.

The years preceding and immediately following the French Revolution were also marked by a major ideological challenge to the dogmas and prejudices of feudalism. To mobilise the social and political forces necessary for the defeat of feudalism, the bourgeoisie and its allies subjected feudal ideology to a devastating criticism. Rousseau, Holbach, Helvétius, Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, Adam Smith, Ricardo, are a few of the great minds of the progressive era of bourgeois society in revolutionary combat against feudalism.

The Germany into which Marx and Engels were born was influenced by these economic, political and intellectual developments. The progressive and democratic movement in the country, encompassing the sections of the bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie and the still-tiny working class, had as its main slogan the unification of Germany. At the time Germany was divided into 38 separate states whose petty divisions and differences were obstacles to the development of capitalism. In addition the reactionary political and ideological sway of the ruling nobility and top bureaucracy was a frustrating fetter upon the progressive and democratic forces.

## MARX AND ENGELS JOIN THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

From their early youth, both participated actively in the democratic movement. In 1835 Marx entered university, first in Bonn and then Berlin. Engels had no formal higher education and by 1837 was working in his father's textile business. But he was an avid reader and what Marx studied in university Engels studied in his spare time. With enormous enthusiasm they engaged in a critical study of the great bourgeois and classical thinkers. They subjected philosophy, history, religion and politics to a thoroughgoing revolutionary scrutiny. They also began contributing articles and pamphlets to the democratic press.

Fired by a desire to attain political justice and human liberation, Marx and Engels had an aversion for any sort of academicism, for knowledge for its own sake. Knowledge and criticism was useful only in so far as it had a practical expression and contribut-

ed to liberating humanity. Political action in the revolutionary democratic movement was always their first concern. In 1843 Marx, in a brilliant article, wrote: '... criticism of the speculative philosophy of law finds its progression not within itself but in tasks which can only be solved in one way - through practice...' (A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction in Marx and Engels Collected Works Volume 3.)

And the aim of practice is to liberate humanity. The matter is put this way, in the same article: 'The criticism of religion ends with the doctrine that for man the supreme being is man, and thus with the categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions in which man is a debased, enslaved, neglected and contemptible creature.'

In his famous criticism of Feuerbach, a materialist philosopher who influenced Marx and Engels, Marx said: 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point however is to change it.'

## THE ROAD TO COMMUNISM

Being committed to political action as the only true human action, Marx and Engels joined the Young Hegelians - the ideological representatives of German petit-bourgeois democracy. They were quickly sickened by its empty, bombastic phrase-mongering and its refusal to engage in serious political activity.

Witnessing the cowardly, vacillating and feeble postures of the German bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie, Marx and Engels saw in the emerging working class, the most oppressed class, the only serious and consistent agency for attaining liberty and justice. Their studies and experience also led them to the conclusion that private property and capitalist exploitation were the source of human suffering in the modern age. In 1844 Marx and Engels wrote: '... private property drives itself, in its economic movement towards its own dissolution... it produces the proletariat... The proletariat executes the sentence that private property pronounces on itself by producing the proletariat...'

The working class in the fight to liberate itself liberates all of humanity. It '... is driven directly to revolt against this inhumanity [of capitalism]... the proletariat can and must emancipate itself. But it cannot emancipate itself without abolishing the conditions of its own life. It cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing all the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own situation.'

Their entire experience and study led them to see in the working class the force of the future. In 1842 Engels had travelled to Britain and came



1848 - year of revolutions in France, Italy, Germany and Hungary

under the influence of the English working class and the Chartists in particular. On returning to Germany, not yet 25, he wrote *The Condition of the English Working Class* (1844) - a splendid document exposing the terrible exploitation and oppression of the working class. In its preface Engels writes: 'I accuse the English bourgeoisie before the entire world of murder, robbery, and all sorts of other crimes on a mass scale... Those fellows shall have to remember me in the future.'

While Engels was being influenced in the direction of communism in Britain, Marx was moving in the same direction through his own studies. The two, though they had met in passing, established their life-long collaboration in 1844 when after extensive discussions they realised they both shared the same outlook - that of Communism.

## IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE AGAINST PETIT BOURGEOIS OPPORTUNISTS

By 1845, Marx and Engels were ready to split from the Young Hegelians. Absolute idealists, the Young Hegelians had contempt for the masses, they denied the role of the people in history and believed that chatter-boxes were the real saviours of humanity. Seeking to stand above the class struggle they 'criticised' both the bourgeoisie and the working class. Marx and Engels agreed to collaborate in a battle against them.

They took up the battle with astounding energy, verve and wit. In 1845 Engels wrote: 'A war has been declared against those of the German philosophers, who refuse to draw from their mere theories practical inferences and who contend that man has nothing to do but to speculate upon metaphysical questions... [these] representatives of abstract German philosophy [are]... the only important philosophical opponents

of socialism - or rather Communism.' Marx and Engels were aware of the damage that opportunists and windbags were capable of doing to the revolutionary and democratic movement. Conscious of the need to destroy their influence, they wrote dozens of polemical articles, pamphlets and books.

It was in this war against the Young Hegelians that they first set forth the basic principles of historical materialism, of dialectical materialism and scientific socialism. Jointly written, *The Holy Family* (1844) and *The German Ideology* (1845-6) exposed the ideological poverty and pettiness of the enemies of communism and the working class. In these books they set out the principles of communism which would be later transformed into a mighty force in the *Communist Manifesto*.

Responding to the idealism of the Young Hegelians, they write in *The German Ideology*: 'Our conception of history... does not explain practice from the idea, but explains the foundation of ideas from material practice [and we conclude]... that all forms and products of consciousness cannot be dissolved by mental criticism... but only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations which gave rise to this idealistic humbug... not criticism but revolution is the driving force of history...'

Many years later, in 1859, Marx succinctly expressed the new world outlook they developed some 15 years earlier: 'In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to

which correspond definite forms of consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness.'

Beginning from these materialist premises, Marx and Engels were able to demonstrate that communism was not some product of a few fantastic brains but a real movement determined by real social, material and productive forces. In *The German Ideology* they write: 'Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence.'

In 1847 in a polemic against the anti-communist Heinzen, Engels was writing: 'Communism, insofar as it is a theory, is the theoretical expression of the position of the proletariat in this struggle and the theoretical summation of the conditions for the liberation of the proletariat.'

But both understood that this liberation could be achieved only in practice through political action. Both understood that 'theory becomes a material force once it has gripped the masses.' So in 1847 they both joined the League of the Just, formed by Blanqui in 1836. It was a communist organisation. Under their influence it was renamed the Communist League at its 1847 Congress and accepted the scientific principles argued for by Marx and Engels. They were asked to write the League's programme. They produced *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* which was published in February 1848, the month when the European revolutions of 1848 began. ■

# Organise with FRFI

LORNA REID

In February we held dayschools for our members and supporters on Political Economy which discussed Marx's Theory of Value introduced by Robert Clough and Andy Higginbottom and the Political Economy of Thatcherism introduced by David Reed. Robert and Andy explained the development of commodity production and the categories Marx used to illustrate it. Following Marx's own arguments they developed an understanding of the commodity, money and capital.

In his analysis of the political economy of Thatcherism, David Reed stressed that it is politically vital to understand Marx's analysis of the capitalist system and the contradictions inherent in it. It is only through this understanding, he argued, that we can understand the real state of the foundations of British capitalism and not be deceived by the confidence and political posturing of the Tories.

To understand Thatcherism we need to understand the post-war boom and in particular the crisis of Keynesianism. He reminded us that it took two world wars, a great depression and fascism to restore the conditions for a profitable accumulation of capital after the second world war.

The post-war boom required certain conditions: the defeats of the working class - fascism and war were expressions of this defeat; the enormous destruction and depreciation of capital during the war; and the dominance of US imperialism which temporarily resolved inter-imperialist rivalries. Marshall Aid after 1948 and the export of US capital laid the basis for the introduction of new technologies in Europe and Japan at a higher rate of exploitation and a higher rate of profit. It also consolidated the dominance of US capital worldwide.

Nevertheless after the experience of war and depression in some countries, the restoration of capital accumulation was necessarily at a political cost. In Britain the maintenance of full employment, the rising levels of social expenditure and rising standards of living were the price capital had to pay for the industrial and political integration of the working class in the immediate post war period. As the post-war boom



Supporters Groups will be holding meetings - Ireland: from Civil Rights to Revolution

developed the contradictions in the capital accumulation process reasserted themselves and the rate of profit began to fall. By the late 1960s the growth of state expenditure and the expansion of credit which had sustained the accumulation process in the face of a falling rate of profit now only produced growing unemployment and rising prices. Inter-imperialist rivalries began to reassert themselves as the dominance of US imperialism was challenged.

The crisis of Keynesianism signalled the end of the social democratic state and capital went on the offensive and used the state to restructure the relationship between capital and the working class. The balance of class forces had to change. Thatcherism represents the ruling class strategy to carry out this change.

An essential component of Thatcher's success has been the political and ideological fragmentation of the working class - a divided working class. This in turn has been based on the very real differences in the material conditions of sections of the working class. A situation which the Thatcher government has created and perpetuated. Today, 'new realism', 'post fordism' and the earlier alternative economic strategies (shamefaced socialism) are the polit-

ical standpoint of the more privileged sections of the working class. They are dangerous in that they undermine the working class ideologically. David Reed concluded by saying that communism, scientific socialism, is designed to combat these positions and we must be equipped to argue the ideological standpoint which can organise the class politically to fight back.

The next in our series of dayschools this year is the French Revolution and the Paris Commune which will be held in April.

Following the news from Armley prison of the deaths in custody of five young men in quick succession our comrades in Leeds and Bradford took to the streets with the demand - Close Down Armley. On Saturday 18 February we held a street meeting in the Roundhay area of Leeds and sold 102 copies of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* The following week we petitioned outside Armley itself during visiting hours. The screws took exception to us raising the demand to close down Armley on their doorstep and insisted that we move away. We refused to move and, through the support we received from visitors entering the prison, we managed to hold our ground. We sold 46 copies of

FRFI to the visitors. This month we will be holding a Readers and Supporters Group in Leeds to discuss the issue of democratic rights for prisoners and to expose the conditions for young people detained in British jails.

Readers and Supporters Groups held in February were on the topics of Britain's Political Prisoners' and 'Whose World? Communists and the Environment'.

The response of the British left to concern about the crisis of the environment is to reject it as a 'deviation from political realities'. Their position is economist in its outlook. They are denying the right of the working class to seize control of its own destiny. Capitalism, in its ruthless pursuit of profit, exploits the resources of our world as well as our labour power. Therefore, it is in our interests, as the working class to fight to guarantee the future of our world and defend it from imperialist plunder. We discussed the significance of third world debt and its contribution to the environmental crisis.

It is the duty of communists to stand in solidarity with the oppressed peoples in their fight against environmental and human exploitation. Here in Britain we have a duty to raise awareness of the environment. The RCG has recently converted to recycled paper for our leaflets and internal circulars. We encourage our readers not to buy CFC based products and to seek alternatives.

In March and April we will be discussing the following topics at our Readers and Supporters Groups: Armley prison, Afghanistan and the Poll Tax. In preparation for our annual delegation to the anti-internment commemoration in Belfast in August, we will be holding a Readers and Supporters Group on the struggle in Ireland - From Civil Rights to Revolution: 20 Years of Resistance. We will be showing the video *Off Our Knees*.

The work of the RCG requires constant funding and resources. Our work involves us working alongside those in Britain who are oppressed by Thatcher and forced to fight back in order to survive. We are not designer socialists so we do not have wealthy subscribers. We rely on you to fund our work. This month we are asking all our readers to make a solidarity donation to the RCG. In January we spent a lot of money defending our comrade Viraj Mendis. Work of this type must continue. You can help us. Join the RCG. ■

## Readers and Supporters Groups

**LONDON - Tuesday 4 April, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Nearest tube Holborn. FROM CIVIL RIGHTS TO REVOLUTION - 20 years of resistance in Ireland. Video - Off Our Knees.**

**MANCHESTER - 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month. All meetings start at 7.30pm, Gullivers, Oldham Street (Off Piccadilly), Manchester City Centre.**

**14 March - AFGHANISTAN - IMPERIALISM ON THE OFFENSIVE**  
**28 March - POLL TAX. CAN'T PAY! WON'T PAY!**

**LEEDS - Thursday 16 March, 7.30pm, Leeds Trades Union Council Club, 21 Saville Mount, Leeds 7.**

**ARMLEY PRISON - HELL HOLE. CLOSE IT DOWN!**

**For details of meetings in your area please write to FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX. Tel 01-837 1688**

**MARCH FOR JUSTICE AND FREEDOM: Guildford Four, Birmingham Six, Winchester Three, Tottenham Youth. Saturday 18 March. Assemble 12 noon. Whittington Park, Holloway Road, London N19. Joint rally Ducketts Common, Turnpike Lane. Called by Irish in Britain Representation Group and Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign.**

**10 YEARS ON ... REMEMBER BLAIR PEACH**  
**Memorial march and meeting. Sunday 23 April. Assemble 1pm, Southall Park, Uxbridge Road, Southall. March through Southall to a rally at Fenner Brockway Centre, South Road, Southall, 3pm. Organised by the Blair Peach 10th Anniversary Committee.**

**City of London Anti-Apartheid Group: REMEMBER SHARPEVILLE**  
**No more massacres!**  
**No more hangings!**  
**Rally 7pm, Tuesday 21 March, Old Theatre, LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2 (off Kingsway, nearest tube Holborn).**  
**Followed by march to the Non Stop Picket.**

**22 April 3RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE NON STOP PICKET OUTSIDE THE SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY**  
**Phone City AA 01-837 6050 for details.**

**RCG COMMUNIST FORUM ON SOUTH AFRICA**  
**Sundays at 6.30pm, Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont Street, London WC1. Nearest tube Russell Square.**

**26 March: ISOLATE APARTHEID! SANCTIONS NOW!**  
**16 April: BLACK WORKERS FIGHT BACK**  
**21 May: WORKERS AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES UNITE**

**FORTHCOMING RCG PAMPHLET: GIBRALTAR - GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER**  
A comprehensive account of the murder of the Gibraltar Three and the subsequent inquest. In a blow by blow account this pamphlet puts the British government in the dock and finds them guilty of murder. The Gibraltar Three were the latest in a long line of shoot-to-kill operations against the Irish people by the British forces.

Advance orders to BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX. Phone 837 1688 for price details.

## RCG activists gaoled

SIMON CLARKE, DAVE KENNY & LORNA REID

To cries of 'shame', on 3 February, Bow Street stipendiary magistrate Bartle sentenced RCG members and City Group activists Dave Kenny and Simon Clarke to 28 and 60 days custody respectively. Lorna Reid was sentenced to 28 days custody, suspended for two years, for police assault and given a 12-month conditional discharge for disorderly conduct. Gary Hyatt and Jenny Sutton, eight months pregnant, were convicted of police obstruction and ordered to pay costs.

The five defendants were all arrested after Lorna and Jenny attempted to remove two hostile and threatening men from the Saturday rally held by the RCG on the Non-Stop Picket: the provocateurs were allowed to walk away.

After sentence, Dave and Simon were held over the weekend at Lambeth Holding Centre, where City AA held a picket, then transferred to Brentford Police Station. On Tuesday 7 February they were granted bail at Southwark Crown Court pending their appeal, but the Judge imposed political bail condi-

tions. Simon and Dave have to reside at their home addresses and must not enter Trafalgar Square or participate in public demonstrations.

The custodial sentences given to Dave and Simon and their conditions of bail mark an intensification in the attack on City Group activists. The judges expressed their class affinity in denying Dave and Simon their right to freedom of expression, at the same time that the Tory government is attacking socialist countries for human rights breaches. Only days after Simon and Dave were sentenced the British media attacked the Czechoslovakian government for imprisoning demonstrators. Despite receiving press statements detailing the case of Simon and Dave, not one newspaper reported the imprisonment of demonstrators in Britain.

The police, in concert with the courts and provocateurs, are attempting to destroy the Non-Stop Picket through violent arrests and the threat of custody. However, just as they have failed before in destroying the picket they will fail again. The defendants are appealing against conviction and sentence. We will continue demonstrating against apartheid and its British backers. ■

## Join the action 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

## Solidarity Donation

We are asking all our readers and supporters to make a solidarity donation to Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! this month to help us fund our work. In January this year we incurred enormous expenses in defending our comrade Viraj Mendis following the police raid on the sanctuary. These expenses were over and above our day to day expenditure on funding our political work. We are asking you to make this donation in order to aid us in our political work and in the production of our publications. We need to raise £1500 by April. We need your support.

All donations should be sent to: Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.

I/We would like to make a solidarity donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

# LETTERS

## FRFI needs £500 every month!

We are asking readers to help us keep the price of the paper to 40p waged and 20p unwaged. Act now by sending us your donations to subsidise FRFI, and help us with our political work.

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

I/We want to donate £ \_\_\_\_\_ to the FRFI Fund

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## Ed Mead – political prisoner in the USA

For a period of four years, starting in early 1975, the George Jackson Brigade (GJB) provided armed support for Seattle's progressive movement. Examples of GJB actions include the bombing of the headquarters of the Department of Corrections at the state capitol in support of protesting prisoners at Walla Walla. The group also bombed the FBI office in Tacoma and the BIA office in Everett in an effort to draw police attention away from Pine Range and Rosebud reservations which at the time were being invaded by federal authorities. The group probably conducted 20 acts of bombing and sabotage.

Ed Mead was arrested on 23 January 1976 during the course of an unsuccessful bank expropriation attempt by the GJB. While the group had gone into the bank with the intention of surrendering should anything go seriously wrong, the police who arrived on the scene did not give them that opportunity. Brigade member Bruce Sidel was fatally shot in the back and another comrade received a gunshot wound in the face. Ed was captured and sentenced in state courts to two life sentences for the crime of shooting back at the police and the federal authorities imposed another 25 years for the attempted bank robbery.

Ed was sent to the Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla where he was immediately placed in the hole in a cell with human fecal matter smeared on the walls. A struggle soon developed from the segregation unit over conditions which eventually spread to the general population. After a 47 day strike, the longest in state history, prisoners were able to win most of their demands. Striking prisoners also received armed support from the

remaining members of the GJB during the struggle. Upon Ed's release from the hole he and others started a group called Men Against Sexism (MAS), the primary objective of which was to put an end to the prevalence of prisoner on prisoner rape and the buying and selling of prisoners by each other. Men Against Sexism used films and a newsletter and outside activists to accomplish its aims.

After about a year in the population the MAS leadership was slammed down in connection with an armed escape attempt.

Up until a year ago Ed and his friends published the *Abolitionist*, a state-wide prisoner-orientated newsletter which was used to help stop the routine rectal probe of Walla Walla's segregation prisoners. Their families on the outside organised themselves in to the Washington Prisoner/Family Support Group. They conducted a protest demonstration at the state capitol against the Department of Corrections and otherwise supported prisoners. Ed is presently preparing a 1990 prisoners' calendar. He is also laying the ground work for republishing the *Red Dragon*, a national quarterly prisoners' newsletter he started while in Walla Walla's segregation unit and published continuously for several years.

Today Ed is starting his fourteenth consecutive year of confinement for an offence in which neither his victims (the two police officers) were so much as scratched. He is serving this much time because he is a communist – because of his political beliefs and for no other reason. Four GJB members have already been released from custody, only two of them remain behind bars – Ed and Mark Cook. They both face substantial amounts of additional time to serve.

CARY CATHERINE

## The food scandal

The problem with both the articles on the poisoned food affair in the last two issues of *FRFI* is that they lack clear political content. *Workers Press* has had two reasonable articles on the scientific facts about salmonella; the government record, the number of cases and deaths from listeria and salmonella and the lack of compensation to victims and their families.

There are many issues that a lot of these articles glossed over. The main one is the inhumane rearing and slaughter of chicken flocks (something your articles touched on) where 400 million chickens are kept in battery houses. Up to six chickens are squashed into a cage less than half the size of this page. They are given poor quality food containing dead chickens, offal and waste (head, guts and feathers).

They are raised intensively and fed growth-promoting antibiotics and slaughtered at only seven weeks old. Many suffer from burns from the urine-soaked wood shavings. Rats and flies thrive, maggots grow in open wounds. These conditions result in 20-30 million deaths before slaughter age, the major cause being heart attacks, another 2.5 million die on the way to the slaughter house. Bits of these injured or diseased birds are sold as chicken pieces.

As for 'free range' eggs these are a complete con. There are the same problems of feather pecking, hysteria and cannibalism as in their factory farmed sisters. They are kept at the legal level of 400

birds per acre which is not much more room than that of battery hens. They have their beaks cut right to the nerve. The farmer continues to make massive profits at the expense of both chickens and consumers.

The other thing is the exploitation of the working class. There are 80 deaths from salmonella and at least 200 from listeria every year. The wages of slaughter house workers are kept relatively high due to the fact that they suffer continuous nightmares. Most could not eat the animals themselves because of the murderous job they are forced to do.

These facts expose the unrelenting pursuit of profit, at any expense, by the ruling class. Intensive breeding programmes are not designed for the animal or the consumer, both of whom suffer, but to make massive profits for the farmers, cage makers, seed sellers, butchers, supermarkets and drug manufacturers.

As communists we have a part to play in ending this horrific and murderous exploitation – if not for moral reasons then for the effects of pollution, disease and death. This has recently been left mainly to the anarchists whose animal liberation has done little to build working class support for animal rights. Now is the time for communists to do something if it is only to publicise the horrors of animal abuse and how it is used for the sole purpose of making profits and gives the working class nothing but misery.

Yours in hope,  
JOHN WALKER  
Manchester



## Mandla Mandela visits the Non Stop Picket

On Friday 20 January non-stop picketers who were very upset at the deportation of Viraj Mendis were cheered up to see Nelson Mandela's grandson and another relative walk past, sign the petition and join us on the Non-Stop Picket. Mandela's grandson, Mandla Mandela, was delighted to see us outside the South African embassy calling for the release of his grandfather who has spent the last 26 years in jail and has never seen him. Join the Non-Stop Picket until Nelson Mandela is free!

PAOLO COWAN

## Women cross the Green Line

On 19 March the 'Women Walk Home Movement' will again cross the green line dividing Cyprus and walk into North Cyprus braving the guns of the occupying Turkish army. Joining the march this year will be Islington councillor Ayse Hasan who will be the only Turkish Cypriot woman on the march.

Cllr Hasan has taken this step in order to show her solidarity with the call for the reunification of Cyprus and show that people of both communities in Cyprus want an end to the division of the island.

In the view of Cllr Hasan and the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey

(CDDRT) the Cyprus 'question' can only be resolved through self-determination for the peoples of Cyprus and an end to foreign interference in the island's affairs.

Cllr Hasan commented that 'We stand for the removal of all foreign troops from Cyprus – first and foremost Turkish troops'. She also said that in her opinion ultimately, the right of the peoples of Cyprus to determine their own destiny can only be guaranteed by 'a people's revolution in Turkey, which will rid that country of the latest in a long line of anti-democratic regimes and establish a truly democratic state which will have no colonial ambitions in the region'.  
COMMITTEE FOR DEFENCE OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS IN TURKEY  
84 Balls Pond Road, London N1 4AJ. Telephone: 01-254 0387.

## Lesbians and Gay Men against deportation

On Tuesday 28 February Channel 4's *Out on Tuesday* Lesbian and Gay magazine programme highlighted the case of Christine Moss the Australian lesbian who is under threat of deportation.

Christine Moss has lived in Britain with her lover for five years, and they now have a five week old daughter, Lauren.

As anti-imperialists we know only too well of the hundreds of black people who are deported each year by the racist British state. Yet every year many lesbians and gay men are denied residency in Britain because the government refuses to recognise the legitimacy of same sex relationships.

Christine is proud to be a lesbian and has fought her case as such, she refuses to be compromised by a marriage of convenience. As far as she is concerned, she, her lover and Lauren are a family and should be recognised as such.

It is vital that lesbians and gay

men who are similarly faced with deportation should openly fight for their right as gay people to stay in this country; and expose the bigotry of the Thatcher government.

By doing so the lesbian and gay community can be mobilised to fight all deportations. Our strength will be in joining forces and recognising it is the same imperialist forces that oppress us both as black people and as gay people.

This work has begun to be achieved by both the VMDC and City Group who have mobilised the lesbian and gay community to fight against racism and apartheid. It is only by uniting all those forces which are oppressed by British imperialism that the VMDC managed to keep the Home Office at bay for more than 4 years, and that City Group has managed to maintain the Non-Stop Picket for nearly 3 years.

It is only by continuing to build a coalition of those who have been dispossessed and rejected by Thatcherism that we can hope to succeed in fighting such bigoted deportation orders and to challenge and eventually overthrow this imperialist state.

GAVIN BROWN  
London



## Write to:

FRFI,  
BCM Box 5909  
London  
WC1N 3XX  
or ring:  
01-837 1688

## No rights for young Irish workers

When I was on the Bloody Sunday demonstration in January I met a young man from Dublin who was telling me about anti-Irish racism directed against young Irish people who come to England to seek work.

When young people attend the job centre they are only given a chance to attend a government run training scheme. Once completed they do not become any more eligible for permanent employment and no other training is available. The purpose of the training scheme is to misrepresent the unemployment figures.

A return visit to the job centre means having to fill in an immigration form. Then follows racist collaboration between the British and Irish governments in running checks on the person involved. The information sought includes previous involvement in Irish politics, is s/he a member of Sinn Fein. Information is required on whether a person has been arrested on a political demonstration. If s/he was arrested on a hunger-strike demonstration in 1981 they will be not be allowed to remain in Britain in 1989.

Once having secured entry to Britain, young Irish people face racial discrimination in housing and employment. Most young Irish people are employed on building sites as casual workers and therefore denied basic trade union rights. The conditions of their employment mean that many do not pay tax or national insurance thus are ineligible for sick pay or injury compensation.

Last year 36 deaths occurred on unsafe building sites and 413 major injuries were sustained. Employers are fined £400 per death but are not sentenced to jail for bearing the responsibility of these deaths. Young Irish workers are often forced to live in accommodation provided on the sites – temporary buildings knocked together and called living quarters. Factory inspectors who also check safety measures on building sites do not exist in sufficient numbers to do the job properly – safety is second to profit.

A campaign has been set up which is fighting back against these atrocities against Irish people on building sites. For information contact:  
Tony O'Brien, Construction Safety Campaign, 72 Copeland Road, London SE15.  
Telephone: 01-732 3711.  
PAM ROBINSON  
South London

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## Kurdistan—business as usual

Whilst millions of dollars' worth of medical aid and heavy installations were transported to the earthquake-stricken regions of Armenia this winter, the tens of thousands of Kurds only a few hundred kilometres away in neighbouring Turkey and Iran seemed to have drifted into total oblivion. Yet they are still there, refugees in their own land, struggling to survive in one of the harshest winters known in the region. LIZ PALM analyses their struggle for survival.

Out of the 120,000 Kurds that fled the racist nerve gas attacks of the Saddam Hussein regime in Iraq to the 'safety' of the fascist Turkish state, 40,000 have been forcibly removed to camps in Iran. The 2,000 metre high camp in the mountains by Yüksekova was abandoned in December after freezing temperatures rendered life impossible. Hundreds of babies died before the camp was finally abandoned.

The remaining 80,000 Kurds in Turkish-occupied Kurdistan are split up into three main camps; a derelict army barracks at Mus, a dilapidated settlement declared uninhabitable years ago at Diyarbakir and the largest camp in Mardin, where the night-time temperature is minus five degrees celsius.

Conditions are appalling. At Mardin the Kurds live in thin summer tents where there is an average of four blankets per 10 persons. The refugees run around with flimsy clothing on, the children bare-foot. The toilets are always blocked up, with excrement flowing down channels through a sea of slime.

In the camps the main diet is bread, rice, tea and sugar. Diseases and infections are rampant, with many of the refugees still suffering the terrible symptoms of the nerve gas attacks, namely chronic diarrhoea and vomiting.

The camps are prisons, surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by Turkish soldiers armed with machine guns. A permit has to be obtained before you can leave and enter. The Iraqi Kurds are isolated from any contact with the local Kurdish population—the Turkish fascists cannot afford to allow the growth of nationalist, patriotic feeling among the Iraqi Kurds so long as they are being 'suffered' on Turkish soil.

The Turkish rulers refuse to grant the Kurds political status which would mean that they could receive international relief. The Kurds are termed 'displaced persons', being granted temporary accommodation and no more. Turkey wants to retain its good relations with neighbouring Iraq, as a huge market for goods and services has opened since the end of the Gulf War.

As if the scenes of mass murder of ten thousand Kurdish civilians in Halabja in March 1988 by the fascist Iraqi regime weren't enough, in December news began to emerge of another massacre of at least 5,000 Kurds that had taken place in August in the Bassay valley of Iraqi-occupied Kurdistan. Eye witnesses reported how nerve gas canisters had been dropped by the Iraqi airforce over the region. Shortly afterwards, the Iraqi army had entered the zone wearing special gas masks; thousands of severely-injured and dead, including hundreds of children, were lying around. The Iraqi soldiers poured kerosine over them, over anything that was still living, including wild-stock and farmland, and burned them alive. The Iraqi government denies all knowledge of this attack.

Surely it is no coincidence that the film material from Halabja, showing scenes of dead bodies being bulldozed into mass graves, remind the viewer of Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen or maybe Sabra and Shatila? Racist annihilation in its most horrific and barbaric form, no matter who wears the uniform.

And for the countries that provide the installations, high technology and ingredients necessary to produce these deadly chemical weapons, it's business as usual.

However, the imperialist countries



Kurdish people bury their dead after murders committed by Turkish military

have begun realising one serious problem in the production of poisonous gas—that is, that it can so easily start blowing back in the direction it originally came from. After the nerve gas attack on Halabja last year, western leaders such as Shultz and Thatcher were falling over themselves in their rush to condemn the Iraqi regime. Countless condemnations were made, trade sanctions and other harsh economic limitations were passed on the government in Baghdad.

Yet the real concern of the imperialist nations soon began emerging. The US government expressed its fear that chemical weapons were turning into the 'atomic bomb of the poor', cheap to assemble and as destructive in their effects. For US militarists, the weapons were being used in a more and more 'routine' way: Nato leaders expressed worry that 'peripheral conflicts might get 'out of control' if too many third world nations could arm themselves with these weapons.

International intelligence sources have known for some time about multi-million dollar business deals with countries that could become users of chemical weapons. Almost all the imperialist nations have been

involved in projects of this sort. The war of words between the United States and the West German government exposes the total cynicism and hypocrisy of imperialist nations where power is concerned. West Germany is the most powerful nation in Western Europe in terms of economic growth. What better way of rubbing salt into an open wound than by exposing the collaboration between West German industry and the favourite bogey man in the Middle East, Colonel Gadaffi, to produce chemical weapons that could be used on the Jews in Israel?

Research into and production of atomic, biological and chemical weapons has always been led by the United States, West Germany and Japan with Britain and France in hot pursuit. Biological weapons are described by experts as 'a hundred times more deadly than chemical weapons', and can spread disease and deadly viruses throughout whole districts.

In West Germany itself, both Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher are employing the usual delaying tactics to allow business to continue flourishing. At

the same time, in prisons in West Germany, sixteen Kurds have been held under conditions of torture for over a year now, accused of a whole range of 'terrorist charges'. They are political activists engaged in support of the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan in Turkish-occupied Kurdistan. Yet the fact that West German industrialists and politicians have been acting as accessories to mass murder seems irrelevant to the Federal Crime Authorities. No West German businessman or politician has been arrested and charged with serious crimes.

Meanwhile in the refugee camps in Turkish-occupied Kurdistan, a deathly silence reigns at night time. A new annihilation policy is being employed by the Turkish government. Instead of machine-gunning Kurds to death on the streets, instead of arresting political activists and torturing them in the most barbaric way, the Kurds have been left to find their own way of surviving months of sub-zero temperatures. The Turkish rulers are waiting for spring to announce its arrival, then perform a quick head count—and see how many are left... ■

## Mass trials in Turkey

On 21 February Swiss journalist, Erich Schmid visiting London, showed a video film he made during an international delegation to Turkey last August. The delegation, composed of European MPs and lawyers, went to observe mass trials of left-wing opponents of the Turkish regime. While there, a translator hired by the delegation was arrested, blindfolded and threatened with torture. Hotel rooms used by delegates were systematically searched by security police. TREVOR RAYNE reports on the video about the torture of political prisoners in Turkey.

Central to the video is the mass trial of 723 defendants of Devrimci Yol (Revolutionary Path). The trial has lasted eight years. The defendants are accused of belonging to an illegal organisation and of threatening to overthrow the state. The state is applying legislation adopted in 1936, taken almost word for word from Mussolini's legal code: it forbids the insulting of the Turkish nation, the spreading of socialist ideas, and pro-

vides for the hanging of those advocating the overthrow of the state by force. The Turkish government seeks to both intimidate the rising working class struggle in Turkey and to legitimate the 12 September 1980 military coup. In 1984 the state prosecutor demanded 213 death penalties; the defence expects about 50 death sentences to be passed.

In the middle of August the Dev Yol defendants were able for the first time

to publicly comment on their detention and trial. They gave the names of 170 torture victims. After the military coup detainees could be held incommunicado for 19 days; this is now reduced to 15 days. During this time the arrested were, and are, processed through the Derim Aristirma Laboratuvar (DAL: Deep Investigation Laboratory). There they were subjected to electric shocks, Falaka (beating of the soles of the feet), high pressure jets of water, burning with cigarettes, forced feeding with excrement and a series of atrocities drawn from CIA counter-insurgency manuals and Nazi 'medical' experiments. This was corroborated by a former Turkish general who produced a Turkish language translation of a CIA handbook. Prisoners are kept two or three to a four square metre cell. They organise for the care of those coming from DAL. Several of Turkey's 15,000 political prisoners have been driven insane. The video showed shaven-headed Kurdish prisoners unable to stand in the dock.

In the discussion that followed a supporter of the Kurdish PKK described a series of hunger strikes last year by Kurdish prisoners demanding the right to speak Kurdish with their visitors. On 9 February 100 political prisoners commenced a new hunger strike. Over 300 Kurdish bodies have been found in a rubbish dump at Siir in north west Turkey—Kurdistan. During 14/15 February a whole Kurdish village was tortured and forced to eat excrement. An eight-month pregnant woman lost her baby.

While real incomes have been halved in Turkey since 1980 and inflation is now running at over 70 per cent, the video showed Turkey's police and army to be equipped with the most modern instruments of repression that imperialism can offer. This is the regime whose President Evren Thatcher hosted on his first visit to a major European state last July. This is the regime Thatcher described as 'a democracy' on her visit to Turkey last year. ■

## Police arrest 38 in immigration raids

TREVOR RAYNE

On 28 February about 60 police and immigration officers raided a sweat shop in the East End of London. 38 men and women, 31 of them Kurdish, seven Turkish, were arrested under suspicion of having broken Britain's immigration laws. They work long hours for as little as £75 a week. Some have said they face political persecution if returned to Turkey, and that they will seek political asylum in Britain and fight any deportation orders. One explained that they had sought to join a trade union and take this struggle out to British workers, but the constant threat from the immigration laws had prevented this. ■