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FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

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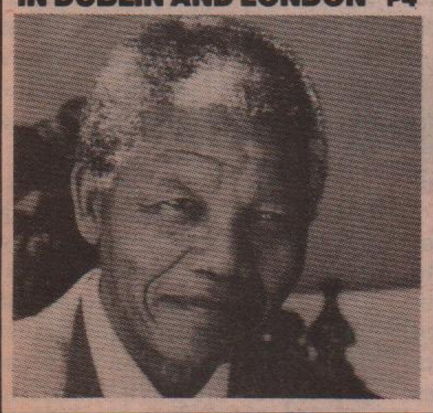

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EDITORIAL

Shevardnadze, Gorbachev, Kohl and Genscher: Cheers! We can do business together!

Triumph of imperialism?

The leaders of the major imperialist nations were in triumphal mood as they emerged from the Nato summit in London and the Group of Seven economic summit in Houston. A 'turning point in history' (Bush after Nato summit), the 'renaissance of democracy' (final communiqué Houston meeting) were claimed as imperialism celebrated what it regarded as a total economic and political victory over communism. Freedom and prosperity were indissolubly linked with private enterprise and capitalism, communism with economic failure and dictatorship.

In Eastern Europe imperialism has forced open areas of the world closed to its economic exploitation for more than four decades. The Soviet Union is in retreat, the Communist Party in disarray, rapidly breaking away from the legacy and traditions of the Bolshevik revolution. Under Gorbachev, class struggle has been abandoned in favour of 'universal human values'. The previous commitment to the Third World is gradually being replaced by a more opportunistic and conciliatory approach to imperialism. Economically the Soviet Union's future is more and more dependent on loans and investment from imperialism. Fred Halliday has accurately summed up the situation: 'After decades of partial success, (the socialist countries) now appear to have succumbed to a mode of production and a political system far stronger than them, and which does not appear to be headed for any predetermined exhaustion or crisis.' (*New Left Review* 180).

Is it then the case that, with the demise of the socialist bloc, the imperialist powers can maintain harmonious and cooperative relations between themselves? Can they ensure continuing economic stability or will the inter-imperialist rivalries of earlier periods reemerge?

The London and Houston summits, in spite of all the triumphalism, could not conceal major differences between the imperialist powers. At the Houston summit there were three main areas of disagreement: farm subsidies, the environment, and aid to the Soviet Union. The compromise on farm subsidies did little more than delay the inevitable confrontation at the Gatt trade liberalisation talks beginning on 23 July.

An ever present factor at both meetings was the reemergence of a united Germany as the overwhelmingly dominant economic and political power at the centre of the European imperialist bloc. In the past Nato linked the United States and Europe in an anti-communist political and military bloc controlled by US imperialism. Today it has to serve other needs as well. Only a strong Nato, retaining US troops in Europe as well as nuclear weapons, could possibly harness and control the imperialist ambitions of a united Germany.

Gorbachev was offered a face saving formula – an empty gesture – to get the Soviet Union to accept German reunification within Nato. Nuclear weapons were now 'weapons of last resort', there would be a strengthened pan-European Conference on Security and Cooperation, and he and a few others would be invited to Nato headquarters in Brussels. This changed nothing. The 'first use' doctrine would remain now as before, under which Nato reserves the right to use nuclear weapons when conventional forces are unable to resist attack. Thatcher, increasingly frustrated with Britain being relegated by Germany to a secondary role in world economic and political affairs, was particularly insistent on this point. She had inserted in the final declaration the sentence: 'there are no circumstances in which nuclear retaliation in response to military action might be discounted.'

Britain has been the imperialist power most undermined by the rise of German imperialism. The special relationship with US imperialism is no longer sustainable (See David Reed's article 'Thatcher baulks at European hurdle' *FRFI* 91). Thatcher, having tried to prevent the reunification of Germany, is fighting a rearguard action to stop Britain becoming a secondary imperialist power in a European bloc dominated by German economic might. The British ruling class has split on this issue. Nicholas Ridley's recent anti-German outburst on European monetary policy only gave vent to the thwarted imperialist ambitions of a section of the ruling class. 'This is a German racket designed to take over the whole of Europe. It has to be thwarted . . . '. Handing sovereignty to the European Community, he said, was like handing it over to Hitler. Ridley has gone, but the divisions remain.

At the Houston summit the imperialist powers were divided on the question of economic loans and aid to the Soviet Union. The US, Britain and Japan, recognising Germany's superior position to exploit the opportunities opened up by the destruction of the socialist bloc, were hoping to delay the process giving themselves more time to improve their own position. All argued for aid conditional on, essentially, the progress made in restoring capitalism in the Soviet Union and the withdrawal of its support for socialist and other progressive regimes – 'to cut support from nations promoting regional conflict'. Of primary concern is their determination to destroy the Cuban revolution. The US wants outstanding debts to be paid – in particular the $300m borrowed by the Czarist and Kerensky governments before the revolution and $700m from lend-lease during the Second World War before it will give any financial assistance. The Japanese want the Soviet Union to surrender the four Kurile Islands it has held since the end of the war. The façade of unity was maintained by an agreement to send an IMF-organised fact-finding mission to the Soviet Union to assess what aid is required.

Meanwhile German and French imperialism will proceed with their own $15bn package for the Soviet Union. Just as Japan will offer a $5bn credit to China. Each imperialist power will manoeuvre to gain the stronger position. 'Principles' will be pushed aside for profit-making. With the end of US domination, and the emergence of three, more equally matched imperialist blocs, the US, Japan and Germany, new conflicts are inevitable. The recent Houston summit in the words of the *Financial Times* only 'papered over the cracks.' ■

News

Soviet Communist Party in disarray

EDDIE ABRAHAMS

The 28th Soviet Communist Party Congress, held in July, brought no hope for socialists. It demonstrated that honest communists are a minority in the Party which has ceased to be a coherent instrument of government. It is becoming an arena in which the major trends, none of whom are able to fight for the interests of the working class, are battling to defend or win privilege for themselves.

Underlining the possibly unbridgeable gulf that separates the Soviet working class from the Party was the massive 11 July miners strike. Besides demanding the Ryzkhov government's resignation, the miners concentrated their fire on the Communist Party. They demanded that it ceases to organise in workplaces, that its assets be transferred to the state and that it withdraws from all military, educational and security services. Already in some areas, miners have thrown out Communist Party officials from their premises. The sometimes deep hatred for the Party was expressed at rallies where one banner proclaimed 'Long live the CPSU – in Chernobyl'.

In addition to Russian working class hostility to the Soviet Communist Party, one must recall that the working class in the smaller Soviet nations in the Baltic, Caucasus and elsewhere have also abandoned the Communist Party for the duplicitous promises of bourgeois nationalists.

As the Party becomes more and more isolated, it is becoming thoroughly demoralised and losing all sense of purpose. Standing currently at 19 million, its membership is falling at an alarming rate. Last year alone 137,000 people resigned. This year the figure will be far higher, especially after the resignations of arch-reactionary Boris Yeltsin and the mayors of Moscow and Leningrad.

In these conditions, it was clear that the Congress could do nothing to resolve the major economic, political and social problems confronting the Soviet Union and its people. The Congress took no major decisions, marked no new turning points, set down no markers for future progress. If it accomplished anything, it was to demonstrate that a substantial section of the misnamed 'conservatives' trend (those who proclaim adherence to Marxism-Lenism) had interests as narrow and as selfish as those expressed by the other two major trends in the party represented by Gorbachev and Yeltsin.

Yegor Ligachev's speech denouncing those who sought to undermine socialism, who rejected its achievements and wanted to introduce private property and restore capitalism, was received with rapturous applause. This contrasted with the reluctant applause extended to Gorbachev and the constant barracking of Leonid Abalkin an outspoken pro-capitalist depu Prime Minister. However wh it came to voting, many of tho who so warmly applauded Lig chev endorsed Gorbachev Party leader and refused to ele Ligachev as deputy leade choosing instead a pro-Gorb chev hack.

These delegates were terrifi of a split. Without Gorbache the entire Party apparatus, up which rest their significa privileges, would risk collaps They preferred Party unity Gorbachev's own terms, rath than the organisation of a seric struggle against counter-re lution which is being aided Gorbachev and spearheaded the likes of Yeltsin and Abalk

As a result Gorbachev w able to conclude the Congress refashioning the Central Co mittee to suit his own aims a purposes. Despite the prep derance of 'conservatives' G bachev managed to secure election of outspoken a working class elements such Abalkin and Bunich. Gorbach and his allies can thus contin to use the CPSU a little wh longer.

The lack of an organised s ialist current capable of winn the honest communists amo the so-called 'conservati and mobilising the working cl in a determined struggle agai the counter-revolution is a gr tragedy for the Soviet work class. It gives imperialism confidence to proceed un peded in its efforts to destroy last vestiges of the glori tradition of 1917. ■

German reunification takes its toll

BOB SHEPHERD & BEN WILLIAMS

On 1 July as the 'Treaty of German Economic, Monetary and Social Union' took effect, the socialist German Democratic Republic (GDR) ceased to exist.

Re-unification is being celebrated as a victory for 'democracy'. In reality it will be used by the German bourgeoisie to exploit the working class in East Germany and to gain access to markets throughout eastern and central Europe.

For the working class in the GDR reunification means a massive attack on living standards and social provision. Unemployment in the GDR, which stood at 100,000 in May (less than two per cent), had doubled to 200,000 by the beginning of July. Estimates suggest that by the end of the year two million out of a workforce of 8.6 million will be unemployed.

Social gains such as free health care and nursery provision will be swept away as the drive for profit replaces planning for social need. This will particularly affect women, 90 per cent of whom had jobs in the socialist economy in the GDR. Every child had the right to a place in a crêche. 95 per cent of three to six-year olds attended nursery schools; health, dental and optical services were completely free; young people leaving school were guaranteed a job with an apprenticeship or a place at university.

Democratic rights established under socialism have been moved at a stroke. In the G all women had the right to a tion on demand in the firs weeks of pregnancy. Under West German constitution, a tion is a criminal offence.

In addition, over the months Soviet war memo have been defaced, Jew graves have been desecrated systematic attacks on mig workers and refugees h begun.

The working class has no mained passive in the face of assault. As the Treaty came effect, 120,000 industrial w ers staged a series of strikes stoppages demanding pro tion against the threat to pay and jobs. In an attemp head off the rapid developm of such conflict, the German ing class has bankrolled East German administratio DM35 million until Octo State subsidies on rent, en and public transport will until January, after the German elections due o December.

Significantly, arrangem are being made to equip the German police with 'more e tive anti-riot gear' and exte police powers to deal demonstrations.

Such are the method which 'democracy' is bein established in a unified many. It will be a democrac the rich and repression fo poor. ■

More 'free' handouts to British Aerospace

The deal struck in 1988: Rover chairman Sir Gordon Day, Lord Young and BAe chairman Roland Smith

DAVID REED

Two years after the fraudulent sale of Rover to British Aerospace, the European Commission, in a damage limitation exercise, has asked British Aerospace (BAe) to repay £44.4m illegal 'sweeteners' back to the British government. The government has reluctantly agreed to the repayment but will cushion the impact, having 'hinted' that BAe could get £11.4m reimbursed through tax rebates if it applies immediately to the Inland Revenue. As we go to press the BAe Board has made no statement regarding the repayment.

Further information has recently been disclosed which may force the EC to reopen the investigation into BAe's purchase of Rover. Evidence has emerged that BAe stands to gain up to £411m in tax concessions from some of the £1.1bn accumulated losses of the Rover Group at the time of the purchase – a point Lord Young omitted to raise with the EC. Rover is now producing substantial profits for BAe.

The sale of Rover to BAe had already lifted the lid on the real character of the 'free-market' economy. Parliamentary democracy was shown to be little more than an elaborate charade for channelling the interests of large corporations and their shareholders. The government worked hand in glove with BAe and felt 'free' to lie, cheat and deceive to achieve its end (see 'Fraudulent sell-off' *FRFI* 92).

Recent information throws more light on this charade and shows how the British government and the EC were prepared to work together to further the interests of BAe. Problems only arose when the illegal 'sweeteners' unexpectedly were exposed. Information, which the government expected to remain secret, was leaked to the *Guardian* in November 1989 some 17 months after the shady deal had been made.

The government knew that Parliament would have to be told of the illegal payments as all privatisation accounts have to be audited by John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General. He has to report his findings to the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee. However, this information is given secretly to the Committee and, by 'convention', is not made public. Using the device of a confidential memorandum (there are 20 to 40 sent to the committee each year), information on the illegal payments could be sent to MPs, BAe, the National Audit Office and the Department of Trade and Industry, fulfilling an obligation to tell Parliament without ever informing the public (The *Guardian* 28 June 1990). Clearly what happened with BAe is only the tip of the iceberg of deception inherent in parliamentary democracy. We only know about BAe because someone chose to leak confidential information, that is, to break a normally fail-safe 'convention'.

The EC was almost certainly aware of the illegal payments to BAe. In a letter sent by the former Trade Secretary Lord Young to Professor Roland Smith, the Chairman of BAe, on 12 July 1988, Young said that he had had further discussions with Commissioner Sutherland. Peter Sutherland was Leon Brittan's predecessor as EC Commissioner. The letter goes on to say that Sutherland 'could not necessarily turn a blind eye' to payments made to BAe 'especially if there were complaints from other parties'. The letter goes on: 'as you are well aware the Commission have the power to seek repayment. This underlines the need to avoid unnecessarily raising the profile of the issue'(*Observer* 1 July 1990). In other words everything would be okay with the EC, it would turn a blind eye, as long as everybody kept their mouth shut. Unfortunately for Young and BAe, someone thought the facts needed to be exposed. So Leon Brittan had no choice but to ask BAe to repay £44.4m to the government.

The £44.4m is a small price for BAe to pay. The Rover Group was sold to BAe for £150m. The latest financial analysis of BAe by Japan's Nikko Securities Company estimates that for £150m BAe acquired a company now worth more than £1bn. The Rover Group was ridiculously undervalued. Ford, which was denied the opportunity to bid for Rover, had initially calculated that it would have been prepared to pay between £400m-£600m.

Smith wanted more besides. In a letter to Lord Young on 6 July 1988, he raised his concern about BAe's relationship with the government in both civil and military fields. The letter goes on: 'if the Board accepts these revised terms for the Rover acquisition, you should appreciate that it is their sincere hope there will be some demonstrable responsiveness to that concern.' A year earlier BAe had been given a secret, near-monopoly agreement with the government for the supply of ammunition and explosives in the wake of its £200m acquisition of the state-owned Royal Ordinance in 1987. It has not yet been revealed how 'responsive' the government has been. What is clear is that the 'free market' economy, in this case, is a euphemism for 'free' government assistance to BAe's shareholders.

In early May a leaked confidential draft report by MPs concluded that the government misled Parliament by not revealing the secret 'sweeteners' to BAe. At the beginning of July this all-party report is being redrafted and Tory MPs, the majority of the committee, are attempting to water down the report and, in particular, criticism of Lord Young and the government. Thatcher has continued to justify her government's lies on economic grounds – a good deal for the taxpayers, well at least the very rich ones. Parliamentary democracy is demonstrably a sham, subordinate to the interests of multinational corporations and their shareholders – a democracy only for the rich and powerful. ■

Fat cats cash in

JOHN ARMSTRONG

Despite the relative decline of the UK economy throughout the Thatcher decade, the salaries of top British company directors continue to grow. Latest figures compiled by the *Independent* show an average increase in 1989 of 30 per cent in their pay packets at a time when the rest of the population is being told of the perils of high wage demands in the 'fight against inflation'.

Of the top earners revealed in the study, Lord Hanson, Managing Director of Hanson Trust, struggles through on £1.5m a year, whilst at the bottom of the top twenty Sir David Scholey, the Managing Director of merchant bankers SG Warburg, gets by on a paltry £560,000.

The rationale given for these wage increases is even more staggering. The managers claim that in order to turn the UK economy around they need an 'incentive' and this entails paying themselves huge amounts of money. For those who are poor or are unemployed you may remember the need for 'incentives' was used only last year to justify the *cutting* of welfare and Social Security benefits.

Not content with a half million pound salary, the top executives do not feel in the slightest that this should be linked to company performance. In fact, the reverse. By and large, the directors are earning more as their companies (and the UK) slide down the index of productivity and profitability. The directors of the Big Four (Barclays, NatWest, Lloyds and the Midland) have all received substantial wage rises in the past year – in one case, at Lloyds, of 61 per cent. Yet these companies, as a consequence of their over-exposure in Latin America and the mushrooming of the debt crisis, have all registered an earnings per share of –100 per cent.

Moreover, a growing number of these directors are also taking up Executive Share Options. This is a system whereby the big earners can take an option to buy, say, 1m shares at 100p and sell them when the market is ripe for 200p, creaming off a cool £1m in the process. When added to the increasing use of 'golden handshakes' to rid the companies of obsolescent management (BP's retiring managing director received £709,000, for example) it is not difficult to see just who is draining money out of the economy on a phenomenal scale.

At a time when the ambulance workers have had to struggle for six months to gain a nine per cent increase over 18 months, and other workers such as teachers are being lectured for considering industrial action, the directors of British industry are milking the faltering UK economy for all it is worth. That they need more money in order to perform less well whilst the poor and the unemployed need less money in order to perform better, is only one of the bitter ironies of the Thatcher government's policies. ■

JON KEMPSTER

The Revolutionary Communist Group marched with 30,000 lesbians, gay men and their supporters on the annual Lesbian and Gay Pride march. We welcome the continued militancy of ACT-UP (Aids Coalition to Unleash Power) and the newly-formed OUTRAGE. We cannot relax. As a gay activist said, 'Gay men are murdered and the police do nothing. We are still treated as the cause of AIDS rather than its victims. We must be Out, Proud and *Fighting*.'

Thatcher's schools take shape

SUSAN DAVIDSON

What is happening to education in Britain? On the one hand a highly centralised national curriculum testing. On the other the decentralisation of administration and funding. There is no contradiction – the Tories want to rigidly control policy and curriculum whilst making sure education is cheap. An already second rate education for the working class will become tenth rate or even non-existent.

Local Management of Schools (LMS) means that all schools over 200 pupils will be turned into 'economic units' by 1993. They will receive a basic budget but be expected to generate income by enterprise and cost efficiency. Selling the product (education), hiring and firing of staff and buying the equipment and services, will be the legal responsibility of Heads and Governors. Each school will survive or sink on its own.

At the same time testing, starting in maths and English at the age of seven, means that schools will be dominated by programmes of study leading to standards of attainment. Test results will be published annually and will be the measure by which schools attract custom (pupils), resources (basic budget) and services (paid for by sponsorship and fundraising). Schools in middle class areas will survive – others will sink.

Those pushing for testing seized on the recent survey on the literacy of seven-year-olds which showed what has been described as the biggest drop in reading standards for more than 40 years. Yet neither the National Curriculum nor testing indicates a wish to improve Britain's education system. It is a reactionary step along the path to poor, poorer and poorest schools. No comprehensive element will remain as pupils scoring low in academic tests will be unwanted and uncatered for.

Under LMS, spending on books has been reduced to as little as 0.5 per cent of the budget. Institutions are producing 'viability plans', as South East London Engineering College had to do when it was given just four weeks to adjust to a 40 per cent cut in income. They are striking for the day, as they did in Barnsley when 30 music teachers were threatened with redundancy. But some Heads and Governors are loving every minute. One school in North Wales is making £40,000 a year after becoming a limited company, and regular advertising and sponsorship are big on the agenda. Other Heads are taking a stand for the children like the Head of Redscope Infants' School, Rotherham who is prepared to defy the law by refusing to conduct tests for seven-year-olds in her school.

Speaking at a Business and Technician Education Council Seminar, Peter Morgan, Director of the Institute of Directors, was supported by Education Secretary John McGregor in calling for work experience 'to begin as early as seven years old'. It could not be more clear that a special limited education system for the working class is what Thatcher is planning. ■

Mandela in Dublin and London

CAT WIENER

On 3 July, the headlines of the British press exploded in outrage: 'Mandela don't meddle' (*Mirror*) – 'Mind your own business Mandela' (*Daily Express*), and *Today* newspaper warned that Mandela had 'better watch his words'. The reason? Nelson Mandela's simple observation, in response to a question at a press conference in Dublin the previous day, that: 'What we would like to see is that the British government and the IRA should adopt precisely the line we have taken in regard to our own internal situation. There is nothing better than opponents sitting down to resolve their problems in a peaceful manner . . . ' without the IRA having to abandon the armed struggle. He also said: 'The methods of struggle of the oppressed anywhere are determined by the oppressor.'

The press, Tory and Labour MPs immediately claimed that Mandela did not know what he was talking about – that there is no parallel between Ireland and South Africa; that the IRA are, in Kinnock's words, 'murderous gangsters who should be given no quarter'; that there exists in Ireland a 'democratic process' which is denied to the majority in South Africa. The British ruling class cannot stand too close a comparison, which would reveal that 'democracy' in Ireland is a farce where an artificially created Loyalist 'majority' ensures that the Six Counties remain Britain's key to the domination of the whole of Ireland. Troops on the streets, repressive legislation, and terror are as much a day-to-day reality for the Nationalist community of the Six Counties as they are for the black masses of South Africa. Not for nothing did South African premier Vorster state in 1963 that he would give the entire apartheid legislation for just one clause of the (Northern Ireland) Special Powers Act.

Mandela's words in Dublin, his consistent support for the armed struggle and his public praise for Libya, the PLO and Fidel Castro's Cuba, were welcome indeed: they highlight the alliance of the oppressed against their common enemy, imperialism. No wonder the British ruling class, keen as they are to cement an alliance with Mandela and the ANC on *their* terms, were so quick to hush the matter up after their initial outburst. And the failure of the movement in this country to give any kind of support at all to Mandela's stance, allowed them to do precisely that.

The itinerary for Mandela's visit to Britain, published by the AAM, ensured that there would be no opportunity for him to meet ordinary people: audience was restricted almost exclusively to press and politicians. A handful of people turned up outside his hotel on the morning of 3 July, and only a couple of hundred when he visited Margaret Thatcher at Downing Street. The AAM's Labour spokesmen, Bob Hughes MP and Richard Caborn MP, rapidly cancelled press interviews, hiding from questions which would reveal their snivelling loyalty to British imperialism on the question of Ireland, forcing them to criticise Mandela. Only *FRFI* and City of London Anti-Apartheid Group carried placards at the hotel and Downing Street that stressed the unity of the Irish and South African liberation struggles.

Small wonder, then, that Mandela has been forced to accommodate the interests of the likes of Thatcher, Kinnock and the CBI. The imperialists have most certainly not let up campaigning – for a capitalist South Africa.

According to the *Guardian* reporter at the Dublin summit the previous week, many EC countries are keen to give funding to the ANC because they fear that unless they help it 'to establish itself, black support might move to more militant organisations.'

This is undoubtedly a problem for the ANC. Reports in the black South African press have suggested that the anti-negotiation stance of the PAC is gaining them recruits from the ANC in townships like Soweto. But the ANC have rejected calls from AZAPO leader Jerry Mosala for withdrawal from the talks and participation in a consultative conference with all the black liberation movements. Such a conference could provide a basis for real unity between the different sections of the movement. A recent mass stayaway by workers in Natal, jointly organised by COSATU and NACTU to try to bring about an end to the conflict there, demonstrated the power of the black South African working class. Ultimately, it is only they who can put paid to the designs of the imperialists. There is no middle way. ■

Growing racism in Italy

PAT CUNNINGHAM

Italy is facing an explosion o racist violence against immi grants. Racism has long beer used against Italians from the South, but the situation facing immigrants from Africa and other Third World countries is reaching crisis point.

The revival of the Italian economy in the early 1980s led to both increasing standards of living and a demand for cheap flexible labour to do those 'dirty jobs' that Italians refused (similar to the situation in Britain in the 1950s). These factors have favoured the rapid increase of immigration from the Third World, especially from North and West Africa, since the mid 1980s, at an officially estimated rate of 50,000 a year, although 'illegal' immigration is much higher.

Unemployment among non EEC immigrants runs at about 70 per cent, creating a huge reserve army of labour, many of whom are homeless.

Because the vast majority of immigrants are 'illegal' they form the most exploitable section of the working class, forced to work for starvation wages and pay exorbitant rents for sub standard housing, or else be reported to the police.

The racist backlash has been led by the neo-fascist MSI party (5 per cent of the national vote and the Northern regional autonomist parties like the *Leg Lombarda*, which gained 20 per cent of the vote in May's local government elections on an openly racist ticket calling for compulsory repatriation of non EEC immigrants.

The social base of these parties is the petit bourgeois shopkeeping class, and better paid racist workers who feel threatened by the competition of the immigrant street traders and workers. This has caused an increase in violent attacks against immigrants, resulting in the murder of a South African refugee, Jerry Esan Masslo, in September, the massacre of five North Africans by the Mafia in Naples, firebomb attacks against an immigrant squat in Milan and the beating up of street traders in Florence, among many other incidents.

State represssion has increased in line with racism, and Italian prisons are filling up with immigrants, forced into crime to survive or, more usually, unable to produce the right documents when stopped by the police. The law on immigration control, written by the Socialist deputy premier, Claudio Martelli, and introduced at the end of 1989 to the almost unanimous approval of the parliamentary Right and 'Left', promises to enforce rigid quotas in line with 'the needs of the economy' and the 'cordon sanitaire' to be placed around the EEC countries in 1992.

It is, in essence, an Italian version of the South African pass laws, requiring non-EEC citizens to carry their work permit at all times. ■

Sri Lanka: Tamil Tigers fight old foe

TREVOR RAYNE

'Forty years of history shows that the Sri Lankan government cannot deliver a political settlement. They have been carrying out a genocidal war against the Tamil people for the last forty years.' Kittu, LTTE International Secretariat, London Office, speaking to *FRFI* 10 July.

In ten days of fighting commencing 10 June, between the Sri Lankan government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, some 1,000 Tamil people were killed: hacked and bombed to death by Sinhalese soldiers, burned and mutilated to avoid identification. The Tigers claim that napalm was used on the heavily populated Jaffna area. After 15 days of battle there were 200,000 refugees. By mid-July, perhaps 2,000 Tamil civilians had been killed. The Sri Lankan ruling class is terrified of the Tamil national liberation struggle and is ready to resort to mass extermination to preserve its privileged position.

Since India's withdrawal from Tamil areas on 30 March the Sri Lankan Army has systematically increased the number of its camps in the Eastern province: 39 new camps in the Trincomalee area alone and 70,000 troops deployed throughout the province. Sri Lankan Air Force planes fly regular reconnaissance flights over Jaffna.

On 10 June, a Sri Lankan police officer attacked a Muslim in the East. The Muslim community reported the incident to the Tigers who went to investigate. After their investigating units had been fired on, the Tigers rounded up the police. Local Sri Lankan Army officers 'violated' a ceasefire and attacked Tamils in the East. The Tigers mobilised for defence, capturing 17 police stations and four army camps in the Eastern province. On 12 June the Sri Lankan government declared war on the Tigers, but this is directed at the political struggle of all the Tamil people.

A month after the latest fighting began the Tigers have withdrawn from the main Eastern towns of Trincomalee and Batticaloa but wage guerrilla war in the rural surrounds. In the North the Sri Lankan Army holds four bases. At Vavuniya the Tigers have withdrawn but control the area. Elephant Pass is immobilised with Sri Lankan troops held in their barracks. Jaffna Fort is under siege and surrounded by a 2-mile radius no-man's land, no food or water supplies are getting into the Fort. Palaly Airbase, 22 miles from Jaffna Fort, is still under Sri Lankan control but unable to link up with Jaffna Fort. For the first time in 300 years, Mannar Fort, former occupants Dutch, British and Sinhalese, is now under Tamil control, yielding a rich crop of weapons.

While the slaughter of Tamil civilians goes on, President Premadasa, assisted by his Saatchi and Saatchi public relations team, continues to talk peace and the British media regurgitate Sri Lankan Army press releases. These deceits will no more bring the Tamils or their Tigers to heel than they did when tried before. This time the Sinhalese ruling class is weaker and its imperialist backers more doubtful; they cannot afford the kind of guerrilla war the Tigers have in store for them. ■

TV Marti: new threats against Cuba

CAT WIENER

Having installed its stooges in Nicaragua and Panama, and militarised the whole of Central America, the US now perceives Cuba as the one remaining threat to its interests in the region. Its response has been to step up its hostilities against the Cuban people, economically, militarily and politically.

For 27 years the US has imposed a stringent financial and commercial embargo on Cuba. The Mack Amendment, if approved by Congress this summer, will extend that embargo to cover even subsidiaries of US companies based abroad.

In May this year, the US launched several military 'rehearsals' for an all-out attack on Cuba. On 5 May, during operation 'Global Shield', US B-52 bombers flew within 80km of Havana, covering strategic Cuban targets, and linking up with a simultaneous naval operation by forces stationed at the Guatanomo base. In response, thousands of Cubans were mobilised by the Cuban armed forces.

The US has now added a new weapon to its propaganda war of unsubstantiated rumours of human rights violations, drug trafficking, etc: TV Marti. TV Marti is an illegal television station set up by the US to transmit its propaganda directly into Cuba. It violates six separate international treaties and conventions, including the UN Charter and the 1982 International Telecommunications Convention, to which both Cuba and the US are signatories. Broadcast by powerful transmitter from a helium balloon above Florida at a cost of some $100m a year, on a frequency already in use by Cuban television for its own legitimate broadcasts, it breaches regulation 2666 of the Nairobi ITC Accord of 1982, which stipulates that certain radio bands are to be used only for internal broadcasts. In particular, the International Telecommunications Union recognises the sovereign right of every state to regulate its own telecommunications. TV Marti – and it should be remembered that the very use of the name of one of Cuba's great revolutionaries is a calculated insult to the Cuban people – is a direct infringement of the sovereignty of the Cuban nation, and has been ruled illegal by the ITU.

Nevertheless, Britain has refused to condemn the operation. In response to a Parliamentary Question from Labour Spokesman George Foulkes, Foreign Office Minister Tim Sainsbury claimed that TV Marti was no different to the BBC's *World Service*, and that the Cuban government was merely 'alarmed at the idea of the people of Cuba being allowed to know what has happened elsewhere in the world . . . that yet another Marxist-Socialist regime would be overturned if they did'.

In fact, US CNN television, as well as the BBC World Service, Radio Moscow, France, Spain, etc, are readily accessible to the Cuban people. The events of Tiananmen Square and Eastern Europe, the coming down of the Berlin Wall were broadcast throughout Cuba. The issue for the Cuban government is one of sovereignty. So far Cuban engineers have maintained an almost total block on the illegal transmissions. The Cuban press attache in London told *FRFI* that there is a joke in Cuba that TV Marti is the first invisible television channel in the world!

On 22 June, the Administration Council of the Union of International Communications reaffirmed that TV Marti is illegal under the terms of the Union's regulations, and ruled that Washington should eliminate the interference. The US's reaction so far has been to challenge the competence of the organisation, and the US embassy in London refused to meet a delegation of British MPs on this issue. They are marking time before Bush has to go to Congress and ask for renewed funding for a project that has been proved a miserable failure.

The Britain-Cuba Resource Centre is campaigning on this issue. Readers of *FRFI* are asked to:

- sign and circulate the Tele-Aggression petition (available from BCRC, Latin America House, Kingsgate Place, London NW6 4RA)
- write to their MPs asking them to sign Early Day motion No.821 on TV Marti
- write a protest letter to the Foreign Office
- affiliate to the BCRC

Help defend the gains of the Cuban revolution against imperialist aggression!

Moncada Day Commemoration, 28 July, Africa Centre, 38 King Street, London WC2. 2pm: Video and rally. 9pm: Latin disco with live music. Tickets in advance: 081-806 2000. £6 day and eve., £3/1.50 day only.

In brief

SCARGILL WITCH-HUNT
The current witch-hunt, led by millionaire Maxwell's *Mirror* and the *Cook Report* TV programme against Arthur Scargill, President of the NUM, alleges that during the 1984-5 strike Scargill and NUM Secretary Peter Heathfield misappropriated £150,000 from Libya (another favourite hate) and donations from Soviet miners. The attack has been joined by TUC boss Norman Willis and Labour MPs (remember their support for the miners during the strike?). The Lightman inquiry into the allegations found that they were unsubstantiated. So new lies have been found – that Scargill presented forged documents to the inquiry. These scabs are trying to destroy Scargill as they did the strike. But Scargill, with solid support from the Yorkshire miners, will not be discredited so easily.

SAS IN THE PHILIPPINES
The National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF) has written to Margaret Thatcher objecting to British military support for the Aquino government. They quote Aquino as stating that 'there is a team of British military engaged in training the Presidential Security Group . . . and this was done at the request of the Philippine government . . . at no cost.'

The Presidential Security Group is cited by Amnesty International and the Economic and Social Council of the UN as being responsible for the murder of political activists. Military sources have identified British SAS officers as among the trainers. The NDF also calls for a halt to the reported supply of 150 British-made Simba counter-insurgency armoured vehicles to the Philippine Army.

UPINGTON APPEAL DELAY
In South Africa the appeal date for the Upington 26, scheduled for August, has been postponed until November or early next year. The first that the relatives knew of it was when it was published in the *Weekly Mail*. This means months of extra heartbreak for the prisoners, 14 of whom are on Death Row, and for their families. City AA is organising a special protest outside the South African Embassy, London, on Friday 27 July 6-9pm.

KITSONS REINSTATED
FRFI congratulates comrades David and Norma Kitson on winning the fight to lift their suspension from the ANC. Ken Gill and the MSF now need to be pressed to honour their promise to ensure David Kitson's livelihood, which they reneged on for purely sectarian reasons.

NO TO NEGOTIATIONS
Speculation in the British and South African press that the PAC is abandoning its opposition to negotiations was squashed at a PAC 'Conference of the Oppressed' in early July. PAC Vice President Clarence Makwetu stressed that there could be no negotiations until there was one person one vote in a unitary state, a redistribution of land and a constituent assembly. PAC UK representative Godwell Mzotane told *FRFI* that recent speculation about a change of position was 'a deliberate lie intended to club the PAC with those who are bent on abandoning the armed struggle and involving themselves in dubious sell-out negotiations. The PAC is not fighting for reform or civil rights – it is fighting for national liberation and self-determination for the oppressed people of Azania.'

ERRATUM
In the last issue we wrote that North Tyneside AA had held a noir practice during a meeting addressed by Lydia Nompondana (*FRFI* 95, 'AAM attempts to sabotage Upington campaign'). This should have read *Tyneside* AA. Apologies to *North* Tyneside.

News

Maguire Seven convictions 'unsafe'

SARAH RICCA

It was inevitable that with the release of the Guildford Four a few more skeletons would have to come out of the cupboard. The frame-up of the Maguire Seven is finally exposed. On Thursday 12 July Home Secretary David Waddington announced that the case of the Seven was to be referred back to the Court of Appeal. His announcement came on the same day that the May Inquiry into the Guildford Four published its interim report which criticises both the evidence against the Maguires and the judges who presided over their trial and subsequent appeals.

Despite the narrow confines of the inquiry, enough was revealed during its four weeks of evidence to expose yet another sordid episode in the British state's terror tactics against Irish people. It has finally been acknowledged not only that the forensic evidence upon which the prosecution's case rested was totally unreliable, but also that Ministry of Defence scientists lied in court to cover up its unreliability. The report also implicates the trial judge – now the Master of the Rolls himself, Lord Justice Donaldson – who allowed inadmissable prosecution evidence and who misdirected the jury when evidence emerged which questioned the reliability of the forensic tests.

The government knew that something of the truth would emerge from the inquiry. Even so, they must have winced as details of the report's findings emerged. In a clever move to hush it up, David Waddington announced that the case was to be referred to the Court of Appeal, immediately making the contents of the report *sub judice* until after the Appeal verdict.

This was greeted with outrage from the Labour Party – outrage which was all sound and fury, signifying nothing. It came too late. Of course it is important that evidence of frame-ups is not covered up. But it is far more important that frame-ups are prevented from happening in the first place. Where was the Labour Party when Annie Maguire was forced to stand spreadeagled against the cell wall in Harrow police station, menstrual blood running down her leg, a police officer shouting 'Irish bitch' in her ear? It was in government. Where was the Labour Party when Guiseppe Conlon lay in a prison hospital bed, dying of an illness for which his jailors refused him treatment? Where were they when Mrs Conlon was forced to pay for transporting Guiseppe's body to his funeral?

While the Labour Party blabbers on about the right to discuss the May report, or the need for this or that new appeals procedure, those who are really concerned about what happened to the Maguire Seven should set about building a political movement to fight against frame-ups and the governments, Labour or Tory, responsible for them. ■

The Carlton Club, a Tory bastion, was bombed in daylight

IRA military campaign

SEAN O'MAOLDHOMNAIGH

Peter Brooke's admission that the IRA could not be militarily defeated was driven home by a series of determined attacks in Britain and in Europe. Despite continuing repression in the Six Counties, the IRA has carried out the biggest offensive on British soil in years.

This culminated in the daylight bombing of the Tory bastion, the Carlton Club, in the heart of the West End. This caused severe fright and embarassment for the Tories as the Carlton is where the higher-ups relax. Red faces all round when it was discovered that the security video outside the Club was found to have been left off by the security man.

The present campaign began early in May when a number of devices were discovered on an army base in Germany. Despite heightened security an MoD building in Eltham, London, was severely damaged on 14 May. Two days later a bomb killed one and injured another soldier at the Army recruitment centre in Wembley.

The accidental killing of two Australian civilians at the end of May overshadowed the campaign. The IRA accepted responsibility and deeply regretted the tragedy.

At the beginning of June the IRA shot three soldiers, killing one, on a railway platform in Lichfield. At the same time a British army Major was killed in Dortmund, West Germany. The next target on 10 June was a dinner party hosted by the Honourable Artillery Company, one of the oldest regiments in the Army recruiting mainly from professionals in the City. Two days later the home of the top Tory fundraiser and former treasurer of the Conservative Party, Lord McAlpine, was bombed.

Within days a military training centre in Haamilin, West Germany was attacked. The army was in a flurry as the IRA maintained pressure with attacks at the rate of two a week. Meanwhile the army in Shropshire was kept busy blowing up their own cars for fear of suspect devices. Another bomb was planted within the security perimenter of Stanmore barracks on 21 June.

The latest campaign has shown that the IRA are capable of striking repeatedly at the heart of British imperialism for as long as it is necessary. ■

Brooke's new initiative

MAXINE WILLIAMS

Five years after the Anglo-Irish Agreement, a new British 'initiative' is going through its birth pangs. After a lengthy period of boycotts and general sulkiness about Dublin's role in the Agreement, the Unionists are being tempted to 'inter-party' talks about replacing the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the future of the Six Counties.

As usual, all parties involved – Unionists, Dublin, SDLP, Britain – are vying to protect their particular interests. The Unionists continue to reject any role for the Twenty Six County government in the Six Counties' affairs and want the Maryfield Secretariat (set up to service the Agreement) suspended. The British government is having to toe a delicate line between the Unionists and Dublin. Just how delicate was shown when Dublin prevented the next stage of the process from taking place and forced Brooke to alter a crucial statement he was due to deliver in the Commons. The Dublin government objected to being excluded from the first stage of the talks.

But for the hot air, what does this initiative amount to? Only the shuffling of the same reactionary cards that have dominated Six Counties constitutional politics for the past two decades. The forces which represent the nationalist people of the Six Counties – the Republican Movement – are excluded.

Haughey blows more hot air

British initiatives come and go. The Anglo-Irish Agreement represented an attempt by the British and Twenty Six Counties governments to create a constitutional centre for nationalist politics in the North and force Sinn Fein to the sidelines. It failed because, inevitably, the harsh realities of imperialist occupation did not alter for the nationalist people. Additionally, it infuriated the Loyalists whose bigotry blinds them to the fact that the Dublin government is as hostile to the nationalist struggle as they are. Thus far, Peter Brooke's initiative has succeeded only in alienating all those parties involved. In the coming period it will become clear whether the British government thinks its interests can best be maintained by leaning towards Dublin or the Unionists. ■

British terror in the Six Counties

PAM ROBINSON

The illegal British presence on the streets of the Six Counties of Ireland continues to kill, maim and threaten the daily lives of the nationalist community.

● Charles Knight, 16, was beaten by the RUC after he was arrested. At the Strand Barracks two plainclothes officers entered his cell and offered him £50 to become an informer. They promised to release him in ten minutes if he agreed. When he refused to co-operate he was beaten again and had to be taken to hospital.

● On Saturday 19 May Gerard McAllister was stopped by an army patrol in Ballymurphy, West Belfast. One soldier shouted 'You Irish bastard' and head butted Gerard with his armoured helmet, splitting his forehead open and knocking him unconscious. The soldiers dragged him into an alleyway, beat him again, and left him lying semi-conscious.

● On Thursday 24 May, the UDR attacked Brendan McConville and Gerard Weir, both 19, in Armagh. During the incident, McConville's arm was twisted behind his back and he was punched in the face. While on the ground he was kicked and hit in the head with a rifle butt. Weir was similarly attacked. Both were arrested for assaulting UDR members. At Lurgan barracks they were again beaten and both needed hospital treatment.

● Paul McCabe, brother-in-law of Aidan McAnespie (murdered by the army), and a friend were harassed by soldiers while they were preparing an area to build a memorial for Aiden on the spot where he was shot in 1988.

● On 4 June in Tyrone, Loyalists shot and killed a Catholic man and injured two of his sons. The attack on their home occured within 20 minutes of an army patrol leaving the area.

● On Thursday 7 June, three loyalist gunmen, having failed to sledgehammer their way into the home of Sinn Fein activist Sean Keenan, opened fire on him and injured him.

● On Monday 11 June, soldiers from the Scottish Borders regiment stationed in Belfast took 'revenge' for Scotland's world cup defeat by opening fire with plastic bullets injuring three youths who needed hospital treatment.

● On Sunday 17 June, loyalist gunmen in North Belfast opened fire on the front room of a nationalist home seriously injuring a man who is now in hospital.

● On Monday 2 July, at 5.30am, a joint Army/RUC raiding party carried out a three and a half hour raid on the West Belfast home of Joan Bennet. During the raid the family were held under room arrest, whilst their personal belongings were damaged. The soliders allowed a sniffer dog to kill a chicken belonging to the family, then smeared the blood on bed linen. Soldiers also stole and ate food that was in the home.

● Soldiers sexually assaulted four young children, three girls, two aged seven and one aged five and a boy aged six after they had ordered them to stand against a wall spreadeagled. At least three of the four children were assaulted and they were threatened that they would be shot if they moved. ■

Prisoners Fightback

The Woolf Inquiry into the April prison protests opened on 11 May at the Freemasons' Hall in Manchester. Its first five-week session was an investigation into the events at Strangeways and took evidence from 69 witnesses. Every category of prison officer and administrator up to Brian Emes, deputy director general of the prison service, was cross-examined in an attempt to apportion responsibility for not preventing or not containing the protest. Conspicuous by its absence was the evidence of the men on the roof. Those prisoners who so vividly dominated our TV screens for 25 days were nowhere to be seen or heard. When challenged, Woolf assured the public that the 'ringleaders' had been interviewed in private but would not be appearing at the public hearing in order not to prejudice future prosecutions against them, to deny access to 'self-publicity' and, most absurdly of all, because, as the prisoners made allegations of brutality which the prison officers denied, the inquiry would become 'bogged down if it tried to establish the truth'.

In this edition of *FRFI* we publish the prisoners' side of the story. Paul Taylor, Mark Williams and Alan Lord were among the last seven men to come down from Strangeways roof. Eric Allison is a former Strangeways prisoner who is closely monitoring the Woolf Inquiry and campaigning for the prisoners' voice to be heard.

The Woolf Inquiry has now moved to Taunton and is hearing evidence about the protests at Dartmoor, Bristol, Cardiff and Pucklechurch. Prisoners are giving public evidence in this session and extreme brutality is already being exposed.

The final stage of the Woolf Inquiry will be in London and will take the form of a series of seminars. They will not address the question of prisoners' rights but the prevention of future 'disturbances'. However, even from this perspective the Inquiry will be compelled to consider prison conditions and, if the prisoners' voice can make itself heard, the issue of brutality will also be forced on to the agenda.

On this page we print a submission to the Woolf Inquiry from prisoners at Long Lartin. We invite other prisoners to send us their views on this charter and we will print contributions on future Prisoners Fightback pages.

SUBMISSION TO THE WOOLF INQUIRY

Charter for prisoners' rights

The announcement by Lord Justice Woolf that evidence and submissions from prisoners will be considered as part of the inquiry into recent prison disturbances is welcomed by prisoners here at Long Lartin Prison.

Because it is our firm belief that any serious discussion or analysis of the existing crisis in the British prison system must as a matter of course necessarily consider the question of basic and legally enforceable rights for prisoners, we have formulated, for the benefit of the Woolf Inquiry and also a wider interested public, an introductory charter of prisoners' rights and basic, necessary reforms of the prison system itself. We hope the following recommendations would form the basis of any meaningful discussions into reform of the prison system.

John Bowden, James Northway, Gerald Patterson, Paul Icheke

1. A legally enforceable code of minimum standards in the treatment of and conditions under which prisoners live.
2. A mandatory bill of rights for prisoners and the incorporation into domestic law of the European Convention of Human Rights.
3. Implementation of the Prior Report on Prison Disciplinary Procedures.
4. More effective complaints and grievance procedures, with access to an independent tribunal in the case of more serious complaints.
5. The creation of an independent prison ombudsman.
6. Improved training for prison staff and greater care taken in the selection of applicants.
7. The recognition of prisoner representative bodies, such as prisoners' councils and committees.
8. Improved prison wages and the right of prisoners to join or form trade unions.
9. A statutory limit on time spent on remand awaiting trial.
10. Implementation of the recommendations of the House of Lords select committee on murder and life imprisonment.
11. Parole as an automatic right.
12. Greater procedural safeguards in the administrative use of solitary confinement and transfers for the purpose of maintaining institutional 'Good order and discipline'.
13. Improvement of visiting conditions and the creation of conjugal rights for long-term prisoners.
14. The complete abolition of censorship of prisoners' mail.
15. The incorporation of the Prison Medical Services into the NHS.
16. Education as a right in prison.
17. A moratorium on the current prison building programme.
18. The creation of a national sentencing council to establish a rational and sensible framework for sentencing policy.
19. Abolition of imprisonment for fine and maintenance defaulters.
20. An end to the imprisonment of mentally ill offenders.

TERRY O'HALLORAN MEMORIAL MEETING

PAUL MATTSSON

The Terry O'Halloran Memorial Fund held its first annual meeting, entitled 'Prison Revolt' on 13 June. Speakers were Kate Akester (solicitor), Shujaa Moshesh (ex-prisoner), Maxine Williams (Chair for the TOHMF), Sandra Williams (mother of Strangeways protester Mark) and Nicki Jameson (*FRFI* prison page editor). Sandra Williams told how she had been to Strangeways every day of the protest and never once told Mark to come down, 'because I knew he was doing the right thing'.

DOMENYK NOONAN

Domenyk Noonan is now in Parkhurst. He has been in six jails in 40 days and is convinced that this is an attempt to separate him from PLA supporters and avert a planned prison strike on 6 and 7 August. We ask all FRFI readers to write letters to the Home Office Prison Department, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1, demanding that Domenyk be moved back up north to be near his friends and family.

EYE WITNESS ACCOUNTS OF THE STRANGEWAYS PRISON UPRISING

'We can make decisions too'

PAUL TAYLOR, one of the last seven prisoners to come down from the roof of Strangeways Prison on 25 April, is a prisoner who at all times stands up for his own and other prisoners' rights. He writes here for *FRFI* of the abuses that prisoners endure day in, day out in British prisons, and tells the inside story of the Strangeways prison revolt.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support for those events at HM Prison Manchester, Strangeways. I have on occasion read *FRFI* and I am aware that the truth shall not be distorted, so I have decided to write an article that may be included in your Prisoners Fightback page. On behalf of all those prisoners who participated in the protest, and indeed myself, thank you all for your support.

THE PROTEST

We were protesting on behalf of every prisoner throughout the country, as much as for ourselves, and our grievances were towards the prison service.

I took the opportunity to write a representation on behalf of prisoners and the tensions amongst them, and proposed to read it in the Chapel on Sunday morning, 1 April 1990, where prisoners would of course be gathered. Many prison officers were present on the landings that particular morning, and when prisoners were escorted to the Chapel. Within the Chapel there were approximately 15 prison officers, and prisoners were aware that there were many more immediately outside. So for the prison service to suggest there were only 'half a dozen prison officers present' is simply an attempt to distance themselves further from their lack of commitment to contain the situation that developed and to further their call for recruitment of more uniformed prison officers.

Whilst the service was in progress, I walked to the front and onto the stage where I took hold of the spare microphone. I faced the congregation of prisoners, and stated the following, 'This man has spoken about the Blessing of the Heart and that Jesus can take away the hardening inside your hearts. I would like to talk to you about the anger, bitterness, resentment, contempt and frustration breeding inside of your hearts through the somewhat ignorant attitudes of the prison service; the seeming unconcern and indifference exhibited towards you and I'.

Prison officers came towards me; Prison Chaplain Noel Proctor was pulling the lead of the microphone. Later he explained to me that when he pulled it had struck him in the eye. The prison service attempted to sway public opinion by releasing that the Chaplain had been assaulted, which he has established is inaccurate.

Thereafter a situation developed in a matter of seconds, and prisoners began expressing the feelings inside their hearts. I myself ran to the back of the Chapel and began ushering prison officers out of the Chapel to a place of safety, only because many of those prison officers were 'D' wing staff who usually were concerned about establishing a relationship in the interests of both themselves and prisoners. I had therefore regard and consideration towards many of those officers. I also escorted Mr Proctor through the vestry of the Chapel to a place of safety. He can confirm this.

Keys which had been taken from a prison officer were passed to me. The Chapel doors leading into the central rotunda were then opened and I shouted: 'It is time everyone had a little association and communication'. I then proceeded to unlock all of those prisoners not already unlocked throughout the prison, to free them from the restraints of being locked in a prison cell without sanitation or washing facilities.

NO BOOBY TRAPS!

[Subjected to the constant barrage of searchlights, sirens, hoses, threats of brutality, chants of 'beast' and beating on riot shields, the prisoners were forced to respond.] I would like to impress that at no time whatsoever were booby traps laid within the prison; however, we were using our very own psychological warfare in that we convinced the authority of the prison service that we had in fact laid many booby traps on the landings. I touched upon that fact in negotiation by inviting prison officers to come into the prison, to storm the prison at any time they cared to with of course the awareness of the precarious problems they would have in coming along landings. A little note to Governor O'Friel – you could not have taken the prison by force on the second day. There would have been irresponsibility in such a decision because prisoners were still expressing, and had not spent enough, the bitterness, contempt and hatred which the prison service had been breeding over a long period of time.

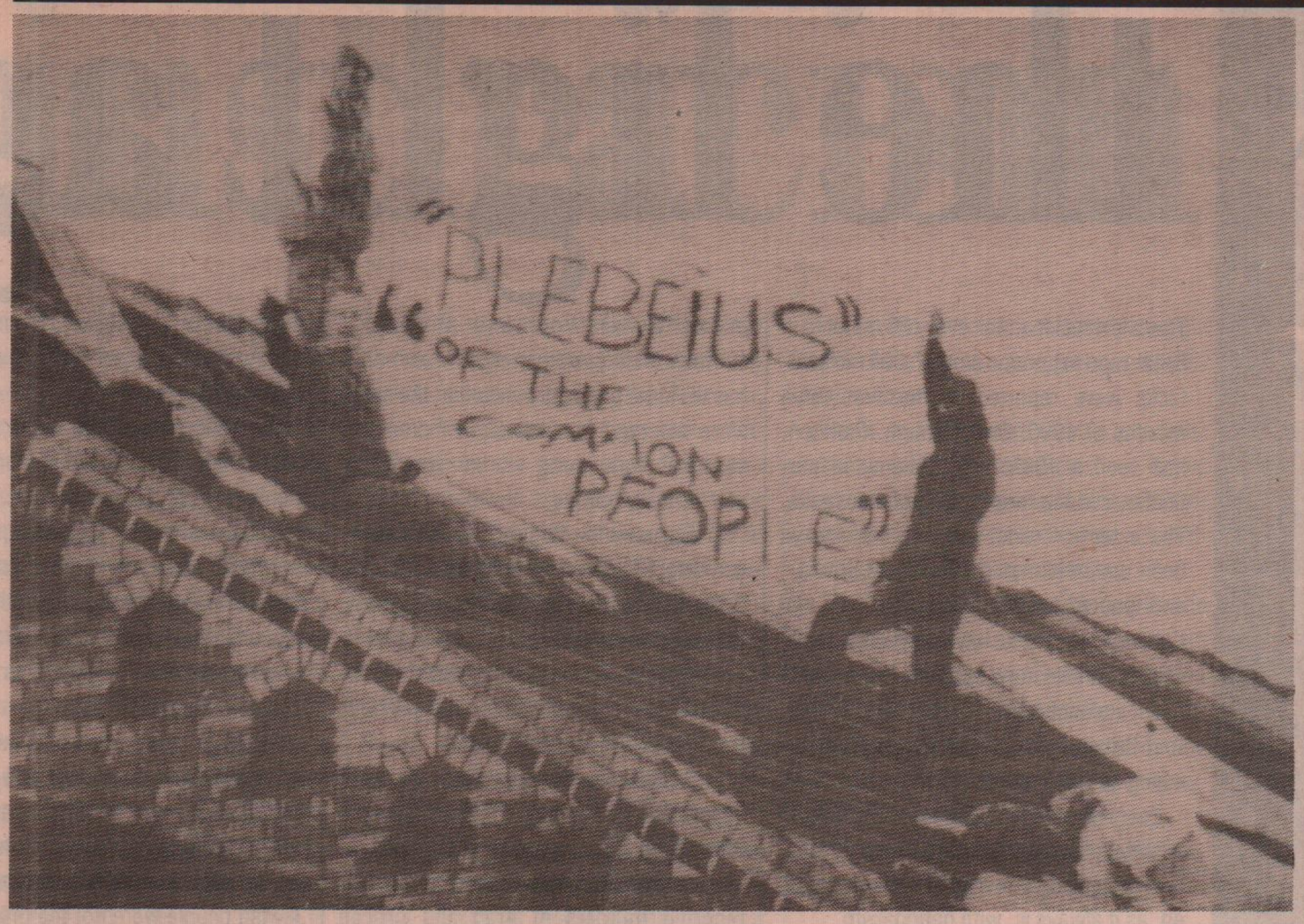
NO DEAD!

In the protest at Strangeways it was suggested to the media there could be many dead, or that they believed there were many dead. There were not . . .

NO SURRENDER!

The prison service has stated it had battled to regain control of the kitchens and 'E' wing. Not true! *We dismissed* the kitchens, it having already been emptied; and we dismissed 'E' wing because it was annexed to the hospital.

We did not surrender! We simply made a decision collectively, and it is significant to add, that I did not come to that decision myself, because I



have simply throughout the protest maintained that I could never allow myself to make any decision in respect of coming down until such time as every person had made that respective decision themselves. There were never any leaders. We all simply worked together in preventing for as long as possible the prison being taken back into the control of the prison authority. No person was ever prevented from leaving the dispute at any time whatsoever, as will of course be established. On the last day we were taking a table-tennis table with table-tennis bats and ping-pong balls onto the roof to put the icing on the cake, so to speak! Wouldn't that have been *fun*?

Of course it would suit the prison service to have everyone believe that it was a planned riot, in an attempt to incriminate prisoners in the criminal offence of riot, and indeed possibly conspiracy. I, Paul Taylor, categorically deny that at anytime was it [intended for] a riot situation to develop or take place.

ABUSE OF PRISONERS' RIGHTS

The prison service expects prisoners to be responsive when it is far removed from its statutory obligation and duty of care [to provide]:

> 'a balanced and integrated regime, which may include work, education, physical education, access to libraries and individual and collective leisure activities', 'to enable prisoners to spend the maximum possible time out of their cells'. (Prison Rules)

Prisons are run on the goodwill of prisoners, and essentially prisoners run the prison. They do all the catering, all of the maintenance within the prison, and yet are given nothing in return. Prisoners are the most patient people you could ever meet, whatever wrongdoing they have done. There is a saying that goes 'Beware the Fury of a Patient Man' (John Dryden).

CONTACT WITH FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

> 'Special attention shall be paid to the maintenance of such relations between a prisoner and his family as are desirable in the interests of both'.(Prison Rule 31 (1))
>
> 'It is one of the roles of the prison service to ensure that the socially harmful effects of an inmate's removal from normal life are as far as possible minimised . . . outside contacts are therefore encouraged, especially between an inmate and his family and friends . . . ' Standing Order 5

I was transferred 200 miles from my family to punish me for a minor act of indiscipline. Is that in the interests of the inmate and family? Of course not!

BRUTALITY IN BRITISH PRISONS

The POA's leaders Ivor Serle and John Bartell have labelled protesting prisoners as beasts and animals. Can they tell the public how many prison officers have died as the result of a prisoner assaulting a prison officer? I doubt there are *any*. Yet how many prisoners have been beaten to death over the years? How many prison officers have been convicted of beating a prisoner to death? None.

Prisoners are dragged forcibly down to strip-naked-cold-cells simply for refusing to do something, not having even been violent. I was so located for having thrown a bowl of fresh cold water over a Senior Officer at HMP Durham for refusing me my statutory right of access to sanitation on 7 September 1989. I was being held in appalling conditions . . . where mice come under the cell door and cockroaches are occasionally found in the food and are widespread at night time outside and inside the prison cells . . . For this I received a beating across the head with a truncheon. I am presently suing the prison service and prison officer concerned for assault for the injuries I received.'

[When Paul was at Walton Prison, Liverpool, he saw two prison officers assaulting his cell mates.] 'One was an epileptic and had not even awoken when I came back to the cell to find two screws harassing him, shaking him forcibly and pulling the bedclothes from him. I will not tolerate prisoners being provoked. I will not stand by and allow a screw to beat a man when he is being held down by several other screws . . .

Governor O'Friel speaks of this so-called 'Explosion of Evil'. Could it be that Governor O'Friel, perhaps unwittingly of course, was referring to the evil that lies within the authority of the prison service?

PRISONERS' DEMANDS

I would like to point out that prisoners have never specifically stated that they want single cell accommodation. That is tantamount to solitary confinement. Prisoners in long term establishments may prefer, of course, single man accommodation, but the majority held in other establishments much prefer the communication of another prisoner. Prisoners want sanitation and washing facilities in their cells, but not to be locked up for long periods of time. A prisoner sees his family once per month for half an hour. That accounts for six hours with those you love in a whole year. We demand more. To see our families twice per month for two hours is humane and it accounts for but two days in a whole year.

The Home Office has instructed that prisoners may be allowed to purchase toiletries and letters to their families from their private money. Why has not *every prison* implemented this? If prisoners' wages had risen in line with inflation they should now stand at £8-9 as reported by the Prison Reform Trust and NCCL last year.

PRISONERS UNITE

Prisoners unite! Do not do slave labour making mail bags. Do not put screws into pin plugs. Do not allow your self-respect and dignity to be taken away from you. Demand free access to shower facilities . . . Demand extra change of clothing. If the Prison Service cannot supply you with seven pairs of socks and seven pair of underpants, then walk around naked or bring the prison service to its knees by refusing any kind of work. Let them get caterers brought in – see how much *that* costs them. Fuck maintenance of the prison – *let them do it* for a change. *Let them do everything* all of a sudden so they come to appreciate it is *we* who do all the work.

We now have a situation where prisoners know the strength of unity. We are no longer going to allow prison officers to provoke confrontation. We are no longer going to allow fellow prisoners to be beaten. We are no longer going to allow the facts to be hidden. We are no longer going to allow fellow prisoners to be forcibly injected with psychotropic drugs to control the mind. Unless the prison service allows prisoners all of their rights, then we may see another Strangeways sometime or another. No more! We can make decisions too.

Justice in prison! ■

'Plebeius – Of the Common People'

Paul Taylor AN0564
HMP Hull, Hedon Road, Hull, North Humberside HU9 5LS

Prisoners' Birthdays

Brian Keenan B26380 17 July HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs WR11 5TZ

Tommy Quigley B69204 23 July HMP Full Sutton, York, YO4 1PS

Stephen Nordone 758663 2 August HMP Gartree, Leicester Road, Market Harborough, Leics LE16 7RP

Paul Kavanagh L31888 12 August HMP Full Sutton

Ronnie McCartney 463799 3 September HMP Gartree

Liam Baker 464984 6 September HMP Long Lartin

MARK WILLIAMS

When the press said that somebody had died, we inside the prison were all somewhat shocked. In fact, we all thought this was more lies told by the screws, in a bid to end our protest. But just to make sure, we searched every room and cell, every attic space, we even searched the sewers – but just like our banner said, 'NO DEAD'.

The fires that were started on several occasions were started by the screws. I witnessed them doing this, myself and the others had to constantly throughout the protest chase screws from the prison who were blatantly setting fire to parts of the prison. It was us, the protesters, who tamed and put out those fires.

David Bill, the Home Office negotiator, kept contradicting himself, as if in a bid to prolong the negotiations. He would agree to our terms, then he would try and tell us it was out of his hands, and go back on his word. If it was out of the Home Office's hands – then whose hands was it in?

I think the final stages were messed around by the Home Office, so that our protest could help to divert the public's attention from the Poll Tax revolt that was going on throughout the country. As Alan Lord was snatched after being asked to negotiate on behalf of us all, this made us all more defiant about ending the protest.

Mark Williams
HMP Frankland, Brasside, Durham, DH1 5HD

ALAN LORD

Alan Lord acutely embarrassed both the Prison Department and Manchester police by escaping the day before the Woolf Inquiry opened. He walked calmly out of 'high-security' Astley Bridge police station while the officers on duty watched the World Cup on TV. Sadly he was recaptured five days later.

At the present moment I'm confined to F-wing (segregation unit). After my apprehension from escaping at Astley Bridge Station, in retribution for the embarrassment I caused, they victimised me by inconveniently placing me on the category A list. Hypothetical! Considering I harmed no one, and committed no crime.

To the actual revelation of escape, the keys were left in the cell, and I had them five weeks! The police on apprehending [me] used unnecessary force. Every one was carrying a sledge hammer etc. Ah well. At least those relative[ly] tranquil days of freedom are memorable.

The 25-day scenario at Strangeways has sufficiently brought many social groups to appreciate the actuality of prison life. I intend to write a full, comprehensive report to Lord Justice Woolf appertaining to the *severe* deprivation within a regime of the old era.

Alan Lord K80382
F-Wing, HMP Wakefield, 5 Love Lane, Wakefield, Yorks WF2 9AG

Odds stacked against the prisoners

I write as an ex-inmate of Strangeways. I'd like to give prisoners a report on how the Manchester hearing of the Woolf Inquiry went. I attended every day; I didn't intend to, but when I saw how the odds were stacked against prisoners (and the truth) I had no alternative.

Our side hadn't had much of a say. We're not represented – unlike the Prison Department, Prison Governors' Association and POA. The various groups who claim to speak out for us: NACRO, Howard League etc, were conspicuous by their absence. On the face of it, the bad guys are winning. A lot of screws have told a lot of lies and as long as those lies didn't offend the three vested interests their stories weren't challenged.

Of the 13 selected and unnamed inmates who were called, seven gave evidence in public. (I assumed the six who spoke in private were informers.) Of that seven, three were members of the choir, three were Rule 43s and there was one other – who described the rioters in the chapel as acting like 'animals'. A well-balanced body of inmate opinion!

One other inmate gave evidence, a lad who spent the whole of his home-leave at the Inquiry and who practically forced them to allow him to speak. He attacked the system to a degree; at one stage he spoke of screws stealing prisoners' food on a daily basis. His evidence was taken after all the press had left for the day and none of the judges or counsel cross-examined him.

However – and despite the obvious stage-management – they're not having it all their own way. Some of the truth is so obvious that the Inquiry can't help but take notice and there are massive contradictions in the evidence of various staff. All this is on transcript and myself and others will put pressure on this Inquiry until the truth is heard.

Eric Allison

Out on the streets RCG fights for prisoners' rights

Throughout May and June, RCG members and supporters continued to organise around the demand – Strangeways Protest. No reprisals! Public meetings were held in London and Manchester raising the demand and discussing the issues with prisoners' relatives and supporters.

Pickets and petitioning outside Wandsworth, Brixton, Pentonville and Holloway jails in London have been maintained since the Strangeways protest. Hundreds of copies of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* have been sold to prisoners' relatives.

In Manchester, RCG members and supporters and prisoners' relatives have held pickets outside the police stations and prisons where Strangeways protesters are being held. Every Saturday street meetings have taken place in Manchester and thousands of signatures have been collected on our petition demanding no reprisals against the Strangeways prisoners. 60 copies of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* were sold outside Walton jail on 2 June when Lily Taylor, mother of Paul Taylor joined our comrades for a sale.

Our work in defence of prisoners' rights will continue. Protests are planned for the beginning of the Woolf inquiry in London. For more information on this work contact us on 071 837 1688.

Lorna Reid

the fight ag

There is a racist attack every 26 minutes in Britain and in London alone 7,000 racist attacks were reported in the first three months of 1990. One borough, Camden, has seen a 130% rise. Asians, in particular, are the targets of brutal assaults. The extent of racist violence has always been underestimated officially in Britain – and ignored by the police. The Tory and Labour Parties alike have played the racist card to win electoral support. But recently racist violence has escalated even further. And Britain is not alone. Racism is flourishing across Europe.

Every one of the 12 European Community states, and beyond into Eastern Europe, is experiencing a revival of racism, coupled, as it always is, with nationalism.

In Italy the targets are low paid immigrant workers from North Africa. Last summer a black woman was thrown off a bus in Rome on the grounds that the seats were reserved for whites. In Florence a seasonal agricultural worker was killed and his body burned.

In Germany the Republican Party is organising to spread its influence into the GDR. Its targets are the Turkish 'guest-workers', long deprived of any rights in West Germany, who now face the threat of deportation to make way for cheap labour from East Germany and Poland.

In France the National Front Party of Jean-Marie Le Pen has won the support of 30% of the electorate in local elections. In the last three months there have been six reported murders of Arab and African workers, who provide France with its cheap labour. In Belgium, Spain, Holland and Austria the right wing is organising and growing.

It is ironic indeed that in the lead up to 1992 Single Market in the EEC and the harmonisation of European laws, it is nationalism which is becoming the predominant force. In future issues *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* will be explaining why the growth of racism and nationalism across Europe at this time is no accident or coincidence.

We begin this series with two articles which examine the role of anti-semitism. Anti-semitism was a central feature of Nazi policy resulting in genocide of Jewish people in the concentration camps. But Jewish people were not the only target of fascism. Communists, trade unionists,

IT IS NOT THE JEWS WHO ARE THE
THE ENEMIES OF THE WORKERS ARE

Unity to defeat anti-semitism

Within days of the horrific anti-semitic outrage at Carpentras Jewish cemetery in France in early May came news that dozens of gravestones at a Jewish cemetery in Edmonton, north London, had been smashed and daubed with swastikas on at least three recent occasions. Although the media initially presented the news with a mixture of shock and incredulity, they were soon ready to offer glib 'explanations'.

For example, they claimed that the liberation from 'communist' regimes in Eastern Europe had unleashed ultra-nationalist and anti-semitic forces whose poison was now somehow spreading to the West. A recent TV documentary graphically illustrated the threat as a moving grey cloud, reducing anti-semitism to a phenomenon that drops from the sky like the weather and avoiding the need to explain it. Another popular myth was the 'copycat' notion – the idea that publicity about one attack encourages others.

For convoluted political purposes the Jewish communal establishment – the Board of Deputies – cynically added its weight to this myth, even though, as has now been revealed, it knew that the first of the recent incidents at Edmonton cemetery occurred on 6 May, three days before Carpentras.

For many years now, as a matter of extremely dubious policy, the Board has tried to keep information about the nature and extent of anti-semitism in Britain under wraps both from the wider Jewish community and society at large, while relying on the state to manage the problem. When pressed though, Board officials admit that the trend of anti-semitic incidents is upwards.

If socialists are going to be able to fight back effectively against anti-semitism they need to know precisely the nature and extent of anti-semitism in Britain today, where it is coming from and why it is growing. Edmonton was not the first Jewish cemetery in Britain to be attacked and the targets of anti-semitic incidents have more commonly been *live* Jews. In the last ten years, attacks have included: firebombing; serious assaults, particularly on children; daubing of property; death threats by phone and milder forms of abuse.

In 1984, a GLC report *Racial Harassment in London* published evidence submitted by the Jewish community which gave a figure of 20-25 *reported* anti-semitic incidents per month in London alone. Communities outside London have experienced similar problems. Of course, many attacks go unreported because people fear repercussions or have no faith in the authorities to deal with them.

If communal representatives now admit that the incidents are growing in number we are talking about hundreds of anti-semitic incidents per year in Britain in the current period. In the last few months young white gangs have been responsible for a marked increase in attacks on the largely working-class ultra-orthodox Jewish community of Stamford Hill in Hackney, where a number of the victims have required hospital treatment. There is informed speculation about organised fascist involvement in these assaults.

But where does this anti-semitism come from and why is there an upsurge in Britain today? Anti-semitism has deep historical roots in British politics and culture, from the massacres and expulsions in Medieval times through to the anti-semitic propagandists and popular movements in the modern capitalist period. Widespread popular sentiment was mobilised on nationalist, religious, cultural and narrow economic grounds in support of Britain's first modern immigration law, the Aliens Act of 1905, directed principally at Jews fleeing pogroms and persecution in Tsarist Russia. In the 1930s Oswald Mosely recruited tens of thousands of fascists around a social, economic and political programme whose central plank was anti-semitism. In the early 1960s a new generation of fascists were inspired by Colin Jordan's call to 'Free Britain from Jew-Control'. A wave of attacks on synagogues and Jewish individuals followed.

Although these anti-semitic movements in different decades were eventually beaten back, anti-semitism was not eradicated. The social and economic tensions of capitalist society continue to breathe life into anti-semitism after periods when it is relatively dormant, and when such tensions are heightened anti-semites have little difficulty in linking their propaganda with strands of more longstanding ideologies of Christianity and nationalism.

The last 20 years have witnessed a disturbing growth of racism in Britain expressed most visibly in the form of racist attacks directed mainly against Britain's black communities – both Asian and Afro-Caribbean. It is often assumed that black people have replaced Jews as the victims of modern racism with Jewish experience consigned to a lesson from history. This view was clearly expressed in the propaganda of popular anti-fascist movements of the late 1970s such as the Anti-Nazi League (ANL). The ANL popularised the slogan 'Yesterday the Jews, today the blacks'. It was a powerful slogan illustrating the continuity of racism, and showing where today's racism could lead, but it left a distinct impression that anti-semitism was a phenomenon of the past. Their posters declaring 'Never Again', depicting scenes of Nazi brutality against Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto underlined this point. And yet the National Front and their supporters were conducting many attacks on Jewish people and property at this time, which went largely unacknowledged.

In order to understand why anti-semitism is growing today it is necessary to understand the *links* between anti-semitism and anti-black racism, how these are combined in the outlook of fascist groups and the impact of Tory government policies on fascist organisation.

When the membership of the National Front mushroomed in the 1970s it did so mainly on an anti-(black) immigration platform. Anti-black racism was the currency for their street level recruitment campaigns and much of their activity. Taken at face value the NF might have been considered extreme racists demanding more than either the Labour or Tory governments would give on immigration control. Jut beneath the surface, though, such organisations were fundamentally fascist and anti-semitic in the tradition of Hitler's Nazis. Their comprehensive ideology revolved around a core notion of combating a Jewish (communist and capitalist) conspiracy to 'pollute the white race' and dominate the world, but they were well aware of the problems of openly propagating such policies in the post-war world. In the fascists' more sophisticated publications, the very presence of black people in Britain is blamed on Jews. None of this is to downplay their murderous hatred of black people, but to put it in context and show how, rather than replace anti-semitism, anti-black racism exists alongside it and is intimately linked to it.

When Thatcher's government was elected in 1979 playing the race card, scaremongering about immigrants 'swamping our culture', the fascist vote was decimated and their main organisation began to fragment. Many fascists left to join the Conservative Party (a number have subsequently stood as council candidates). Those that remained in fascist organisations felt increasing pressure to publicly assert their distinctive image. The Tories had left them very restricted space on issues of immigration and law and order, and so they were compelled to reveal their distinctive anti-semitic ideology more openly.

Today the main force among fascist organisations is the British National Party (BNP). While their street-level paper *British Nationalist* continues to focus on themes of immigration and law and order, the more sophisticated and internal journal, *Spearhead*, is dominated by anti-semitic material denying the Nazi genocide and exposing alleged Jewish control of politics and the media. Economic conditions have also put pressure on fascist organisations towards more open expression of their underlying anti-semitic philosophy. In a period of large-scale unemployment and poverty, clearly affecting black people proportionately more than whites, few white workers are seriously convinced by simple equations of the number of blacks in Britain and the number of unemployed. Even hardened white racists know something of the economic reality for black people. This situation compels fascist groups to concentrate seriously on the economic and political system as a whole. They cannot with any credibility charge black people in Britain with wielding economic or political power. Jews, on the other hand, conspicuous in various sectors of political and economic life. and increasingly noticed as Jews by the narrow nationalist right-wing media, fit more easily into the fascists' conspiratorial schema. After a period of sectarian divisions and fragmentation, the BNP in particular are growing and establishing new branches and no doubt have a hand in the current wave of anti-semitic attacks.

The significance of anti-semitism today is often underestimated. Many people, including many socialists, regard the Nazi genocide of European Jewry as the yardstick of anti-semitism. Attacks of the kind that occurred here in the 1970s and 1980s and which are escalating today are seen as trivial by comparison. In their *own* terms they are far from trivial and are played down at our peril. Two further factors engender complacency on the Left about anti-semitism. One is the unwillingness to believe that Jews in Britain are in any sense a vulnerable community, uncritically accepting an image of the Jewish community popularised by the more economically powerful, conformist and right-wing elements who control the communities' main institutions. In reality the community is divided economically, politically and culturally. One of the largest Jewish communities, which currently bears the brunt of many attacks, is situated in Hackney, Britain's poorest borough. The supposedly more comfortable and secure suburban Jews have also experienced attacks: racism is not confined to the inner city.

The second factor is the belief that focusing attention on Jewish concerns here might somehow undermine activity in support of the Palestinians in their struggle for justice in the Middle East. The opposite is true. The failure to take anti-semitism seriously actually encourages greater Jewish support for Zionism, while the situation in France, where Le Pen's movement openly combines anti-Jewish and anti-Arab racism, illustrates the urgent need to remove barriers to Jewish-Arab unity. There are no lines dividing those who daub swastikas on Jewish graves, who firebomb black people's homes, who murder Arabs on the streets of France. Our resistance must be equally united. ■

David Rosenberg is on the Editorial Committee of Jewish Socialist magazine.

ainst racism

working class people, gypsies and other ethnic minorities, lesbian and gays, were murdered in gas chambers and forced labour camps. With the growth of anti-semitism now, major political questions arise once again about the relationship between the fight against anti-semitism, the broader struggle against racism, and the fight for working class emancipation.

Anti-semitism is now a central feature of right-wing ideology in Europe. In both France and Britain, alongside the rise in physical attacks on Jews, sharply illustrated by the barbaric attack at Carpentras cemetery in France, right wing theorists are arguing that the Nazi gas chambers never existed and that six million Jews were not murdered. The twin targets in France are the Arabs and the Jews. In Eastern European countries anti-semitism has re-emerged with the demise of communist governments. In East Germany Jewish cemeteries have been desecrated, and recently the grave of Bertolt Brecht was daubed with Nazi symbols. In Poland anti-semitism thrives, anti-semitic literature is widespread, including a recent pamphlet called 'The Criminal Tribe' – reminiscent indeed of Nazi propaganda in the 1930s. Once again anti-semitism grows alongside anti-communism. In the Soviet Union, the right-wing Pamyat openly promotes anti-semitism alongside nationalism.

David Rosenberg, of the Jewish Socialist Group, points to the class basis of racist attacks on Jewish people and how anti-semitism can only be fought in the wider context of the anti-racist struggle and in unity with the struggle against anti-Arab racism.

Nadia, a Palestinian woman journalist recently returned from Palestine, draws the connection between anti-semitism, Zionism and the connivance of imperialism at Zionist expansionism.

The 'triumph of democracy' worldwide is already a perversion. Oppressed minorities and peoples, and the working class internationally already share in common the fact that imperialist democracy will not extend to them. This unity in oppression must become unity in struggle if the 'triumph of barbarism' is not to follow.

CAROL BRICKLEY

LEFT: Demonstrators march through Paris after Carpentras
ABOVE: Palestinians demonstrate against Soviet Jewish immigration and to protect the Occupied Territories

ENEMIES OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
THE CAPITALISTS OF ALL COUNTRIES — LENIN

Promised land for Soviet Jews

By the end of 1990 over 200,000 Jews from the Soviet Union will arrive to settle in the so-called 'promised land' of 'Eretz Israel' – occupied Palestine. Under the racist 'law of return', Israel gives automatic citizenship to any Jew from anywhere in the world. These immigrants will settle on stolen Palestinian land and further strengthen Zionist claims to a Jewish majority, in a bid to annex the remainder of occupied Palestine.

Up until 1988, Zionists throughout the world, especially in the US and Britain, conducted a campaign for the 'refuseniks' – Soviet Jews who were being denied the right to leave the Soviet Union, and, according to the Zionists, the right to 'return' to their 'homeland' of Israel. The fact that most of these 'refuseniks' did not really want to go to Israel and that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were being denied the right to return to their country of birth was not on the Zionist agenda.

Eventually, in response to pressure from imperialism and as part of Mikhail Gorbachev's promise of 'liberalisation' under glasnost, Soviet Jews were allowed, in very limited numbers, to leave the Soviet Union. Because the Soviet Union has no diplomatic relations with Israel, these 'refuseniks' first had to stop over in Austria or Italy before catching flights to Israel.

By late 1987, it was obvious to the Israeli government that a crisis had developed: of all those Jews leaving the Soviet Union each year, 75 per cent of them were 'dropping out' upon arrival in Vienna, with most immigrating to the US. The crisis prompted the Israeli PM, Yitzhak Shamir, to seek help from Israel's friend and paymaster, the US. In mid-1989 the US approved legislation limiting the quota of Jewish 'refugees' into the US to between 40,000 and 50,000 per year. Furthermore, all those requesting US visas had to prove, beyond doubt, that they faced persecution in the Soviet Union, as a condition to obtain a visa. This led to widespread demonstrations by Jewish emigrants at the US embassy in Rome during July and August of 1989 in protest at this infringement of freedom of choice.

This was not the first time that the US had connived with its Israeli ally to ensure rapid Zionist settlement and colonialisation of Palestine. Shortly after World War II President Truman, in an effort to force Jewish refugees from Nazi persecution to go to Palestine, ensured that 100,000 Jews were refused entry visas to the US.

The Israeli state is an artificial creation of imperialism to protect its, and specifically US, strategic interests in the Middle East, as well as to keep the US's Arab allies in check. In consequence, Zionist attempts to 'populate' this entity, colonise it and, in doing so, dispossess the native Palestinian inhabitants, can only be artificial.

Only through coercion and underhand attempts has the Zionist settler state been able to entice new immigrants. The airlift of 11,000 Ethiopian Jews (*Falashas*) in 1984 – the so-called 'Operation Moses' – with the help of the now-deposed dictator of Sudan, Jaafar al-Numeiry, is but one example. The disclosure of MOSSAD (Israeli secret service) complicity in the bombing of synagogues in Iraq in the 1950s, in an effort to frighten Arab Jews into leaving for the 'promised land', only shows the willingness of the Zionist state to resort to terrorism and to sacrifice the lives of innocent Jews to accomplish its aims.

Indeed, Theodor Herzl, the so-called 'father of modern Zionism', was aware that only through anti-semitism could Jews be persuaded to leave their native countries in Europe.

In June 1895, Herzl wrote in his *Zionist Diary*: 'I achieved a freer (!) attitude towards anti-semitism (while in Paris) . . . above all I recognised the emptiness and futility of trying to combat anti-semitism.' Herzl then went on to enlist the help of known anti-semites in a deal to 'get rid of' the Jewish population, which had most frequently espoused Marxist and socialist ideas as an answer to their oppression. Meeting with Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany, Herzl explained that he would be 'taking the Jews away from the revolutionary parties'. Herzl then met with the notorious Ministry of the Interior of Czarist Russia, Von Duhre, who was responsible for a pogrom of Jews at Kishnev in 1903 where 45 were killed, and 1,000 injured.

Today, no longer able to wave the banner of 'freedom for Soviet Jewish refuseniks', the Zionists have resorted to fear campaigns. Now they insist that *glasnost* has unleashed a rampant wave of anti-semitism in the Soviet Union, as well as in other Eastern European countries – a campaign so well-publicised that it led one leading Israeli professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem to suggest that MOSSAD might well be orchestrating a large part of the campaign.

Inevitably, the greatest price of the Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel will be paid by the Palestinians, particularly as daily life in the *intifada* becomes harsher. Yet again Shamir and his racist right-wing government are insisting that Jews should not be denied the right to 'return to their homeland'. Although Shamir insists that these new immigrants will not to be 'told' to settle in what he calls 'Judea and Samaria' (the biblical name for the occupied West Bank) nor Jerusalem, in March of this year, Shamir announced that a greater Israel would be needed for the new immigrants, ie annexation of the remainder of occupied Palestine.

Indeed Shamir does not need to force Soviet immigrants into settling in the West Bank or Gaza Strip; the enticing prospects of inexpensive luxury homes and subsidies for those wishing to settle there means that coercion is not needed. According to Daoud Kutlab, a Palestinian journalist living in Jerusalem: 'the protestation of the Israeli government that it does not direct new immigrants to the occupied territories is not credible, since, in the present economic situation, neither housing nor jobs can be provided for new immigrants except with heavy government subsidies. These subsidies are available in the West Bank and Jerusalem to a far greater extent than . . . [inside the green line – ie Israel's 1948 'border'.] As for immigrants, in general, Shamir has signed a proposal to exempt them from tax on household and electrical goods and instead has offered £2,000 to each new immigrant to start off with, once arriving in Israel. As for those who help Soviet Jews to get to Israel, they receive a certificate saying they participated in the 'historic redemption of Jews from the Soviet Union.'

Unfortunately the response from the Arab world has yet again resulted in very strong words and little or no action. Being no more than ineffective reactionary regimes propped up by US money, they have directed their main attack against the Soviet Union – for allowing emigration.

Rather than use what leverage they can against the US, the Arab countries have cautiously avoided all-out confrontation with their friend and ally, Egypt. Egypt is the US's number two ally after Israel in the area, and they insisted that although they object to the 'territories occupied by Israel in 1967', they would not deny the right of any Jew to settle in 'Israel proper' – little more than lip service to appease both the US and Israel.

More direct statements and action have come from the militant Lebanese groups. Several East European consulates in Beirut have been carbombed in recent months and the Islamic Jihad has threatened to attack planes carrying Soviet immigrants to Israel.

As for the Soviet Union, in response to vigorous campaigning and criticism by the PLO, including the Marxist PFLP, a direct flight agreement between Tel Aviv and Moscow and vice-versa was 'postponed until further notice'. Furthermore, a law has been enacted by the Soviet government to allow emigrants to return to the Soviet Union within five years. However, at the end of April the Human Rights Department of the Soviet Foreign Ministry announced that those who settle in the occupied territories could be treated as war criminals if they ever return to the Soviet Union, on the basis that settlement in these territories means the abuse of Palestinian human rights.

As a result of all the 'publicity', and acting as only a police state can, the Israeli government imposed censorship on media coverage of Soviet immigrants, citing 'security and military' reasons – a move which failed to evoke more than the slightest protest from a press accustomed to censorship since the establishment of the state of Israel.

The United States, although voicing 'concern' for the extremist statements of Shamir and the building of three more illegal settlements, has been playing the usual role of 'peace maker' in the region and has promised substantial aid for the absorption of the new Soviet immigrants, including $400 million in housing loans (this is in addition to the $3 billion the US grants to Israel each year). Furthermore, when the Arab countries came forward with a UN Security Council Resolution in May, condemning Soviet Jewish immigration, the US yet again vetoed the resolution. This is no surprise, as US commitment to its friend and protegé will not change.

For the Palestinians, the future looks even more bleak. The new Soviet immigrants, highly skilled, are unable to be absorbed in Israeli sectors. Instead they are quickly replacing Palestinian labourers, vulnerable enough as it is, for them to work in the Israeli 'slave markets'.

Furthermore, increased immigration means further land expropriation by the Israeli authorities on flimsy grounds, further expansion by the racist Zionist state, and further attempts by the extreme right to call for mass expulsion of the Palestinian population.

With the new government, composed of such fanatic parties as *Ha Tehiya*, which calls for annexation of the occupied territories, *Tsomet*, whose ideology is based on the expulsion of the Palestinians, and *Moledet*, headed by Rafael Gitan who once described the Arabs as 'cockroaches', there is little future.

Finally, the Ministry of Housing is now headed by none other than the 'butcher of Beirut', Ariel Sharon, who is ultimately responsible for the housing of the new immigrants. From one who is personally responsible for the massacre of over 20,000 Palestinian and Lebanese civilians in 1982, we can know for certain the direction the settlement of Soviet Jews will take ■

Nadia is a Palestinian journalist

Palestine fights

The Palestinian *intifada*, now two and a half years old, is passing through an extraordinarily difficult stage. Events in May and June were forceful reminders of the harsh conditions confronting the Palestinian national liberation movement. Isolated internationally and regionally it is being forced to fight alone against the relentlessly barbaric Zionist state which continues to enjoy imperialist support. EDDIE ABRAHAMS analyses the current situation.

In an attempt to disguise their limitless ambitions for profit and plunder, the imperialists claimed that developments in 1989, and the collapse of the socialist countries in particular, ushered in an era of 'democracy'. 1989 was the year that 'peace broke out' and 'democracy' proved victorious. In Palestine such claims are unmasked. Zionism, an obscene product of imperialism, is a bloody refutation of all imperialism's claims to be 'democratic' and 'civilised'.

ZIONIST BARBARISM

On Sunday 20 May, Ami Popper put on his brother's Israeli army uniform, took his army-issue M-16 rifle and went to the Gan HaVradim road junction outside Rishon leTzion. Gan HaVradim is the 'slave market' where Israelis hire Palestinians who commute there from Gaza every morning in the hope of finding a day's work. Popper opened fire on them, killing seven and wounding ten.

He was immediately labelled a lunatic. Fascist Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir considered it politic to publicly condemn the murders – but only as a 'shocking act of lunacy'. A Palestinian worker commented: 'They always say it is a madman when something like this happens'. Subsequent events proved that Popper's crime, far from being a 'lunatic' act, was entirely consistent with Zionism's response to Palestinian resistance in general and the *intifada* in particular.

Survivors witnessed dozens of Israeli cars pass by. Not a single one stopped to help. Hours later, one driver did stop, to survey the bloodstains. He cheerfully demanded 'Why only seven?' An Israeli soldier commented: 'Seven killed. Good. I've been stoned so many times I don't give a fuck. We should shoot a whole lot more and this crap would stop'. These were not the acts of 'lunatics'. These people represent the average Zionist who value Palestinians less than dogs. They express the mentality of colonial settlers who live in constant fear of the Palestinian people's struggle to reclaim the land which was stolen from them.

Throughout the occupied territories and in 'Israel' itself, Palestinians mounted massive and angry protests. Fascist Shamir, claiming that they had 'exceeded the bounds of the permissible', sanctioned the murder of 11 more Palestinians and the wounding of at least 400 before the week was finished. This was no act of 'lunacy' either. It was calculated colonialist butchery in an attempt to terrorise Palestinians into submission.

Those who claim that Popper was a 'lunatic' wilfully cover up the fact that the Israeli state can survive only by resorting to the worst reactionary violence. The entire edifice of the Zionist state is built on the expropriation, oppression and plunder of the Palestinian people and their land. In the face of a mass democratic movement fighting for national liberation, such a state can survive only by means of fascist technique. A glance at Israel's response to the *intifada* proves this.

During the first two years of the *intifada* , begun in December 1987, 823 Palestinians from the age of 2 to 83 were killed by bullets, teargas and beatings. Estimates of serious injuries are put at 80,000 out of a combined West Bank and Gaza population of just 1.3 million.

Today over 15,000 people are held in concentration camps which in two years have processed over 35,000 people. In June, an Israeli human rights organisation, B'tselem, reported, among other forms of brutality, that Palestinian teenagers were being held in police courtyards, manacled to pipes during driving rain and scorching sun. 5,500 people have lost their homes which have either been sealed or demolished by the security forces. Numerous forms of economic repression included uprooting 52,698 olive and fruit trees.

In the first months of the *intifada* a secret Israeli army report stated that: 'Officers . . . are giving orders to break property, and to break hands and feet, and to beat people not only during demonstrations . . . but at all times . . . '. Nearly 18 months ago an American medical team, Physicians for Human Rights, referred to 'an uncontrolled epidemic of violence . . . '. Dr Leon Shapiro testified that: 'If this were a war, many of the actions whose results we have seen would be declared atrocities.'

Besides the murder of ordinary civilians, Zionism is resorting to shoot-to-kill tactics, as its parent British imperialism has in Ireland, in an attempt to destroy the *intifada* leadership. In December 1989 four Israelis dressed as Palestinians entered a Nablus barber's shop and shot dead four members of the Palestinian Black Panthers (a unit of militant youth responsible for executing collaborators). All were unarmed. None was given the chance to surrender.

Boycott Israeli produce!

In their struggle against Zionism and imperialism, the Palestinian people urgently need international solidarity.

The absence of any serious British solidarity with the Palestinian people is one of the most criminal features of the British labour movement. It was British imperialism after all which was instrumental in the formation of the racist Zionist State.

We can go some way towards rectifying this disgrace by supporting the campaign to **boycott Israeli goods.**

For two and a half years, the Palestinian masses in the occupied territories have mounted a massive **boycott of Israeli produce**. We should join them.

Boycott the following goods;

JC grapefruit segments
Assis celery hearts
Osem crackers, sesame honey snacks
Jaffa Gold juice
Prizewinners sweetcorn
Sunshine natural Jaffa juice
Southern Delight sweetcorn
Elite sesame and halva

You can also:

- write to your MPs demanding that they raise the issue of Britain's continuing trade with the the Israeli regime in Parliament.
- organise pickets of shops and supermarkets selling Israeli produce.

Palestinians murdered by Ami Popper

In the face of continuing resistance, the Israeli government reduced the age of criminal responsibility to 12, closed down schools and colleges and began expelling leading activists from the West Bank and Gaza. Their latest measures include a decree applying collective punishment to the families of children who throw stones and the setting up of armed Zionist militias in the West Bank and Gaza.

IMPERIALISM BOLSTERS ZIONISM

Following the 20 May events, Yassir Arafat, at a UN General Assembly, demanded that a UN team be sent to the occupied territories. The US vetoed the proposal. On 21 June, in a further act of solidarity with Israel, the US broke off political contact with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). President Bush and his Secretary of State Baker found their pretext in the 30 May Palestine Liberation Front's seaborne military operation against Israel. The PLO, they insisted, had failed to condemn forcefully enough this 'Palestinian terrorist action' in which no Israeli was killed or injured and in which Israeli soldiers killed four and captured seven Palestinian guerrillas!

Throughout the *intifada*, and in the face of Zionism's most brutal crimes, imperialism has remained an unflinching supporter. The relentless Zionist terror against a whole people has evoked no serious action. When Romanian miners entered Bucharest to break up a few pro-capitalist and anti-semitic demonstrations, imperialist lackeys demanded economic sanctions and the cancellation of economic agreements with the democratically-elected Iliescu government. But when Zionism murders hundreds, breaks their bones, imprisons, humiliates and deports them, imperialism merely asks for 'reason' and 'restraint', more frequently from the oppressed Palestinians.

Imperialism cannot take serious action against Zionism. Even after the collapse of the socialist bloc, Israel remains its major 'strategic asset' in the Middle East. It is the most stable and reliable counter-revolutionary force in a region where mass poverty and oppression are always on the verge of exploding into anti-imperialist uprising.

To sustain Israel and ensure its stability, imperialism supplies it with $4bn a year, with the most sophisticated weaponary and consistent political and diplomatic support. And to secure the loyalty of its population to imperialism, it has enabled them to enjoy an imperialist living standard at the expense of the Palestinians.

SHAMIR'S GOVERNMENT OF THE 'FINAL SOLUTION'

In the third year of the *intifada* the Palestinian people are preparing to confront a massive new danger. From over the horizon they can already see the spectre of the 'final solution' – the expulsion of all Palestinians from the West Bank and their replacement by a new flood of Zionist immigrants. This is no fantasy.

This year alone, over 200,000 Soviet Jews will settle in Palestine, all demanding homes and land (*see centre pages article*). On 8 June, Shamir formed the most reactionary government in Zionism's history, uniting Likud with open fascists such as *Moledet* which calls for the mass expulsion of Palestinians from the West Bank, and *Tehiya* and *Tzomet* which call for the West Bank's annexation. The priority for this government will, in Shamir's words, 'be devoted to the most important issue of our lives – the massive emigration' into Palestine.

Responsibility for the settlement of Soviet Jews will rest with new Housing Minister Ariel Sharon. Sharon is a ruthless, cold blooded Zionist who would uproot millions to defend Zionism. He is known as the Butcher of Lebanon for organising the 1982 invasion of Lebanon and the murder of 20,000 Lebanese. It was he who gave the go ahead for the unspeakable massacre of unarmed Palestinians at Sabra and Chattilla.

Commenting on the new Jewish immigration, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) magazine *Democratic Palestine* notes that 'Israel has received a new reserve force for the occupation army' and is 'getting a new injection of professionals and other skilled workers who will be useful in further development of industry.' The PFLP also comments that the new immigration 'increases the danger that the Zionists may opt for "transfer" as a "final solution".'

THE FUTURE OF THE *INTIFADA*

Political developments over the past year and the collapse of the Socialist bloc in particular, have sharpened the international and regional isolation of the revolutionary *intifada*. The lack of forward political development following the heady days of the 1988 Declaration of the Palestinian State has induced a degree of passivity and strengthened the hand of bourgeois forces within the *intifada*. And no doubt the weariness resulting from two and a half years of the Zionist repression has forced the less revolutionary, less consistent sectors into retreat.

However, despite all these factors, and the unrelenting repression, the *intifada* survives. The popular will to fight, the determination to resist Zionist colonisation, the willingness to die for freedom remain unbending. The *intifada* survives because the material conditions that gave rise to it survive. In December 1987, the Zionist newspaper *Hadashot* wrote that the occupied territories 'have become more and more like Soweto . . . densely populated, poor, with shameful living conditions and full of hatred'. The *intifada* is a revolt against unbearable conditions of poverty, oppression and enslavement. It is a revolt led by the most oppressed, by the poor and by the dispossessed who have nothing to gain from a compromise with Zionism. And now with the talk of 'transfer' assuming ominous dimensions, the *intifada* is literally becoming a matter of life and death for the Palestinian nation. ■

No Voice is Louder than the Voice of the Uprising

This is the title of a new book published by the PFLP which contains invaluable material about strategy and tactics in the democratic revolution. It brings together the first 47 declarations of the underground United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) which unites all organised political trends in the *intifada*.

The declarations respond to every significant aspect and development during the intifada: the role of the different classes in the struggle against Zionism, Zionist repression, imperialist intervention, the question of collaborators, the development of the popular committees as a form of dual power, the role of women, the question of political prisoners and many other issues. They frequently underline the leading role played by the working class. One declaration directed specifically at workers opens: 'Your stones and firebombs have shaken the earth under the occupier's feet'. The declarations also feature splendid internationalism with declarations of support for popular struggles in South Africa, Chile, Namibia and elsewhere.

No Voice is Louder than the Voice of the Uprising can be obtained from the PFLP magazine *Democratic Palestine*, Box 30192, Damascus, Syria.

A woman in Gaza protests at the arrest of her son

The legacy of LUMUMBA

30 June 1990 was the thirtieth anniversary of the gaining of independence by Congo (now Zaire), an event that passed virtually unnoticed in the British media. Seen at the time as the most disastrous episode in the decolonisation of Africa, much of the history of the transition to independence, and of the role played by the country's first Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba, is now ignored. ALWYN TURNER pays tribute to his memory.

Congo was first brought under Belgian rule in 1885, when Leopold II, having failed to convince the Belgian government of the prestige of having an African colony, simply annexed the region under his own direct rule. During the next three decades, he instigated a ruthless policy of exploitation of natural resources that amounted virtually to genocide, with an estimated one third of the African population being wiped out in the drive to extract ivory and rubber from the country. Even by imperialist standards, the violence was clearly unacceptable and, under international pressure, the Belgian government took over the running of the country in 1908.

For the next half century, Congo was not seen in political but simply in economic terms as a source of massive mineral wealth, to be extracted through forced labour. The Belgian government favoured total suppression combined with a policy of silence that effectively cut off the country from the rest of the world; even within Belgium, Congo was ignored, while the government deliberately avoided the creation of a white colonial class with any ties to the country.

Despite the closed nature of Congo, however, the upheavals in colonial Africa that began with Nkrumah's campaigning in Ghana could not be kept out indefinitely. In 1955, a civil servant, Joseph Kasavubu, was elected President of ABAKO, an organisation founded in an attempt to unite the Bakongo people, by then scattered through three colonial nations. Previously a cultural movement, ABAKO became under Kasavubu's direction an increasingly political organisation, calling for independence and for democratic rights, including press freedom, elections and recognition of political parties. In 1958, an even more significant development saw the formation of the Mouvement National Congolais (MNC), an overtly political party advocating a unified independent Congo in response to ABAKO's tribal separatism. The central figure within the MNC was Patrice Lumumba, an outstanding orator and pamphleteer who had moved rapidly from a belief in the progressive nature of Belgian colonialism to an unequivocal anti-imperialism and who was to emerge as the most controversial post-colonial leader of the time.

The process whereby Congo became an independent state remains obscure. At the end of 1958, Belgium remained apparently in firm control; within a month, widespread though disorganised outbreaks of rioting, most notably in the capital Leopoldville at the end of a march by 30,000 unemployed workers, had forced the Belgian government to concede long-term reforms (though it still maintained its repressive policies, arresting the leaderships of ABAKO and MNC). It was becoming obvious that independence for Congo was ultimately inevitable; what no one was prepared for was the speed of Belgium's capitulation. In January 1960, at a round table conference in Brussels (for which Lumumba was released from jail), the Belgian government announced that Congo was to become independent in June, a total reversal of their previous policy.

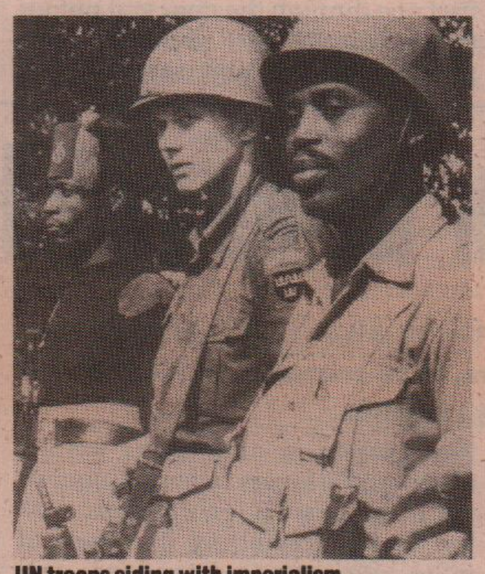
In retrospect, it appears that the Belgians assumed that, having effectively run Congo as a purely economic investment, the issue of political control was irrelevant. At the ceremony of independence on 30 June 1960, Lumumba – by then the newly elected Prime Minister in a coalition that had Kasavubu as President – was not even scheduled to speak. When he insisted on doing so, he shocked both the Belgians and the Congolese bourgeoisie with a powerful denunciation of colonialism as a 'humiliating slavery which was imposed on us by force' and with a refusal to forget 'the insults and blows we were made to endure morning, noon and night because we were Blacks'.

Until that speech, it had been tacitly accepted that Congo would go the way of other 'independent' African states – ie that the post-colonial government would work in tandem with the remains of the colonial military and civil structures and would protect imperialist economic interests. Lumumba made it clear that he had no such intention; he proclaimed the need to establish a black African state, genuinely independent, that would begin the long process of reclaiming Africa for Africans and would facilitate the liberation struggle of all black people. In short, he sought to put into practice the rhetoric of Nkrumah and to revive the ambitions of Marcus Garvey. For Lumumba, Congo was to be a beacon of hope for the black world:

Patrice Lumumba

> 'Together, my brothers, my sisters, we are going to begin a new struggle – a sublime struggle that will take our country to peace, prosperity and grandeur . . . Let us show the world what the black man can do when he works in freedom.'

Inevitably, once it was clear that Lumumba was no neo-colonialist puppet, he was subjected to an immediate and ferocious onslaught from Belgian imperialism and from those who worked under its protection. Within days, the army was incited to mutiny and the thousands of Belgian troops who had never left the country stepped in 'to protect white civilians'. The result was a state of civil war in which Lumumba was isolated, still enjoying massive popular support but unable to mobilise any organised manifestation of it to defend his government. The situation deteriorated still further when the leader of Katanga, the richest region of Congo, declared the secession of his province (a move supported by the South African and Rhodesian governments and backed up with white mercenaries).



UN troops siding with imperialism

Lumumba, in desperation, called on the United Nations for help. On 12 July, less than a fortnight after independence, 25,000 UN troops flew into the country, ostensibly as a peace-keeping force, in reality to support the anti-Lumumba factions. They did nothing to assist the beleaguered government, nothing to challenge the Belgian troops, nothing to threaten the secession of Katanga or of Kasai (the second richest region which subsequently announced its secession). When Lumumba demanded the removal of all white UN officers and troops (who constituted the vast majority of the UN force), his appeal was rejected, the UN openly refusing to recognise the legitimacy of the democratically elected government. US imperialism was the major backer of the UN contingent. At the time the Congo supplied 50 per cent of the world's uranium and was the source of the material used to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The US ruling class also recognised the Congo as strategically vital for control throughout Africa. CIA and British MI6 agents accompanied the UN contingent.

The chaos and bloodshed that followed independence broke the fragile coalition that existed between the MNC and ABAKO, and in early September, Kasavubu announced that as President he was (unconstitutionally) removing Lumumba from office. Ten days later, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu, the Congolese Army Chief of Staff, staged a coup with the support of the UN, removing both Kasavubu and Lumumba from office and placing the latter under house arrest. Lumumba escaped but was recaptured, tortured and, on 17 January 1961, murdered.

The frenzied violence that greeted Lumumba's short-lived attempt at black power remains of immense significance in African politics. No other leader of a newly independent former colony had made such a clear break with imperialism; no other leader was faced with such a naked assault by imperialist power. The months that followed Congolese independence were presented by the West, both at home and in Africa, as a tragic example of what happens when black people attempt to reject the superior wisdom of European civilisation. The involvement of Belgium and the UN soldiers, the recruitment of Portuguese mercenaries, the destabilising efforts of South Africa and Rhodesia, were all laid to one side and, for many years, Lumumba was held up as evidence of the supposed instability of black government and as justification for the patronising liberal myth that we need to prepare and educate the population gradually if democracy is to be achieved.

It was a powerful myth and, as listening to liberal white South Africans or examining the British media will demonstrate, still is. The subsequent marginalisation of Lumumba, the shroud of silence that has descended over his politics and even his existence, has not dispelled the lies; rather, it is a recognition of his potential power to inspire and incite the struggle for liberation.

Today we see South Africa, the last remaining white-governed state in Africa, apparently moving towards a (mostly) peaceful transition to a black government and we hear again the rhetoric of reconciliation that was the dominant theme of the great era of decolonisation. And yet the majority of the continent remains economically enslaved to imperialism and in the grip of reactionary black bourgeois administrations that do nothing to challenge that status. It is clear that a new struggle needs to be waged, a struggle to take up the threads of the great wave of anti-imperialist campaigning that transformed the continent, to build an Africa truly governed by and for Africans. In that struggle, the legacy of Lumumba, the man who fought and died for his belief that decolonisation was not a time for 'reconciliation' on the terms of the oppressor but rather a time for reawakening, will surely be reclaimed and restored. ■

Kenya and Zambia: revolt is vital

So far this year riot police have been out on the streets of Gabon, Benin, Ivory Coast, Zaire, Zambia and, in July, Kenya: all one party states where the ruling parties have held power for eighteen years or more.

By the end of 1989, Africa's foreign debt stood at $250 billion, forcing the continent to pay 40 per cent of its export earnings in debt repayments. Falling commodity prices have cost Africa an estimated $5.5 billion over the past decade. Annual average income per head has fallen from £534 in 1978 to £353 today: Kenya's figure is £225, Zambia's £188! In ten years, the continent's employment rate has dropped 16 per cent, health and education spending cut 25 per cent. Illiteracy, hunger, disease and death are rampant: to revolt is vital.

As the economic and social crises have intensified so the political pressures on the imperialists' stooge élites have grown. Since February, when Kenya's Foreign Minister was killed, the tensions have multiplied. President Moi called in British police to investigate, but Moi himself is generally blamed. His KANU party has been in power since independence in 1963. Kenya's deteriorating condition over the past decade has produced demands within and without KANU for political reforms. Their proponents have been hounded and slandered: several have wound up in the notorious Hola camp, former site of British troop murders of Kenyan political prisoners. The beatings-up and arrests have reached as far as ex-cabinet colleagues of Moi who see a multi-party system as the besst way of fulfilling their thwarted political ambitions.

The government attack on the July rally for democracy triggered an explosion of anger that ignited in towns across Kenya. Ngugi wa Thiongo, spokesperson for the underground Mwakenya, an organisation that revives the traditions of the suppressed Mau Mau war against British colonialism, exclaimed, 'Suddenly, the culture of silence and fear, which I've been writing about for the decade since I came out of detention, is not there anymore . . . Moi can never rule again in the old way'. The US government is threatening to suspend aid. No doubt Thatcher will reconsider her line that Kenya is an example to others of respect for human rights. They will understand that Moi must compromise with his bourgeois rivals if the revolutionary conclusions of the masses are not to be drawn.

Zambia, like Kenya, inherited a bourgeoisie and political system designed by the British ruling class to ensure that country's continued plunder. Since 1973 opposition political parties have been banned by President Kaunda. Under pressure from international banks, Kaunda doubled the price of maize in June. Within a week student demonstrations had escalated to fighting across Lusaka and into the copperbelt: copper accounts for over 90 per cent of Zambia's export earnings. At the end of June elements in the military staged a coup attempt.

Zambia's foreign debt is $7 billion with arrears on payments of $1.2 billion to the IMF and world bank. Kaunda is attempting to resist an increase in the limit on repayments set at 10 per cent of export earnings. Kenya has been undergoing an IMF 'enhanced structural adjustment facility'. Kenya's debt repayments already consume over a third of export earnings, which are largely controlled by Unilever, Lonrho and Del Monte anyway. International finance capital has no solutions to the problems killing Africa's masses, the people have begun the process of finding solutions for themselves. Imperialist greed has narrowed the space within which its parasitic African class allies can manoeuvre their own survival. ■

TREVOR RAYNE

Conditions in US prisons echo those in Britain – prisoners face an oppressive regime designed to deny them human rights and dignity. The British government is using the example of US prisons as a model for privatising the prison system in Britain. Below we print two articles about a regime just as barbaric as Britain's – see also this issue's letters page.

Insurrection at Clallam Bay

PAUL WRIGHT, a prisoner at Clallam Bay Corrections Centre in Washington State, describes an uprising at the prison in the face of conditions familiar to British prisoners – overcrowding, harassment and injustice.

On 11 April 1990 frustration and tensions which had been building for weeks burst forth. For approximately four hours prisoners at the Clallam Bay Corrections Centre held and controlled all three pods of F Unit (the close custody unit). Since its opening about three months ago prisoners in F Unit have been subjected to petty harassment, such as 'cell inspections' where prisoners are often infracted for not having their shoes under their bunk, 'dirty' sinks, etc. At the kangaroo hearings the prisoner is invariably found 'guilty' and sanctions imposed. There are insufficient jobs at the prison yet prison officials place those not working on cell confinement during the day. Many prisoners have literally put in dozens of job applications, in vain. The guards in the Unit have repeatedly harassed prisoners, trumped up infractions, locked them in their cells, revoked their privileges, etc.

Petitions complaining of this, signed by nearly all the prisoners in F Unit, were sent to the Warden, Neil Brown; he did nothing. Petitions were then sent to the governor and several legislators: they did nothing. Dozens of grievances were filed, plus verbal complaints to the unit sergeant and CUS: they did nothing. It was well known that the lack of jobs and the policy of locking up the 'unemployed' was a sore spot, especially the practice of taking earned time from non-workers (this means that the prisoner must stay in prison past his sentence. Even with good behaviour the prisoner loses up to five days a month earned time as a result of this practice). Prison officials took no steps to remedy this.

In the past week or so, several prisoners had been brutally beaten within F Unit by staff, usually during disciplinary hearings or such. On 11 April prisoner Terry Grant was told that because he was not able to find employment he would be placed on cell confinement. Terry had put in 28 job applications, to no avail. He told the unit sergeant he would rather go to the hole than put up with this. A few minutes later several guards came to take Terry to the hole from the rotunda area. Terry dropped the first one through the door and put up spirited resistance, landing good punches on the unit sergeant and other guards. Terry was forced to the floor and one guard began jamming his finger in Terry's right eye, causing it to bleed, while the sergeant brutally pulled his hair. Prisoners in pod 1, recently returned from lunch, became outraged at this, the latest in a series of beatings and abuses. Guard Banner opened the pod door while the struggle was occurring and some 10 to 15 prisoners surged out to rescue Terry from the beating and eye gouging. In the ensuing melée the unit sergeant and the guards who had been beating Terry were themselves beaten. In the retreat back to pod 1 prisoner Bob Lindell was captured and after resistance put into the hole.

At this point the frustration that had been building for weeks vented forth. Guard Banner ordered prisoners back to the cells but wouldn't open the cell doors. The rebellion quickly spread to pods 2 and 3. At that point the doors were barricaded, floors wet down, makeshift weapons quickly fashioned from chairs, mops, brooms etc. Several prisoners were able to call their families and tell them of the occurrences, and asked them to call the media. Phones were cut off soon after.

At about 2.45pm the warden, Neil Brown, came to F Unit to speak to the prisoners. He would not negotiate and refused requests to have outside persons such as the ACLU or the media present as observers. Mr Brown promised that if prisoners locked up he would listen to their grievances and complaints – he gave his word on this (as expected he didn't keep it). Prisoners refused to capitulate at this point. Shortly after, a tactical unit using stun grenades mace and clubs stormed pod 3. Prisoner Sherman Pully was thrown down a flight of stairs, beaten with a night club and maced. Several other prisoners were maced. Mr Brown once more spoke to the prisoners in F Unit and again asked them to capitulate, threatening further violence if they refused. As no hostages were taken he felt no obligation to negotiate or discuss anything. Eventually, at about 3.30pm the prisoners in pod 1 were the last to capitulate.

A few hours later riot squads came through and searched the prisoners' cells, after threatening to mace anyone who resisted. No one was beaten or harmed during the searches and as far as could be seen everyone's property was treated with care and respect.

At approximately 6.30pm a bus had arrived from Shelton and approximately 30-40 prisoners were taken from F Unit and taken to Shelton IMU.

F Unit has been on lock down since. Prisoners have been fed in their cells and for several days the power in the cell was kept off. No one has been allowed to take showers or call their families. During the entire episode there was no prisoner-on-prisoner violence. On 12 April prison counsellors began calling out the remaining prisoners, manacled, to ask why they thought the insurrection had occurred. Some cooperated with this, others did not. It appears that it will soon be business as usual with no attempt made to provide adequate jobs, abolish the cell confinement policy and denial of earned time for the unemployed, or to restrain unit staff from their petty provocations.

By not correcting these problems, prison officials are responsible for setting the stage for another rebellion in a few months time, and again after that and so on. Especially when they complete their double bunking plans and overcrowd the cells and units to 40 men instead of their design capacity of 20. Prison officials will attempt to blame the prisoners for this incident and 'get tough', just like they did at Attica, Santa Fe and other places. It is well known that petty policies and harassment cause more grief than good – as a behaviour modification technique it's working pretty good: building a spirit of resistance. ■

Life on Death Row

One of the most inhuman features of the US prison system is Death Row where prisoners wait, often for years, to be executed. ALEXA BYRNE reviews *Life on Death Row* by Merrilyn Thomas.

Some of the account given in *Life on Death Row* is the stuff of which our worst nightmares are made. All dignity and humanity denied. Relentless cruelty and murder enshrined in a corrupt judicial system where 'to be poor is to have the unique privilege of an appointment with the executioner'.

The worst horror of all is that this is reality. Right now in the US there are 2,186 men, women and teenagers on Death Row, with one more person added every day. 'If we execute one person a day, every day but Sunday, for the next ten years, there will still be over 2,000 people waiting to be killed.'

You read the last letters from condemned people to friends and family. You go through the last 50 minutes of an innocent black man's life after he has spent eight years in a cage to have every appeal turned down. As he faces the gas chamber he sends his last message to his family. He watches the prison warders strap tape around his chest securing two ECG terminals, 'so they can tell when your heart stops beating, OK?'.

He thanks his lawyer who walks to the chamber with him holding back tears of rage and helplessness at this 'macabre ritual'. The black man was Edward Earl Johnson, framed at 18 for the killing of a white policeman. It took a full 17 minutes for him to die. His lawyer is Clive Stafford Smith, whose fight against the US death penalty is described in this book. Out of loyalty and friendship to Edward, he stayed and heard him choke to death while the scavengers from the press watched.

Stafford Smith is a white lawyer, originally from England. He has devoted his life to representing Death Row prisoners, and works for the Southern Prisoners Defence Committee. Often he and his colleagues work for no pay, travelling hundreds of miles inter-state to defend men and women in the last weeks of their lives. What keeps him going is the hope that he may save a person's life, and by proving the innocence of Edward Earl Johnson and others, bring about the abolition of the death penalty.

The odds are stacked against him, as they are against the condemned. They are up against a racist judiciary and Reagan's brutal legacy which took away the right of Death Row prisoners to legal aid in fighting their appeals and ruled that mentally ill people can be executed.

Troy Dugar was sentenced to death on his 16th birthday. He has a mental age of nine and has suffered eight years of schizophrenic delusions – he doesn't even understand that he is on Death Row. Yet he is supposed to research and litigate in a highly complex field of law to save his own life. As Stafford Smith says, 'We have surely stepped through the looking glass'.

The book describes the extreme poverty of black people in Mississippi where Earl Johnson was born, and the historical background of racism and slavery in the southern States. It traces the years of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 60s when black people organised against segregation and the white supremacy of the fascist Ku Klux Klan.

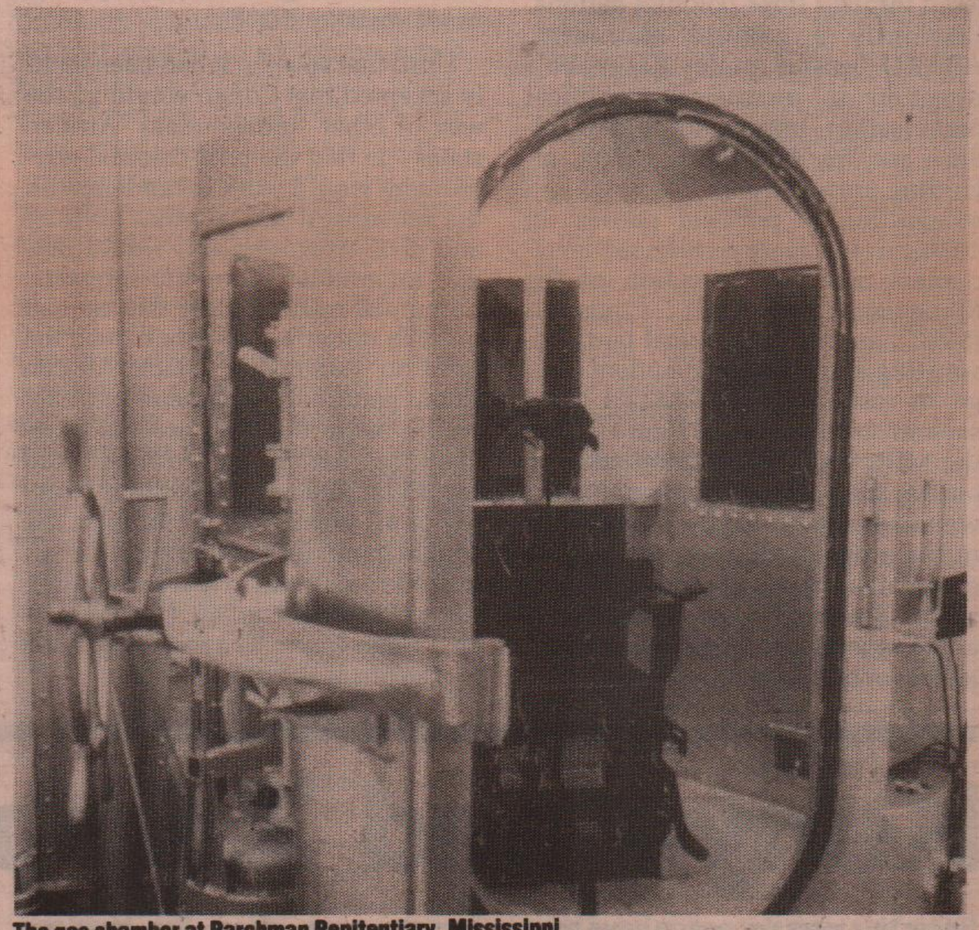
It reproduces transcripts of Earl Johnson's trial and exposes the deep-seated prejudice of the judiciary. Only last year the District Attorney of the Mississippi Supreme Court publicly admitted that when picking a jury he tries to 'get rid of as many blacks as possible'. It is commonplace for the prosecutor to dismiss jurors who oppose the death penalty. Leo Edwards was sentenced to death by an all-white jury in June 1989. He told Clive before his death, 'When I saw the jury, I thought "I'm dead"'.

'Amongst those accused of murder in the US everyone executed shares the badge of poverty', writes Stafford Smith. 'You won't find the rich, white and privileged of the world on Death Row.' Because there is little financial reward or glory in representing Death Row prisoners, black people and poor whites often end up with highly inexperienced and often racist lawyers. One lawyer referred to his client as a 'nigger' throughout the trial. In another case, a Death Row prisoner was represented by a law student who had to ask the judge for a moment to compose herself. 'I have never been in a courtroom before', she said.

Life on Death Row covers all this and more. At times I found Merrilyn Thomas' attitude condescending and superior. For example, she described Leo Edwards as 'a maltreated pet animal'. She is also disparaging of periods when black people's organisation has become a threat to the state – for example, the black power movement. She describes the Panthers as extremists taking attention away from the plight of black people in the South.

Neither has she any understanding of the class conflict which under capitalism allows the US ruling class to protect its puppets, like Oliver North, with the best lawyers, while the poorest of the US working class are executed – denied the basic human right to a fair trial. ■

Life on Death Row: One man's fight against racism and the death penalty, Merrilyn Thomas, Piatkus, £12.95.



The gas chamber at Parchman Penitentiary, Mississippi

The Democrats and the death penalty

In an attempt to win votes, 'liberal' Democrat candidates in the US are falling over themselves to prove their commitment to the death penalty. An obscene display of opportunism at its most brutal and reactionary, TV ads glorify the politicians as they parade their credentials.

'I have now signed some 90 death warrants in the state of Florida,' boasts Bob Martinez, Democrat governor. Attorney-General Jim 'Texas Tough' Mattox 'has carried out 32 death penalties', but has to watch his rival Mark White, filmed alongside the photos of prisoners he executed when Governor of Texas. The 'tough and caring' liberal Mayoress of San Francisco battles it out with John Van de Kamp who some years ago made the mistake of opposing the death penalty. He has made amends. His advert shows the door of San Quentin gas chamber opening while the voice-over reassures the public that he has 'put or kept 277 murderers on Death Row'.

Meanwhile in Georgia, Andy Young, black Democrat candidate who was big in the '60s Civil Rights Movement, plays Judas and betrays all the black working class men and women on Death Row. 'Every society he opines, 'has the right to put mad dogs to death', and promises to enforce the death penalty with a will.

The Democrats, if elected, will ensure that Reagan and Bush's legacy of judicial torture and murder continues apace. ■

Alexa Byrne

In the lead up to the next election debate will begin again about the nature of the British Labour Party and the attitude which the left should adopt towards it. In order to advance this discussion FRFI will carry a series of articles examining the history of the Labour Party and the left's positions. We begin with a review by MIKE TAYLOR of an SWP book *The Labour Party – A Marxist History*.

Out of the bowels of the TUC

'Most of the Labour Party's members are working men. However whether or not a party is really a political party of the workers does not depend solely upon a membership of workers, but also upon the men that lead it, and the contents of its actions and its political tactics. Only the latter determines whether we really have before us a political party of the proletariat. Regarded from this, the only correct point of view, the Labour Party is a thoroughly bourgeois party, because, although made up of workers, it is led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that, who act quite in the spirit of the bourgeois. It is an organisation of the bourgeoisie which exists to systematically dupe the workers.' *Lenin on Britain*

To the authors *The Labour Party – A Marxist History* the Labour Party appears as an 'enigma', yet at least 70 years before Lenin had adequately characterised that Party. The subsequent history of the Labour Party, in office and opposition, powerfully and inarguably proves this assertion of Lenin's. Even the darling of the British left, Tony Benn, was forced to state recently that 'the Labour Party is not and probably never was a Socialist Party'.

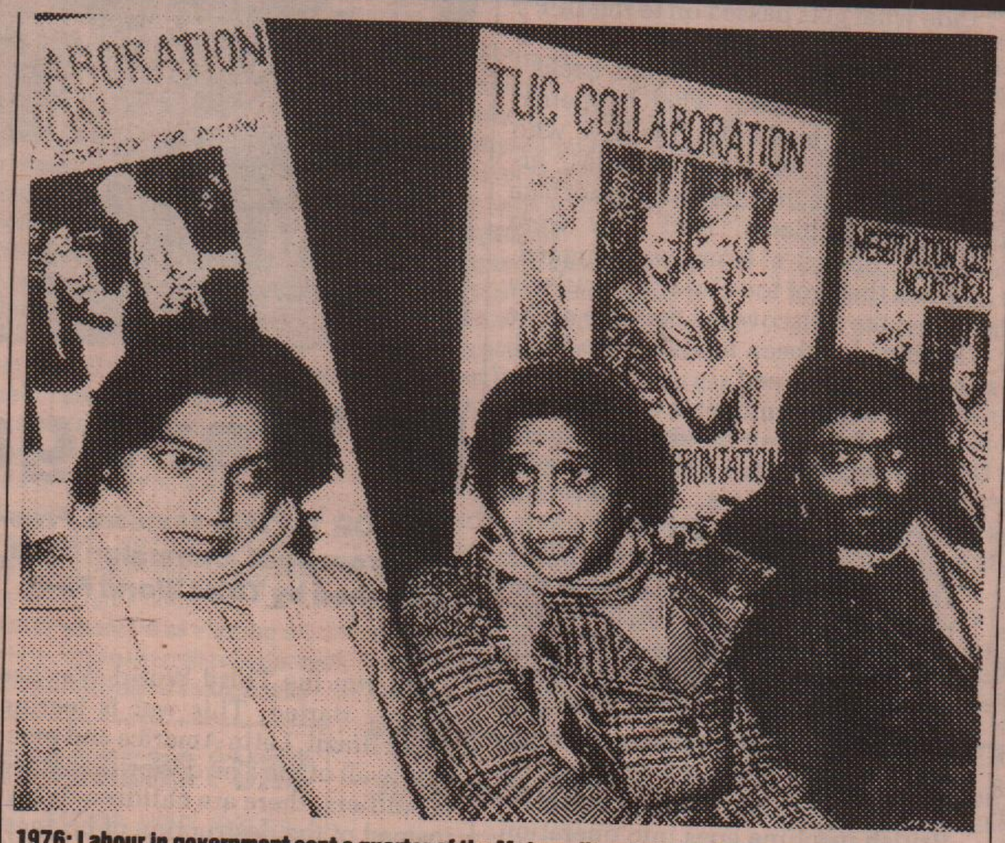
In the first chapter of Cliff and Gluckstein's book, the 'Birth of Reformism', we learn how the development of Britain's industrial monopoly, after 1848 and the defeat of the Chartists, led to a period in which the working class did not advance any political ideas of its own but merely followed the lead of the Liberal Party. In the last decade of the 19th century, a wave of New Unionism developed which was primarily based upon the unskilled and poorer sections of the workers.

These new unions took up militant methods which were frowned upon by the respectable Trade Unions of previous years. However after achieving some relative advance in their conditions these struggles soon evaporated. The authors are evidently disappointed that the militancy of the period led to no more solid political advance of the working class and they introduce the concept of Reformism to explain this. It is a classic piece of theory from the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party.

> 'In 1893 there was a correct combination of circumstances for reformism: workers' struggles had built up organisation but defeats had pushed it into bureaucratic channels. On both industrial and political fronts, leaders had been raised into prominence by the fight, but now they substituted for the movement of the mass . . . Here in a microcosm was the relationship between reformism and the working class.' (p12)

The Socialist Workers Party's incredibly narrow conception of the class struggle as primarily the struggle over wages and conditions and their refusal to accept that sections of the working class may well organise and fight over these issues without advancing the real political struggle one bit, leads them into the above vortex of confusion and illogicality. The authors are, within a few pages of their 'Marxist history', unable to give a Marxist explanation of the emergence of Reformism. They do indeed quote Engels a couple of times in this chapter but they have chosen to forget that Marx and Engels paid particular attention to developments in the working class in Britain in this period. In reviewing the latter half of the 19th century, Engels had the following to say:

> 'The truth is this: during the period of England's industrial monopoly the English working class have, to a certain extent, shared in the benefits of the monopoly. These benefits were very unequally parcelled out amongst them; the privileged minority pocketed most, but even the great mass had a temporary share now and then. And that is the reason why, since the dying out of Owenism, there has been no Socialism in England. With the breakdown of that monopoly, the English working class will lose that privileged position: it will find itself generally – the privileged and leading minority not excepted – on a level with its fellow workers abroad. And that is the reason why there will be Socialism again in England.' (Engels 1892 *Preface to the Condition of the Working Class in England*)



1976: Labour in government sent a quarter of the Metropolitan Police to break the Grunwick strike

Far from discovering the 'roots of Reformism', the Socialist Workers Party authors have chosen to ignore the main feature of this period: the development of a labour aristocracy. This constituted only a minority of the working class which was concerned only with the advancement of its own narrow, privileged interests. It was precisely out of this layer that the British Labour Party was born.

Unfortunately Cliff and Gluckstein treat us to more of their own brand of Marxist analysis in preparing the reader for the saga of deceit, betrayal and reaction which is the sorry history of the Labour Party. The simple explanation they offer for all Labour's foul misdeeds is its 'false consciousness', which is: 'the difference between Labour's understanding of itself and its actual position, between myth and reality' (p30). Unable to accept that the Labour Party's political theory and practice represents the interests of that privileged minority of workers who have everything to defend and gain by siding with their own ruling class against the working people at home and abroad, the authors have come up with this lame excuse.

Were it not for the partial nature of the history of this rotten bourgeois party which the SWP authors advance, the reader would almost be encouraged to extend a hand of sympathy to the poor Labour Party suffering under its chronic identity problem. But as we turn the pages of our 'Marxist History' from the first Lib-Lab MPs to the Minority Labour government of 1921, the Socialist Workers Party authors are once again caught out making the most disgusting excuses for the actual conduct of the Labour Party. The response of the Labour Party to the events of the Great Unrest from 1910 was to abuse strikers as mentally defective and to sit dumb and acquiescent, while the police and courts smashed the struggles of the working class. The Socialist Workers Party's remark on this behaviour is incredible: 'However this attitude was not out and out reactionary. Labour's leaders did not explicitly side with the bosses.' (p49)

In one of the extremely brief references to the struggle of the Irish people against British Rule we are once again told: '. . . Labour's position was not purely reactionary'. (p87)

In fact it was Arthur Henderson, Labour MP, who led his colleagues in spontaneous applause on hearing the news of the execution of the leader of the Easter Rising, James Connolly, in 1916. The Labour Party's outright defence of the bourgeois state and its right to use the most ruthless terror against its opponents, at home and abroad, is thus excused. The very same Labour Party acted as the proud recruiting agent for the imperialist slaughter of the First World War.

The reasoning behind the authors' kindness to the Labour Party at the points when its true reactionary nature is revealed begins to become clear when we are told that 'revolutionary socialists should relate to Labour in a practical way.' (p105)

According to Cliff and Gluckstein and quite in the face of the brief evidence submitted so far, it is 'mistaken' to see 'the trade union bureaucracy and Labour Party for tame servants of reaction' (p106) for to do so is to deny '. . . their reformist role . . .' (p106)

What has preoccupied our authors should be clear now. It is to prevent reformism from being seen as purely reactionary. The Labour Party does not do and say these things because it represents the interests of a privileged section of the workers who side with the ruling class. The problem is only a matter of 'reformist . . . false consciousness'. It is just a question of what our dear, old, befuddled but basically nice Labour Party believes.

By page 273, the authors state this explicitly: 'Labour is a reformist party, not a reactionary one'.

The Labour Party not reactionary! Not after 40 years (by now) of brutal colonial repression and attacks on the working class. The authors have covered the miserable record of the Labour Party in government and opposition and should know better. The Labour government of 1922-24 continued the business as usual of murderous British imprialism while making no improvement to the miserable conditions of the unemployed and poor at home. Labour MP and Cabinet Minister JH Thomas stated clearly: 'I'm here to see there's no mucking about with the British Empire.' Abroad the aerial bombing of Iraqi villagers was used to maintain that Empire, while those who fought alongside the working class in Britain faced jail under the Incitement to Mutiny Act. Is this reactionary or not, Cliff and Gluckstein?

In 1926 the General Strike took place against the outright hostility and bourgeois slavishness of the Labour Party and was quickly defeated, condemning the working class to years of poverty and unemployment.

The 1929-31 Labour government earned the Labour Party further reactionary credentials as it carried out unhesitatingly the dirty work of the ruling class. As Miliband has pointed out:

> 'Given the fact that Britain was in 1931 one of the richest countries in the world, and blessed with one of the richest ruling classes in the world, it is surely amazing that there were actually found rational men to argue that the saving of a few million pounds a year on the miserable pittances allowed to unemployed men and women and their children was the essential condition of British solvency.' (*Parliamentary Socialism* 1961, quoted p101)

Cliff and Gluckstein apparently have two different standards for the behaviour of the Labour Party, at home and abroad. While domestic policies are


Kinnock: just the latest in a line of reformists

innocently described as 'reformist' we learn that the Labour Party in 1942 did pursue a 'reactionary foreign policy' (p240). We do not however learn anything of that 'policy' as the authors clearly feel that a Marxist History of the Labour Party can exist with about five pages devoted to mentioning the British Empire. Indeed as the tempo of the Socialist Workers Party's favourite kind of class struggle hots up in the late sixties and early seventies, we learn that:

> 'Yet the battle of Saltley Gates (1972) had an important advantage, it advanced the real workers movement to a position of power and confidence it had not had for half a century.' (p317)

The authors are about to review the Labour Party in opposition under the Heath government of 1970-74. As yet no mention has been made of the fact that it was the Wilson Labour government which sent the troops into Northern Ireland to prop up Orange rule. This does not even merit a mention under the heading of 'British Foreign Policy'.

Mass workers' struggles did take place in this period, the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' work-in against unemployment, the Pentonville Dockers fought against Tory industrial relations law and ultimately the battle of the miners in 1974 led to the downfall of the Heath government. Yet what 'advance' had the 'real workers movement' made while it tolerated British terror in Ireland? In 1972 the British Army had shot dead 13 peaceful demonstrators on Bloody Sunday. Why does Ireland only merit a page and a half of facts without serious analysis? Where are our 'Marxists' when it comes to reconciling British imperialism's role in Ireland with the existence of the 'advanced . . . workers movement' in Britain?

Indeed, when the authors deal with the fight of low paid public service workers during the 'Winter of Discontent' of 1979, when many workers began openly to withdraw their support from that very Labour Party, they do not recognise this as a political advance: it was 'not part of a rising tide of struggle or class consciousness' (p344).

There we have it then from Cliff and Gluckstein; when the Labour Party attacks the working class and oppressed here and abroad it is not 'reactionary' but when the poorer sections of the working class begin to question their allegiance to the Labour Party it is not 'class consciousness'.

In their conclusions the authors state very formally that the Labour Party is 'a complete and absolute impediment to the further development of the class.' (p388)

Yet when it comes to the day to day political struggles, who will respond to the overtures of the Socialist Workers Party? '. . . only the Labour Left and their political sympathisers.' (p392) What better example could exist of the preoccupation of British Socialists with the privileged minority of workers than this? Far from exposing the record of the imperialist British Labour Party their book amounts to a pessimistic and pathetic apology for it. Genuine communists are clear why we argue for the workers to break with the Labour Party in order to advance their real interests. ■

The title is a quote from Ernest Bevin: he describes the Labour Party as having been born 'out of the bowels of the TUC'.

The Labour Party - a Marxist History by Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein. Published by Bookmarks, 1988, £7.95.

Shoot-to-kill is not fiction

MAXINE WILLIAMS reviews the drama-documentary Shoot-to Kill, ITV Regions, 3 & 4 July 1990 [not shown by Ulster Television]

The Stalker affair has always refused to go away. It has continued to simmer beneath the surface of British politics since Stalker's abrupt dismissal in 1986 from the inquiry into three British shoot-to-kill operations in Ireland. Like the Wallace and Holroyd cases, the Gibraltar killings and subsequent cover-up and the Birmingham, Guildford and Maguire frame ups, the Stalker affair haunts the British ruling class. In Britain's Irish closet many skeletons now rattle. The victims – direct and indirect – of British crimes in Ireland simply will not go away.

The British government and its agents are kept constantly busy guarding their backs over these many scandals. As new revelations come, new cover ups have to be instigated. So it was no surprise when Ulster Television banned the drama-documentary 'Shoot to Kill' which was screened in all other ITV regions on 3 and 4 July. Sir John Hermon, former RUC Chief Constable, and the RUC were furious about the honest picture the programme painted of their crimes. So, ironically, it was in the Six Counties, where the scandal began with the shooting of six men by the RUC in 1982, that the public was not allowed to see this powerful programme.

The programme makers chose to adopt a drama-documentary format because of the difficulties of making a straight documentary. It allowed them faithfully to describe the facts about the RUC killings and the subsequent Stalker inquiry. But it also gave them the opportunity to recreate the atmosphere in the RUC, to portray the main characters and their motives and to raise questions about who got rid of Stalker.

The advantages of this became clear in the portrayal of Sir John Hermon. The sinister nature of the man is horribly apparent. He is first seen addressing a schoolgirls' assembly and quoting St Paul: 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report – if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things.' Quite what St Paul meant is unclear. What Sir John meant is abundantly clear – nothing. His first reaction to the news that Gervaise McKerr, Eugene Toman and Sean Burns have been gunned down in a premeditated fashion by his men is to turn on the lie machine. 'Stress there was no prior knowledge' he says, it was a routine roadblock. His prime concern is, he says, the protection of the informer who set up the three men for their execution. So much for St Paul.

'Shoot-to-kill' treats three sets of killings as a case of the RUC being 'out of control' and lusting for revenge. In this, it reflects the views of Stalker and his second in command of the inquiry John Thorburn, who worked on the programme. Whilst this is clearly a limited and therefore misleading view, in the end it does not matter a great deal. What matters is that the RUC is shown planning and executing a series of murders; using a paid informer to set up the victims; shooting wounded and dying men to finish them off; sanctioning this at the highest level and then being protected by the British government and its agencies.

RUC agency E4A is shown being drilled in 'firepower, speed and aggression' until killing is second nature to them. When, after the killings, the RUC are given their cover stories – routine roadblock, car crashed through, RUC man injured, gave chase, fired in self defence – one comments: 'This year's Nobel prize for fiction'. The CID not only did not investigate the killings but actually themselves tampered with evidence to allow the cover story to stick. When one of the killers, PC Robinson (subsequently acquitted), is charged with murder and panics about his cover story, he is told by the main organiser of the operations, Chief Inspector Flanagan, 'National security and the law requires that you say what I tell you to say.' Flanagan is subsequently promoted to Superintendent by Hermon and ends his career (before conveniently being retired on grounds of ill health) lecturing top British policemen on counter-terrorism.

Shoot-to-kill and the Stalker inquiry rather than Stalker's story is the subject of the programme. Thus, it ends with Stalker's suspension from the inquiry. But it shows very well Stalker's naivete at the start and his dawning rage at both the RUC refusal to cooperate and the crimes they committed. Hermon is seen warning Stalker, 'This is my show . . . I'll decide what gets passed on to the DPP', and warning prophetically 'This is not Manchester, watch your backs'. All evidence about what happened had to be prised out of the RUC who were, down to the constables, arrogantly sure that they would not face serious problems. And they were right. Stalker's team was bugged. When they got too close, particularly when they discovered that one of the killings had been taped by the RUC, they were stopped.

British government involvement in the Stalker affair is shown. At the outset a committee with British ministers/civil servants, the DPP and Hermon is shown deciding an inquiry is needed to satisfy the public and the press but it is clear that Hermon will control it. When Stalker goes too far, a similar British committee is shown deciding they don't want 'the lid blown off'. Shortly after this, when Stalker threatens to question Hermon himself and to get the tape of the Michael Tighe killing, the British machine goes into operation. The 'committee' is shown discussing removing Stalker. 'The press will have a field day', says one; 'It's the lesser of two evils', replies the other. An RUC tout in Manchester tells the police that Stalker has protected a local businessman Kevin Taylor from prosecution, an allegation subsequently found to have no foundation whatsoever. Manchester Chief Constable Anderton sanctions investigation (his role in the affair is only hinted at) and Stalker is suspended.

Four years later no RUC man has been convicted for the murders nor have any been prosecuted for their role in the cover up. The British Attorney General ruled out prosecution on grounds of the 'national interest'. Stalker and Thorburn are no longer policemen. Sir John Hermon has retired peacefully. Anderton is still in place despite the fact that his force persecuted Kevin Taylor for four years and could make no charge stick. Taylor was ruined. And in the Six Counties Irish people continue to be murdered by the RUC. Shoot-to-kill is not fiction.

Marching against debt repayment in Mexico

War against debt

TREVOR RAYNE reviews *Freedom from Debt*, Campaign Pack, published by Third World First

'I tell you the Third World War has already started. This war is tearing down Brazil, Latin America and practically all of the Third World. Instead of soldiers, there are children dying, instead of the destruction of bridges, there is the tearing down of factories, hospitals and entire economies. It is a war over the foreign debt, a war which has as its main weapon, interest.' Luis da Silva (Lula), Leader of the Workers Party, Brazil

This short pack is a damning indictment of the parasitic, decaying global system of finance capital. The net transfer of £8.5 billion to British banks by the poorest, most indebted nations in the world between 1983 and 1987. The tripling of British bank profits and the IMF officials who supervise the plunder from advisory seats in government ministries. The thousand children a day who die of starvation in Brazil and the smashing down of forests and dispossession of hundreds of millions of peasants required that the instalments might be met.

The pack contains a special section on the Philippines: Barclays is the largest European lender, $387.8 million to that country. Much of the money is reputed to have been recycled by Marcos out of the Philippines back into private accounts with Barclays, but still the bank demands interest. Third World First calls for a campaign on this issue including pickets of Barclays banks.

Solidarity against the debt with the poor of the world is vital. Use this pack: excellent for education of all forms. ■

Available from: Third World First, 9 Poland Street, London WC1N 3DG.

The squalor of slum conditions in Bogo

We the people

TED TALBOT reviews *We the People: the Revolution of 89*, Timothy Garton Ash, Grantal Penguin, 1990

This book consists of four short articles covering Garton Ash's visits to Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague in 1989. Intended as pieces of journalism for the *New York Review of Books* and the *Spectator*, the collection appears to have no *raison d'etre* except that it is topical and hence a likely seller.

Precisely because it consists of extracts of journalism, the book abounds with anecdotal material unsupported by reference to any sources of evidence. It must, then, be taken as a personal travelogue.

At least the author is upfront about his political perspectives: 'But the reader will see that my sympathies are generally with those who made these revolutions rather than with those who attempted to prevent them, with the former prisoners of conscience rather than the former gaolers of conscience.' (p22). Different rules apply for the new regimes: '. . . my inclination is not immediately to start hunting for new evils'.

The book rambles through its four main chapters but whilst, like most diary-type formats, it abounds in minor details, there is no substantial additional information that most FRFI readers will not be aware of simply from their reading of the press.

Politically, as indicated before, you can expect the outlook typical of the 'quality' bourgeois press, ie, satisfaction at the restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe.

Even within its own limitations of being a popular account, rather than a specialist text, I do not think that many readers will find it of much use especially at £5 for a 156-page paperback. ■

Colombia: Inside the Labyrinth, Jenny Pearce, Latin America Bureau, 312 pp., £8.99 (pbk), £18.99 (hb

Colombia is credited with having the highest murder rate in the world. 2 per cent of children under five suffer from malnutrition and a further 19 per cent are at risk. A quarter of the population live in absolute poverty. Th book examines the historical basis of the country's two-party system a analyses the criminal and political violence, surrounding the cocaine trad which undermines the state's ability to govern. It looks at the role political parties, trade unions and guerrillas in Colombia today. As an depth guide to what is happening in Colombia today it is recommended.

Gary Ro

FRFI READERS AND SUPPORTERS GROUPS

MANCHESTER
German Reunification. What does it mean for the German Working Class?
Thursday 16 August 7.30pm, Gullivers Pub, Oldham Street, off Piccadilly Gardens.

For details of FRFI readers and supporters groups in your area please contact, FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

RCG PUBLIC MEETINGS

LONDON

North East London
Will the Labour Party make a difference?
Wednesday 25 July, 7.30pm, Red Rose Club, Seven Sisters Road (nearest tube Finsbury Park)

North West London
The Labour Party: What do communists say?
Tuesday 31 July, 7.30pm, Caversham Neighbourhood Centre, Bartholomew Road, NW5

South London
Will the Labour Party make a difference?
Tuesday 31 July, 7.30pm, Lambeth Trade Union Resource Centre, 12-14 Thornton Street, SW9, (nearest tube Brixton, buses 3, 59, 109, 133, 159)

Letter from a US prison

I have been waiting for a chance to write to you, ever since I began receiving *FRFI*, but being an indigent State of Texas prisoner (and Texas does not pay its prisoners *anything* whether they work or not, and actually work is compulsory; those of us who refuse to work for the fascist/slavist state are dumped into permanent solitary confinement where I have spent more than four years), I must wait sometimes to get my mailings out.

I agree very much with the positions you take on the counter-revolutionary events we saw in Eastern Europe (in less than a year!), in support of the Cuban Revolution and generally I think I agree with *all* your positions. I enjoy David Reed's analyses on the history of the Marxist movement and especially since he includes (or *FRFI* includes) many notes from the workers' movement in England at the time of Engels and Marx, where most of the proletariat's struggle happened last century.

Let me tell you something about myself. I am incarcerated in Texas, doing a life sentence, after being convicted of attempted capital murder (viz, a shoot-out with Houston police where only I was seriously wounded; police came like trigger-happy cowboys to my children's house in Houston where I was visiting on vacation, ostensibly to prevent me from committing suicide; it was my first arrest and conviction ever). I was born in Cuba, in the United States since 1961, but I do support the Cuban Revolution 100 per cent; I gained full class consciousness *after* I came to the United States. At the time of my arrest I was living and working in Los Angeles, California. I was fairly class conscious *before* my arrest but kept more or less to myself my political feelings. But after my arrest, I met (by letter) a few comrades in Texas prisons, mainly Alberto Aranda and Alvaro Luis Hernandez and it is through them that I began studying revolutionary theory more seriously and methodically. At home, before my arrest, I barely had time to myself, after my job, cooking, cleaning etc. Here I found the time to read and educate myself politically, but I owe much of that to Alberto and Alvaro as well as other comrades in Texas prisons.

We formed a group named PURE (Prisoners United for a Revolutionary Education), which was very active for three or four years, but lately enthusiasm has dwindled a little.

About a year ago (on 15 March 1989) answering a call by the Conspiracy Resistance Defendants (Susan Rosenberg, Tim Blunk, Marilyn Buch, Alan Berkman, Linda Evans and Whitehorn) who made a US nationwide call for a day of strike per month in solidarity with German and Azanian (South African) political prisoners who were striking at the time, PURE launched a 'chain' hunger strike (two prisoners striking two weeks at a time, to be followed by a further two). The strike worked for several months, in addition to the twice a month strike, nationwide. But our strike was spontaneously taken over by Death Row prisoners in Texas who by themselves have kept it up for over a year (it is *still* active!), and not only that , but even began their own independent newspaper, *The Endeavour*, of somewhat irregular schedule, but it is still active.

Considering that Death Row (and *most*) prisoners were a very apathetic group before the strike (or before they took the strike as 'their strike'), the strike has been a tremendous success. The merit belongs to Alberto Aranda who is housed (illegally) in Death Row, although he is not under death sentence, and thus has a very close relationship with Death Row prisoners. But other than that, our efforts to politically organise prisoners in Texas, have pretty much fallen on deaf ears.

Comrade Alberto Aranda was sentenced in 1988 to 40 years of additional imprisonment (he was then due for release) for allegedly throwing a glass of 'unknown liquid' at a guard. At this trial, he was tried, despite his protests, by a jury having at least seven *known* prison guards, he was denied three witnesses he requested on his behalf and was denied evidence (a prison recording tape) which proved that the 'unknown liquid' (the state claimed it was unknown to make it appear dangerous because otherwise throwing piss or water at a guard is the lowest class of misdemeanour, punishable at most by a fine; this way they made it a felony to sentence Alberto to 40 years), had been identified as either piss or commode water. In addition Alberto, after being denied for months the right to be his own counsel, was all of a sudden granted leave to defend himself but given only three days to prepare for trial (and then denied witnesses and evidence). The trial was held at Huntsville, Texas: a small town whose principle industry is prisons! An example of Texas (and Amerikkkan) 'justice'. All requests to change the venue or postpone the trial so as to have time to prepare it well, or even the chance to notify his family and friends were duly ignored by the court. Now he is on appeal, of course.

Thanks again for *FRFI*. It's refreshing at a time when all the US left seems to have gone to hell! (All but one among the myriad 'leftist' groups and sects; the exception being the Workers World Party.)

In struggle,

ANA LUCIA GELABERT
Gatesville Penitentiary, Texas

PRISONERS FUND

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FRFI needs £500 a month to keep the cost of the paper at 40p and 20p unwaged. The cost of producing the superb material on the Strangeways prison revolt in FRFI 95 and distributing it amongst nearly 200 prisoners who all had to receive it recorded delivery cut deep into our funds. We are sure you will agree that this kind of work is absolutely necessary.

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LETTERS

Who are the sectarians?

Who would absurdly claim that the Anti-Apartheid Movement does not support the release of 26 black South Africans, 14 of them on death row?

Who would falsely claim that the AAM sent one of its representatives to South Africa regarding a speaking tour?

Who would claim that the Anti-Apartheid Movement does not wish to raise the issue of revolutionary violence in resisting apartheid when it is running a campaign around the case of four railway workers sentenced to death for the murder of four scabs in 1987 and is leading efforts in this country on behalf of ANC combatant Robert McBride?

Who would claim that the AAM could effectively raise money in this country on behalf of all the thousands of political prisoners in South Africa and distribute this in an equitable way?

Anyone with a basic knowledge of the divisive role of ultra-left organisations in solidarity movements would immediately answer the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group.

Your opportunism in highlighting one case (albeit an important one) and claim that the AAM has undertaken no campaigning shows that you are just as willing to exploit the oppressed masses in South Africa as de Klerk and Western capitalists in your sectarian attempt to denigrate the AAM.

You are fully aware of the extent of repression in South Africa and any organisation could claim a lack of support for this case or another. The AAM seeks to create a political climate where such repression is ended. The AAM could rightly ask: 'What have you done to support the campaign to save the SARHWU 4 or miner Lucky Nomnganga, where were you in our efforts to save dairyworker William Ntombela or the NUM 3, or to release Oscar Mpetha and Harry Gwala?'

Further such campaigning requires money and we would be letting down the liberation struggle if we were to re-orientate ourselves towards fundraising for the internal struggle. Those organisations which are leading the liberation struggle call for the intensification of pressure from organisations like our own on the apartheid regime and its supporters in the West. You are well aware that organisations exist for providing material support to the families of victims of apartheid repression.

To quote Comrade Mandela: 'The solid support we have received from the Anti-Apartheid Movement throughout the years has not only been a source of real inspiration to us all but has also put the struggle for a non-racial South Africa on a level never seen before'.

Yours sincerely,
COLIN ADKINS
Individual AAM member, London

Colin Adkins protests too much. His arguments would be more convincing if it were not true that SATIS and the AAM did *try to prevent Lydia Nompondwana's tour and* did *do its best, along with SACTU, to undermine the campaign for Moses Mayekiso and the Alex 5. SACTU came up with a host of duplicitous arguments (in writing) about why British trade unions should not affiliate to Friends of Moses Mayekiso and was backed by the AAM. Paul Brennan of SATIS* did *tell City AA that now is not the right time to campaign for political prisoners. The AAM* did *warn its affiliates up and down the country not to support Lydia's tour because City AA was organising it. This was not failure to support a campaign – we are used to that. It was sabotage. And it was not sabotage by City AA or the RCG. As ever, the boot was on the other foot.*

The questions raised about the AAM's campaign for the Upington 26 were raised by Lydia Nompondwana. She came to Britain from a small, impoverished community, made even poorer by the imprisonment of 26 of its people. Colin Adkins does not have to face the daily heartbreak of struggling to feed, clothe and educate children, pay the rent and find resources to visit imprisoned relatives. If he did he would be less glib with his answers. Of course it's correct that the AAM is not a fundraising organisation but a campaigning organisation. So is City AA. But doesn't the AAM have a duty, having launched a campaign for Upington, to consult with the families involved. Without this they are consigned to helpless, voiceless, victim status, instead of being treated as real people who are fighting apartheid. They are oppressed enough without becoming victims of a brand of paternalism which stinks of exploitation. Couldn't the AAM have the grace to explain itself? At least City AA eventually forced them to, which is more than Colin Adkins' complacency will ever do. What Lydia asked for was to be listened to. Did you listen, Colin Adkins?

City AA holds demonstrations outside the South African Embassy in London every Friday evening, 5.30-7pm, and every weekend, Saturday 12 noon-Sunday 6pm. The RCG supports these pickets. Every week different issues and campaigns are the focus – and incidentally they have included all the campaigns Colin Adkins accuses us of not supporting. City AA doesn't have a letter of thanks from Nelson Mandela for campaigning 1408 days and nights outside the Embassy for his release and the release of all political prisoners. We have been thanked by David Kitson for the work done to campaign for the release of political prisoners – but then David Kitson was ostracised by the London movement, including the AAM, for doing so. City AA has not sabotaged, expelled and lied to maintain its credentials. The AAM has, and unfortunately will continue to do so for as long as its membership supinely accepts its sectarianism.

City AA is not asking for thanks for the work it does. We are all well aware that Mandela and the other prisoners will not be told the truth about City AA – we no longer expect it from sectarians. But Nelson Mandela has an excuse for his ignorance of the truth. Colin Adkins doesn't.

Write to:

FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX or ring: 071-837 1688

Labour must take the blame

I take my son to the mother and toddler group at Chestnuts Playcentre in Tottenham, one of the 12 threatened with closure or the imposition of charges. The playcentre is used as an after-school club where working parents can leave their children and also operates a holiday club for the same reason. Cuts in this service will mean that many women in particular will be forced to either give up their jobs or pay expensive childminding fees.

On Monday night 20 women and their children picketed the Haringey Civic Centre where a Policy and Resources Committee was taking place. I had a placard which read: 'No cuts! No Poll Tax! We will not allow our schools, libraries, parks, pools and playgroups to be savaged by our SCAB councillors!' This seemed to offend some people; an SWP member told me that he objected to the use of the word 'scab', and that the anger should be directed against the Tories, not the Labour councillors.

His argument was that by attacking Labour I was aligning myself with the right, who would jump at the chance to attack Haringey's 'progressive' policies; people had to have enough faith in Labour in order to get Thatcher out, and then socialists would be able to 'expose' Labour's true character. What more proof could be needed of Labour's complete bankruptcy and wholesale collaboration with the ruling class than their complete failure to fight the Poll Tax and the cuts? The SWP have demonstrated that they are more concerned with covering up for Labour than fighting in the interests of the working class? Well, we are going to fight for our services, and the SWP had better decide which side they are on.
JENNY
Tottenham, N London

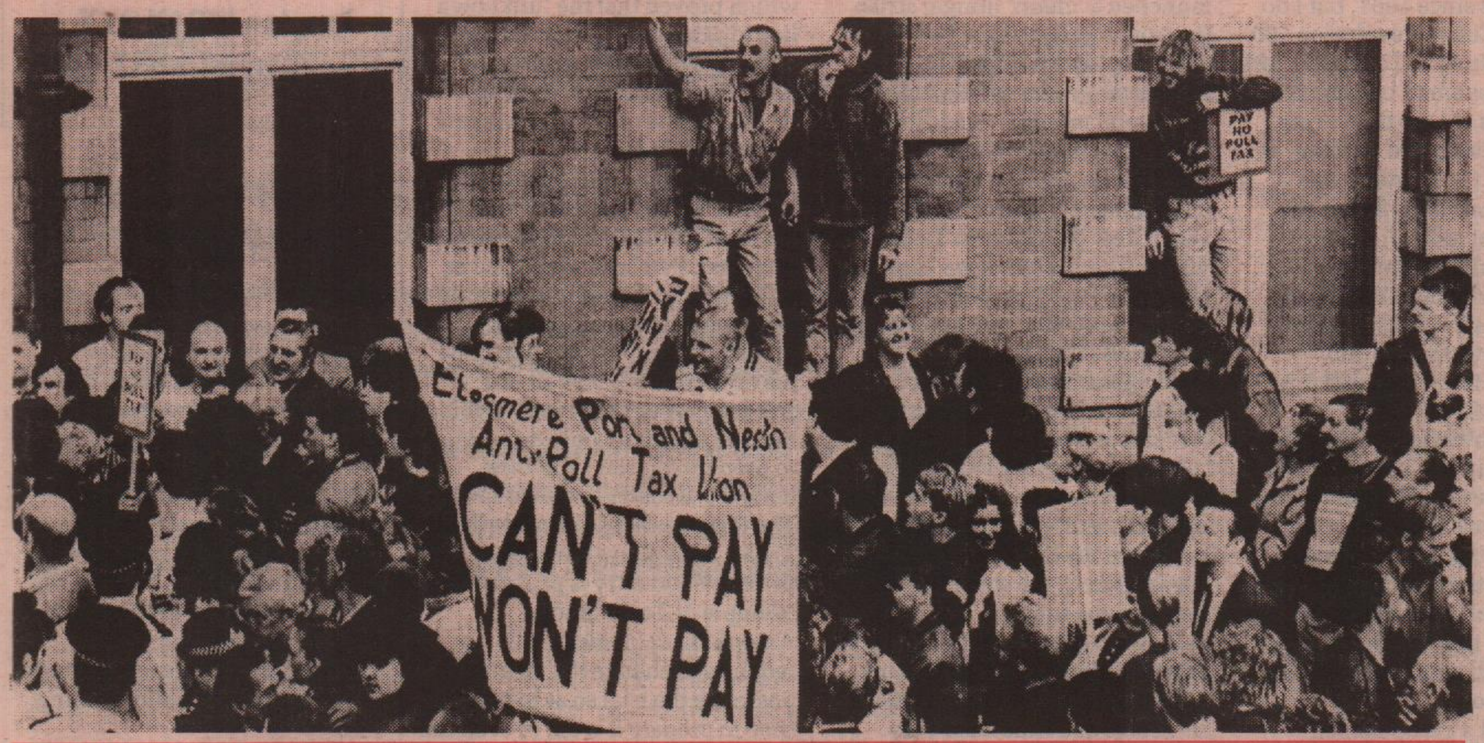
Worried Wandsworth

On Saturday 23 June myself and other members of the Tooting Anti-Poll Tax Union went to the Wandsworth Weekend, a local community fair, to distribute information about and petition against the Poll Tax – there are 30,000 people not paying their Poll Tax in Wandsworth. We were approached by a council official who told us to leave because he was opposed to 'a political group being here at all'.

We left the park peacefully and handed out leaflets at the main entrance for a few hours. When we had finished we proceeded to walk back through the park to the car park to collect our car, but a police park attendant stopped us and insisted on us leaving. The council official had informed all officers on the park entrances not to allow us entry. This was obvious as we were again stopped at another gate.

This event has shown how threatened Wandsworth Council is and the worry they have over this unworkable, undemocratic, unfair tax that they had to resort to this sort of intimidation.
KAREN GRIFFITH
Tooting, S London

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!



POLL TAX

1 in 3 won't pay

The Association of Certified Bailiffs and the Society of Sheriff's Officers both announced on 11 July that they had been given an impossible task – there are only 1,000 bailiffs in England and Wales to deal with 12.5 million non-payers and 200 Sheriff's Officers in Scotland to deal with 1.5 million non-payers. It is ironic that their plea for understanding came only days after bailiffs in Northampton valued personal possessions viewed through windows at the homes of non-payers who had denied them entry. LORNA REID and VIRMAN MAN examine the fightback.

There are currently about 14 million people across the country refusing to pay the Poll Tax – that's one in three of everyone liable to pay. In London alone the figure is three million. Many London councils have already had to borrow from the City to compensate for loss of income through unpaid Poll Tax.

Tory and Labour controlled Local Authorities have not hesitated to use the courts as a means of recovering unpaid Poll Tax. Thousands of court summonses have been issued in the Isle of Wight, South Tyneside, Warrington, Fleetwood near Blackpool, Sutton and Wandsworth in London. However, the scale of non-payment simply cannot be accommodated in the courts. In the Isle of Wight, South Tyneside, Warrington and Wandsworth mass numbers of cases were adjourned either because, as in the cases of the Isle of Wight and South Tyneside, the councils had not allowed 14 days to elapse between receipt of the reminder and receipt of the summons, or as in the case of Warrington such chaos was created when 5,000 non-payers were summoned that the magistrate agreed to adjourn all the cases. Fearing a repeat of this chaos, Wandsworth Council withdrew all the 4,800 summonses it had issued before the date of the court hearing.

Where non-payers are being summoned to court, the courts are becoming the focal point of large, angry demonstrations. Inside the courts, McKenzie's Friends (advisers to defendants) are holding up the proceedings by questioning magistrates and council officials on every single detail concerning the summonses. The success of the delaying tactics was unlawfully challenged by the magistrate in Sutton. After clearing the public gallery, he ordered the removal of the McKenzie's Friend. Such a measure only confirms the desperation felt by the courts and the councils in their attempts to recover unpaid Poll Tax.

Defiant scenes will be seen all over England and Wales in the weeks and months to come as more councils resort to using the courts to recover unpaid Poll Tax. So why is it, when so many people have pledged to defy councils and courts alike, that the left is unable to seize the opportunity presented to them to mobilise the thousands of non-payers into an active and organised resistance movement?

When presented with this opportunity the first response of the Militant-controlled Anti-Poll Tax Federation was to attempt to control the numbers involved, and when control was denied them they resorted to sabotage. As hundreds of non-payers and supporters demonstrated outside the court in the Isle of Wight, Steve Nally, secretary of the Federation, complied with a police request to send home people whose summonses were not to be heard that day. Federation stewards also assisted the police by dissuading an angry crowd from breaking into the court to bring the proceedings to a halt.

When Wandsworth Council became the first London council to issue summonses to non-payers, the Tooting Anti-Poll Tax Union, founded by local RCG members, swung into action to mobilise hundreds of people to demonstrate outside the court. Without contacting TAPTU the London Federation called a picket outside the court, then did not even bother to turn up on the day. A borough-wide leaflet produced by the Federation published a contact number for TAPTU, Mark Bygrave, who was completely unknown to TAPTU but well known by Militant.

For Militant, the numbers of non-payers are a vital instrument in their fight within the Labour Party – so long as they dance to Militant's tune. When these forces exercise their independence and their response goes beyond what is acceptable to the Labour Party, Militant then steps in to avoid embarrassing their friends in the Labour Party.

As the ruling class steps up its attack on non-payers, aided and assisted by the Labour Party, new opportunities are opening up for socialists. So far, millions of working class people are refusing to be intimidated into paying. Additionally they are beginning to organise across the country to defend their services which are threatened with cuts as a result of the Poll Tax. An expression of this resistance is independent anti-Poll Tax candidates standing in local elections. For socialists there should be no problems with supporting these candidates against Labour candidates who refuse to support non-implementation of the Poll Tax.

But it would appear that the SWP is having problems with this development. When Barry Lewis stood on the principle of non-payment against the official Labour candidate in Margate, the Canterbury SWP branch was unsure whether to support him. It was only when he beat the Labour candidate that they decided their support was correct. Since then a debate has broken out in the pages of *Socialist Worker* – Brighton branch insists it was wrong to back Lewis against the Labour Party and a supporter in Edinburgh believes that the SWP should not only have supported Lewis but should also have supported an independent candidate who stood in the local elections in Musselburgh.

The Labour Party has gone beyond mealy mouthed compliance with the Poll Tax – its councils are actively pursuing working class people through the courts and deploying bailiffs and Sheriff's Officers against them. The potential exists to draw millions of people into a new movement which will challenge Labour as well as Tory. It will be squandered for as long as the left refuses to break its slavish relationship to the Labour Party. ■

TRAFALGAR SQUARE DEFENDANTS

Stop the frame-ups

The massive police operation continues against those who defended themselves against the police attack in Trafalgar Square on 31 March. On 12 July Scotland Yard released another five photographs of people allegedly wanted in connection with the events of Trafalgar Square. So far 36 photographs have been published in the press. The Crown Prosecution Service are denying defendants the right to a trial by jury by lowering serious charges to charges which can only be heard in a magistrates court.

Magistrates continue to hand down heavy sentences. One defendant was jailed for 28 days on a charge of disorderly behaviour. The magistrate warned that the sentence might have been heavier if the defendant's wife was not expecting a baby very soon. So far 30 defendants have been jailed and almost 100 have been held in custody awaiting trial.

On Thursday 21 June 60 police officers, some wearing bullet proof vests, raided six houses on or around the Holmleigh Road estate, Hackney, East London at 6am and arrested eleven people on suspicion of violent disorder and criminal damage. Nine policemen, some brandishing axes, charged screaming into the bedroom of a couple where their ten-day-old baby was sleeping. The family's dog was stunned by gas and the father was assaulted. He has since been charged with assaulting police. Nine out of the 11 arrested are members of the local anti-Poll Tax union.

Graham Smith from the Hackney Community Defence Association told *FRFI* that the day before the raid on the estate residents had seen a man outside looking through photographs whilst a helicopter buzzed overhead. Three weeks before the raid took place the police accompanied officials from the London Electricity Board to check on resident's bills. All the residents were able to produce receipts of bills paid. An official was overheard saying to the police, 'I told you it wouldn't be worthwhile.'

The Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign is committed to defending all those arrested and charged on or since the 31 March demonstration. Solicitors for the defence campaign have now secured access to the 90 hours of video tape showing events on the day.

Richard Roques, RCG member and a defendant, addressed a weekend school held on 16/17 June, explaining how the attack on the 31 March demonstration was part of an overall attack on all those resisting the Poll Tax and why it was vital that all those arrested were defended. He later spoke on behalf of City of London Anti-Apartheid Group and described their successful campaign for democratic rights outside the South African embassy.

On 1 July 100 people demonstrated outside Pentonville jail in solidarity with jailed defendants. One defendant displayed a placard from his cell window demanding 'No Poll Tax!' The Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign is a vital part of the struggle against the Poll Tax and for democratic rights. It must be supported by all socialist and progressive organisations and the anti-Poll Tax movement. Further details can be got from: The TSDC, c/o Haldane Society of Lawyers, Panther House, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X OAP. It meets every Wednesday, 7.30pm, at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1N.

Lorna Reid/Richard Roques

Poll Tax means brutal cuts

The scale of cuts proposed by Labour and Tory controlled councils as a result of Poll Tax capping and reduced budgets is enormous. Across the country schools are to be closed down, social worker appointments cut, libraries and swimming pools closed, playschemes and services for the elderly cut. Thousands of council workers jobs will go.

In Wandsworth, South London, where a £50 million cuts package is proposed, cuts in Social Services have already claimed the life of a three year old, killed by her father whilst awaiting a replacement social worker and a place in a nursery. In Labour-controlled Local Authorities the proposed cuts are similar. Haringey council, London, is proposing a £13.9 million package. In capped Barnsley 60 teachers have already been sacked. 250 teachers in Rochdale and 188 in Sheffield are to be sacked.

The Labour Party's pleas that the Tories are to blame are deceitful. Labour councils have a choice about the cuts – just as they had a choice about implementing the Poll Tax. Working class communities across the country must organise against the cuts just as they have organised against the Poll Tax – by making no concessions to the Labour Party.

Gary Rose

What to do if you are summoned to court

- **Attend the court hearing – if you do not attend the liability order will be granted in your absence.**
- **Do not offer to pay anything.**
- **Insist on your right to an individual hearing with representation: a solicitor or a McKenzie's Friend (an adviser).**
- **Do not be cowed by the courts. You have the right to ask questions. These are a few of the standard questions that can be asked:**

1. Is the magistrate hearing the case a member of the Conservative Party/a councillor? If so, apply for him to dismiss himself from the case.
2. Who issued the complaint that I have not paid the Poll Tax? Does this person have a legal right to do so?
3. Can you prove I am on the register/have been billed/have received a reminder?
4. Why has my rebate application not been dealt with?
5. I can't pay – give details of your financial situation and problems.
6. I haven't been given adequate time to pay.
7. How are the legal costs worked out?

There are many other questions to be asked. Remember: you are not on trial – the council has to prove its case. Take your time in asking questions, ask for clarification on anything you do not understand. ■

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