

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

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BOB CANNON

Police attack Wapping strike anniversary

Saturday 24 January 1987: a group of riot squad police are dragging a man, on his back, along the ground. As they go, one cop is crouched over the man, hitting him repeatedly with a baton. I watch as the man is carried away, unconscious on a stretcher. The Metropolitan Police are celebrating the anniversary of the News International dispute.

Some 25,000 marched from the Temple to Wapping. When we arrived the riot squad were already forming up behind a line of 'ordinary' police. They waited patiently for their excuse to attack.

A lorry is overturned in front of the police lines. Newman's finest have their excuse. They charge out. Already they are hitting out at anyone unfortunate enough to get in their way. Bits and pieces are being thrown at the police lines—placard sticks, cans, the odd bottle.

The riot squads repeatedly charge into the crowds. To my right a group of demonstrators are caught against a wall whilst cops beat them. They charge forward in small groups, one holds a powerful light aimed at the crowds, another sprays red paint at random, to identify 'ringleaders'. 'Ringleading' children, bystanders and others are sprayed.

As the police attacks go on, resistance grows. Groups are breaking up paving stones to use against the police. Every so often, the rain of rocks is sustained enough to drive the rampaging police back. But it is an uneven battle. The police are armed with shield and baton, trained and organised to attack the demonstrators.

Just after 9pm, the mounted thugs come sweeping out. One middle-aged man falls to the ground, trampled in the

rush. Ernie Greenwood, *Morning Star* photographer, is trampled under a horse. He was released from hospital on Tuesday 27 January. Another photographer, David Hudson, is beaten unconscious. BBC reporter Kate Adie is batoned. At least nine photographers receive hospital treatment.

Countless numbers of unknown demonstrators are injured. From the *continued on page 2*

POLICE RIOT

Black people targetted by Embassy police

On 22 January at 2am two City AA members from the non-stop picket outside South Africa House were accosted by the police. Tunde Forrest, a young black man, was arrested, assaulted and charged with assault on police. So began the latest campaign of harassment by Cannon Row police against the non-stop picket. Each time major court cases have been won, the police have resorted to racist and sexist abuse and assault to gain revenge. They are particularly keen to arrest and frame black youth because they know that many magistrates share their racism.

When Tunde and Dominic left the picket on 22 January to go to the toilet they were followed by two uniformed policemen—one of them a notorious white Rhodesian. Tunde was searched while in the cubicle and accused of flushing drugs away. No drugs were found on either Tunde or Dominic. Tunde was taken outside while the white Rhodesian threatened Dominic with arrest if he tried to follow. Dominic went outside anyway to see Tunde being arrested by the other officer. He asked

why, and was told, again by the white Rhodesian, 'he'll make up his mind on the way to the station'. Tunde was charged with assault.

On Friday 23 January at about 2.30am a police car drove past the picket with a loud speaker: 'Tunde Forrest is a cannibal' the racists inside shouted.

Twenty four hours later, a police officer on the picket was spending his time chatting to two racists who were abusing the picket. The picketers, including Tunde and Dominic were singing

and walking in a circle. One of the racists, a man in 'blue trousers like a policeman's' and with a plaster cast on his arm strikes Tunde. The police officer does nothing. The racist strikes Tunde again. Tunde takes his jacket off but is restrained by other picketers. The police officer now calls up reinforcements. Four police vans and 2 police cars arrive—in one of the cars is the white Rhodesian. Tunde says that he was assaulted in the van and at the police station. Tunde was again charged with assault on police. Later he was taken to hospital for out-patient treatment.

This racist harassment is part of a pattern: police officers stand in the middle of the picket and abuse picketers; racists spit at and assault picketers, the police do nothing. On several occasions white South Africans have threatened women picketers, the police do nothing. One week after the arrests of Tunde, a picketer was followed to the bus stop at 2am and arrested for 'littering'. He had not thrown any litter.

Ever since City AA started its pickets of the Embassy in 1982 the police have been trying to move them. They have failed. Their racist harassment of picketers is part and parcel of their political assault on demonstrators. At Broadwater Farm, at Brixton, at Wapping, at the South African Embassy—the pattern is the same: law and order means lying, racist, sexist thugs on the loose. City AA is fighting back—we will be there until Nelson Mandela is free.

Carol Brickley

Thatcher Kinnock unite to gag BBC

The BBC's banning of a 'Secret Society' programme has provided yet another occasion for patriotic outpourings from Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock. The programme, written by *New Statesman* journalist Duncan Campbell, claims that a £500 million spy satellite, code-name Zircon, has been kept secret from Parliament. This breaches an undertaking by the Ministry of Defence that Parliament should be informed, via the Public Accounts Committee, of all projects over £250 million.

Following the ban the Attorney General Sir Michael Havers took out an injunction banning Duncan Campbell from showing the film to MPs in the House of Commons. No injunction, however, prevented the publication of the contents of the programme in the *New Statesman* (23 January). There followed Special Branch raids and lengthy searches of the *New Statesman* offices and the homes of journalists Duncan Campbell, Patrick Forbes and Jolyon Jenkins.

What was Neil Kinnock's reaction to the fact that the project had been kept secret from parliament? 'I would have done the same myself' said he. Kinnock attacked Thatcher's 'incompetence'. Said Kinnock 'The government was right to seek to take the action to pre-

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★
**March for
MANDELA**
Saturday
14 March
London
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VIRAJ
in sanctuary
★
support from
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Build VMDC
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★ **INSIDE**
City awash with
Guinness p10
AAM AGM p8/9
Inside Barlinnie p6
★

Broadwater Farm Trial

Fleet Street mobs lead Silcott frame-up

On Wednesday 14 January the trial of Winston Silcott (27), Mark Braithwaite (20), Engin Raghip (20) and three juveniles (one aged 14, the other two are 15), began at the Old Bailey. All six are charged with the murder of PC Blakelock during the Broadwater Farm rising of 6 October 1985. They also face charges of riotous assembly and affray. Two have additional charges connected with petrol bombs. All are pleading not guilty to all charges.

The stage has been set for a major show trial in which the state will seek revenge for the death of PC Blakelock. No officer has been charged with, or disciplined for, the death of Mrs Cynthia Jarrett, the immediate cause of the rising.

The protest picket outside the Old Bailey on the opening day of the trial was censored. The City of London police ruled that no megaphone could be used. Stafford Scott, of the Broadwater Youth Association, was arrested for trying to tell passers-by the truth about the show trial.

The media have played their part loyally. Sensationalist headlines portrayed the community of Broadwater Farm as bloodthirsty animals:

'Mob "planned to put PC's head on pole"' *Daily Telegraph*
 'Riot mob tried to behead PC Blakelock, says QC' *The Guardian*
 'Screaming mob "tried to hack off PC's head"' *Daily Express*

'Merciless mob "tried to hack off PC's head"' *The Times*
 'Put his head on a pole' *Daily Mail*
 '"They said they would put his head on a pole"' *Daily Mirror*

Unless you read the small print very closely, you will not know that the story about 'hacking off' Blakelock's head and putting it on a pole comes from a statement, extorted from a young and frightened man, which was retracted before the trial began.

The *Sun*, long the filthiest object in the Fleet Street sewer, has been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions for contempt of court for its 'entirely deplorable' (Justice Hodgson) report and for publishing a photograph of Winston Silcott.

Evidence in court has already exposed the role of the police. A witness, Edward Burke, had made a statement saying 'They jumped onto the verge of the grass'. The police altered this statement to read: 'I saw

them jump the policeman'. This is typical of the quality of 'evidence' which will be trotted out in the ten weeks the trial is likely to last.

We already know that the police are determined to frame Winston Silcott and the five others. We already know that some 360 people were arrested following the rising and one after another put under pressure to

'name' Winston Silcott. We already know that detainees, including children, were held for up to 54 hours without access to lawyers, family or friends. We know they were often physically assaulted, racially and sexually abused. We know that Winston Silcott was held incommunicado for three days and interrogated while naked except for a paper bag.

Only one thing can stand between the six defendants and a lifetime behind bars: the response of a community determined to protect its own. Only public mobilisation can defend Winston Silcott and the others. FRFI calls on all readers to support the Old Bailey pickets.

Alexa Byrne, Sue Davidson and Terry O'Halloran

The machinery of state revenge is continuing to grind. Gary Potter's second trial for affray (see FRFI 63 for report of first trial) ended in a hung jury again on Wednesday 28 January. The following day a third trial was ordered.

As the show trial against Winston Silcott and five others opened, Melton Collington stood trial for affray. Like all the others, he had been held incommunicado and forced to sign a statement which he retracted in court. Judge Keith Machin gave him four years in prison.



ANDREW WARD/REPORT

New Keith Hicks inquest

On Monday 26 January the High Court ordered a new inquest into the death of Keith Hicks in Brixton prison on 12 March 1985. Keith Hicks was an epileptic who died in status epilepticus. FRFI exposed the circumstances of his death and the appalling conduct of Coroner Dr David Vernon Forster (see FRFI 51)

at the time. The High Court, it seems, agrees. Forster was criticised for making the jury sit all day without a break and for refusing to allow them to consider a verdict of lack of care. The verdict of misadventure has now been quashed.

Terry O'Halloran

Thatcher's sweatshop

Recent figures have shown the stark imbalance of job losses: the so-called 'North-South divide'. 94% of jobs lost since 1979 were in northern and western regions. And for many people in work, there is a deepening division between the low-paid and the wealthy. The recent *Low Pay Review* shows that the poorest workers are now relatively worse off than they were when data was first collected one hundred years ago.

For example, the average take home pay of those YTS leavers who find work is about £50 a week. 25% of YTS leavers working full time earn under £40 a week. Thousands of workers have suffered pay cuts as public services have been contracted out: cleaners in Leicestershire had hourly rates cut from £2.24 to £1.70 - making a saving of £400,000 for the council by further exploitation of already impoverished workers. The much vaunted 'economies' in the NHS have similarly been stolen from the pay packets of ancillary workers.

By contrast, the highly paid will remember 1986 with affection. Lawyers averaged a 13.9% pay rise; company chairman and chief executives 11.6%, taking average pay to £63,000 per annum. Richard Giordano, chair of British Oxygen, continued to enjoy a gross salary of £883,100 (or £16,983 a week). CBI leaders, who cry loudest for 'restraint' were shown recently in *Labour Research* to have had 14% pay rises in 1985-86, taking their average pay to £86,000 a year.

Remorseless attacks upon the working class will continue as successive governments try to restore the rate of profit. Thatcher's policies - deregulation, abolition of Wages Councils, anti-union laws and so on, all aim to resolve the crisis

at the expense of the working class. Mass unemployment is, of course, a vital part of this sweatshop economy, but is an embarrassment in an election year. Hence the proliferation of schemes, projects and other con-tricks which both reduce the apparent number of unemployed and force people into low-paid jobs. The 'New Workers Scheme' actually subsidises employers who pay very low wages to young workers. The new Worktest questionnaire allows Jobcentre staff to withdraw benefit if a claimant seeks 'too high' wages: one Scottish woman who sought gross pay of £50 a week had her benefit stopped. Low paid jobs will thus fall to the lowest bidder. Low Pay Unit surveys reveal that many Jobcentres advertise jobs at illegally low rates of pay.

The 'Restart' scheme implies that the long term unemployed only need 'counselling' and a few postage stamps to snap out of their idleness. Despite its glossy TV promotion, the scheme has placed only 0.7% of those interviewed from May to October 1986 in work; even this in the lowest paid jobs. In the same period, however, 10,842 claimants had their benefit stopped through 'Restart'. No wonder Jobcentres have been ordered to give it top priority.

Dave Burton

Wapping

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platform, legal observer, John Bowden, blood running down the side of his face, tells how he was attacked by the police. Later in the evening, the riot cops surround and attack the bus in which people are receiving emergency first aid, mostly for head wounds.

Every time there has been a significant mass presence at the plant the police have attacked: 19 February, 22 March, 3 May (1986) and now 24 January 1987. The physical presence outside the fortress is the only remaining obstacle to the ending of the dispute. That is why the police launched their brutal attack.

Cops lie

The police have already started covering their trail with the usual tales of 'agitators' and their usual display of 'weapons'. Iron railings figured prominently. I saw, on Saturday night, how the police gather their weapons.

A man tore a railing out of a fence in order to climb through to safety from the police charges. He dropped the railing on the pavement. A riot squad cop dashed across the road, picked up the railing and ran back to police lines with it.

At the Scotland Yard press conference on Monday 26 January, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Wynn Jones denied that the police had drawn their batons. From the first police attack onwards, the only police I saw without drawn batons were the ones spraying paint about or using the flashlights.

Wynn Jones, in for a penny in for a pound, also denied that the police

were spraying red paint. I saw them spraying. I saw people with red paint streaked across their clothes. I escorted one young man to the tube. He feared arrest because of the streak of red across his jacket. The police clearly feel no restraint in committing any kind of violence against the people or telling any kind of lies afterwards.

Kinnock backs cops

And what says Neil Kinnock, leader of Her Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition?

'Mr Neil Kinnock ... said earlier that he found the violence "hideous and horrifying" and regarded those responsible for it as outcasts from the Labour movement who would get no support from him.' (*The Guardian*, 27 January 1987)

Kinnock attacked those who resisted police violence. By doing so he helped Hurd to threaten the speeded-up introduction of Public Order Act powers over static demonstrators. He helped Hurd to refuse a public inquiry. He helped Hurd to isolate those who courageously withstood wave after wave of police assaults. Those engaged in resistance were not only the so-called 'outsiders' but also trade unionists.

Kinnock was quickly joined by Willis and the General Council of the TUC. On Wednesday 28 January the General Council passed a resolution condemning both the violence of the police and of the demonstrators. Only Scargill took a principled stand and refused to condemn the violence of protestors under attack from the police. (Eric Hammond, King of the Scabs, also opposed the motion ... for criticising the police).

Precisely at the moment when Thatcher and her police thugs come under serious pressure, with even the BBC filing complaints against the police, Kinnock and Willis step forward to relieve the pressure and attack the people who are struggling to defend basic trade union and democratic rights. As Lenin said, opportunists like Kinnock and Willis are better defenders of the bourgeoisie than the bourgeoisie themselves.

The dispute goes on

From the beginning, Kinnock and Willis, aided by Dean (SOGAT), Dubbins (NGA) and Conroy (NUJ), have looked for some dirty deal they could impose on the strikers. The organised trade union movement has refused, as during the miners' strike, to provide any actual solidarity. The TUC has blocked all action against the scab EETPU. The NUJ has only now fined 95 NUJ scabs £1000 a head for scabbing (42 scabs were acquitted for 'lack of evidence' although they had signed a letter admitting that they were working at Wapping). SOGAT members recently voted against a levy for the sacked printworkers.

Murdoch has now gone back to court seeking damages against SOGAT and NGA for the 24 January demonstration. If he wins both unions will be threatened with sequestration.

The reaction of Kinnock and Willis to the events of 24 January is of a piece with their reaction to the News International dispute as a whole. The jobs and trade union rights of the sacked printworkers have been sacrificed to the re-election of Neil Kinnock: the patriot and policeman's friend.

Terry O'Halloran

Secret Society

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vent publication, wrong to fail to ensure that all the angles were covered'. This puts Kinnock to the right of Thatcher who was, at least, forced to admit that it was not possible to get blanket injunctions from the courts unless they had firm evidence on named individuals and publications. We also learned that Kinnock

had given his full backing to the Attorney General prior to the seeking of the injunction against Duncan Campbell.

It was precisely because of Kinnock's stand that Thatcher was able to order Special Branch raids on the *New Statesman*, the homes of three journalists, and later the offices of Glasgow BBC. Glasgow BBC was raided again on 31 January. Special Branch took away material from all six 'Secret Society' programmes.

Ironically, editor of the *New Statesman*, John Lloyd, is an ardent Kinnockite who has pushed the mag-

azine to the right in the last few months. His latest editorial, written after the four day search of the *Statesman's* offices by Special Branch, shows he has learned nothing. He condemns only Thatcher and says not a word about Kinnock's odious role in the affair.

Kinnock's performance shows exactly what's in store under a future Labour government. And as for free speech and freedom of information, you can forget them if Kinnock's given the whisper that the national imperialist interest is at stake.

Olivia Adamson

Racist thugs at Stoke Newington

Stoke Newington police who were responsible for the death of Colin Roach have committed another vicious crime against a black youth - Trevor Monerville. On the morning of 1 January this year, Trevor was found asleep in a car with a broken window. Police claim to have arrested him for being under the influence of drugs and being involved in criminal damage. He was taken to Stoke Newington Police Station to 'sleep it off'.

Trevor is now in hospital seriously ill. He has undergone brain surgery and nearly lost his life. He was admitted to hospital with bruises from head to toe, even the soles of his feet were bruised. He had suffered a series of blows to the head which produced a blood clot on the brain and left him paralysed on the left of his body.

At 3pm on New Year's day, Trevor's father reported him missing to Stoke Newington police. They denied any knowledge of his whereabouts. Again the next day Trevor was officially reported missing. On 3 January the police charged Trevor at Highbury Magistrates Court. They knew his identity now through his fingerprints, forcibly taken by six police officers. Still Trevor's father was not told of his whereabouts. Trevor was then taken to Brixton prison where he was put in the hospital wing. All his clothes were destroyed.

When forced to explain the situation, the police came up with the story that Trevor was suffering from a brain tumour. This lie was exposed under medical examination. The police then suddenly dropped all charges against Trevor.

Stoke Newington police have a long history of vicious and murderous assaults on black people. Trevor's friends and family are organising a campaign to force the truth out on this latest atrocity by the Stoke Newington police.

Simone Dewhurst

Support the Wombourne Twelve

Twelve young lesbians and gay men were imprisoned over Christmas for demonstrating against the call of South Staffordshire Conservative council leader Brownhill to put '90% of queers in the ruddy gas chamber' to prevent the spread of AIDS.

After a peaceful demonstration outside Brownhill's home the 12 were arrested, verbally and physically abused, and held for 22 hours. On 22 December they appeared in court charged with threatening behaviour, one woman also faces two police assault charges.

Magistrates granted the police application for them to be remanded for seven days in custody, on the false grounds that their addresses had not been verified. When they appeared in court a week later they were finally released on bail. One of the gay men pointed out 'any one of us who harboured illusions about the police and their relation to the courts as well as the purpose of the public order law, has now realised how naive we were. We would not have expected a seven day prison sentence if we had been convicted. In effect the police have had us punished without our being found guilty.'

The Defence Campaign are organising a demonstration on 23/24 February outside Seisdon Magistrates Court in Wombourne. Send donations and requests for more information to Wombourne Twelve Defence Campaign c/o BM GYM London WC1N 3XX, Tel: 833 3912.

Susannah Lloyd

Teacher's union attacks left

Over 80 members of the council of the Inner London Teachers' Association (ILTA), the section of the National Union of Teachers (NUT) which represents London teachers, were suspended this month by the NUT national executive. ILTA leaders had called a strike for 13 January in opposition to the Education Bill which Kenneth Baker is railroading through Parliament.

The Bill gives Baker the power to impose a settlement in the current teachers' pay dispute. It also abolishes the right of both teachers' unions and their direct employers, the Local Education Authorities, to take part in future pay negotiations by replacing the present Burnham committee with a government appointed body.

ILTA called the strike to show opposition to the Bill, but also to put pressure on the national union whose campaign against Baker's Bill

is limited to winning over 'public opinion'. The NUT executive viciously suspended the 80 ILTA members and sent out warning letters to NUT members, telling them not to support the strike. '... At this stage... industrial actions will not assist in any way the campaign against the bill, and will... be counter-productive by alienating many who we could otherwise count upon as allies'. And yet it is quite clear that without industrial action, such measures will have no effect on

a government which has proved quite impervious to reasonable arguments.

Over 6,000 London teachers ignored the NUT leaders and struck, with over 2,000 attending a demonstration and rally in near blizzard conditions. The rally called for a one day national strike on 19 February.

Teachers have put up a relatively militant fight for the last two years. But NUT leaders have shown themselves ready to jeopardise it all. Before Christmas they signed the ACAS deal which falls far short of teachers' demands, and is rejected by 4 out of the 6 unions, not to mention by Baker. Now they want to limit the fight against Baker's Bill, urging us to put our faith in the House of Lords and suspending those calling for more militant action.

All NUT members should oppose the suspensions and put pressure on NUT leaders to call a strike on 19 February against the Bill.

Olivia Adamson

BT launches all-out attack on engineers

After two years of privatisation, British Telecom, in its drive to increase profits, has launched an all-out attack on its workforce. Up and down the country National Communications Union (Engineering) members were threatened with suspension for working to rule and refusing to work overtime, in support of our 1986 pay claim of 10%.

In Manchester about 80 engineers were facing suspension on the Monday morning of 19 January. In response, the whole Manchester district walked out on indefinite strike until the suspension threats were lifted. Similar actions took place throughout Britain. The union executive had only sanctioned 24 hour stoppages in support of suspended members, on a district by district basis. They were overtaken by events and by the end of that week virtually all the union membership was out. Our executive, faced with a *fait accompli*, was forced to call an all-out strike from Monday 26 January.

BT management has forced the confrontation and is clearly prepared for a lengthy dispute. Their aim is to break the union and impose their own draconian conditions on the workforce, changing our attendance patterns, ending job demarcation and making overtime compulsory. Our union leadership, led by NCU General Secretary John Golding, quite clearly did not want an all-out confrontation with BT. The leadership's tactics have been to try to keep the dispute centered on a district by district basis. However, they have been overtaken by events and the strength of feeling of the NCU

membership.

This is the first national strike called by the NCU or its predecessor the POEU that has lasted for more than one day. BT workers in fact belonged to the Civil Service until 1969 and many of the ideas and prejudices of that era are still strong in sections of the NCU membership. Until now they have not felt threatened by Thatcher's onslaught on the working class. Their voice is the voice of John Golding when he condemns 'extremists' in the union and attacks what he calls outsiders for supporting the strike. It's also the voice of Peter Bailey, a local Manchester branch officer and Tameside Labour councillor, who, the Monday after the vicious police assault on the Wapping demonstration, at a mass meeting of 2,000 engineers, condemned the picketers at Wapping for their violence!

There is however, another section of the union: the low paid, ordinary engineers, who are determined to fight and don't look upon themselves as being different from other workers involved in industrial struggles. It's this section of the union which must give the lead in the fight for us to successfully resist the attack from BT.

Bob Shepherd

The go-ahead for Sizewell B

The expected has happened. The building of Sizewell B power station, a PWR similar in design to the one which nearly melted down at Three Mile Island in the US, is to go ahead. Following the longest public inquiry in history comes a 3,000 page report by Sir Frank Layfield. Sir Frank has reservations of course, but has decided that the 'national economic benefits' override any doubts.

● **Safety** Sir Frank accepts the CEB's 'assurances' that Sizewell B will be safe. In fact the US firm Westinghouse who are set to build the reactor have a number of outstanding lawsuits against them over problems in PWRs they have built in the US. Neither does the report mention Chernobyl, an omission of the most stupendous proportions. After all, Sizewell is situated only 70

miles from London, one of the largest population centres in the world.

● **Cost** Sir Frank reckons Sizewell B will be cheaper than a power station using other fuels. Not only does this not take into account the recent fall in coal prices, but it ignores the fact that, up to now, no method has been devised of safely decommissioning nuclear reactors and storing waste which will stay radioactive and deadly for up to 25,000 years. The cost of this is simply incalculable in terms of damage to people and the environment.

It is no surprise that the massive vested financial, political and military interests in the nuclear industry have triumphed in the inquiry. Only organised opposition on the ground can now halt Sizewell B.

Olivia Adamson

Workers occupy Caterpillar

On 14 January, 1,200 workers at the Caterpillar tractor plant in Uddingston (Glasgow) heard that they were to lose their jobs. They are now occupying the plant. FRFI supporters went to talk to them.

Workers told us that as late as Autumn '86 the management had assured the 1,200 workforce of a rosy future and had praised them for their 'continuing improvement in the quality of their products.' An investment of a further £62 million over the next 4 years was talked of.

However, things were not as they seemed. Are they ever when profit is considered before people? The American multinational had made only £13 million in pre-tax profits from 1981-85. Competition with Japanese companies was increasing and the market in imperialist countries was decreasing. Caterpillar announced that Uddingston plant, along with Davenport and Dallas in the US, would have to go. A total of 2,900 jobs are to be shed.

So much for the company brochure given to each employee when they start. 'People have intrinsic worth and dignity... We intend to treat people as individual human beings...'

On 14 January, without even consulting the British government who had also agreed to invest millions in the plant, the company broke the news of the closure to the Uddingston workers at a mass meeting at the plant. Workers were told that jobs would be shed over a 15 months period and that 'fair' redundancy payments would be made. The workers' answer was to immediately occupy the plant. They broke open doors to get in and are still in occupation today.

The factory is in an area of 20% adult male unemployment. This would rise to 50% if the factory closed. With nothing but memories of a once flourishing economy from the pits and the Ravenscraig steel plant, workers know that they have no option but to fight for their jobs.

On 23 January leaders of every unionised workplace in the West of Scotland and local MPs met with representatives of the Caterpillar workforce. At this meeting, they organised the collection of money and supplies necessary to sustain the workforce during their occupation. A Women's Support Group is being organised. Money must be sent if the workers are to win their fight. Morale is high and resolve is strong. Caterpillar management have a battle on their hands. As the workers' representatives told us 'We'll be here till we win'.

John

Send money and messages of support to: Thomas Stevenson, Treasurer, 17, Campsie View, Bargeddie, Baillieston, Glasgow



Our rights trampled in Kinnock's bid for power

In the last 10 days of January Neil Kinnock reached new depths of reaction in his drive to prove himself a worthy and patriotic defender of British imperialist interests. He did it at our expense, at the expense of thousands upon thousands of people who are resisting the attempts of the Tory government to trample on hard won democratic rights.

The Tory government took unprecedented action in parliament and the courts in what turned out to be a failed attempt to prevent us knowing about a new British signals intelligence spy satellite and to cover up its deception of Parliament. The Tories received the full support of Neil Kinnock. In fact Kinnock took an even more reactionary stance than Thatcher when he accused the government of incompetence for not completely silencing Duncan Campbell by allowing his article in the *New Statesman* to slip through the censorship net. In so doing Kinnock gave Thatcher the signal to go ahead with special branch raids on the *New Statesman*, the homes of three journalists and the BBC Glasgow, where the programme about the satellite was made. Kinnock encouraged government deception and secrecy. In short he took a stand against the democratic rights and interests of ordinary people in this country.

A few days later Kinnock was at it again. On Saturday 24 January a planned, highly organised police attack on the 25,000-strong Wapping march took place. Demonstrators resisted police brutality with cans, sticks, bricks and paving stones. Kinnock, far from immediately condemning the police brutality, took their side and attacked those demonstrators who defended themselves and fought back as 'outcasts from the Labour movement' who would not get his support. It was not long before he was joined by a babbling chorus of like-minded scabs. Willis condemned the 'disgraceful and violent' scenes and a few days later announced publicly that the TUC was considering whether or not to propose the ending of mass demonstrations outside Wapping—precisely the aim of the police. Kaufman, Labour's 'law and order' shadow minister, condemned the 'gratuitous violence' at Wapping, put it down to 'outside elements bent on exploiting grievances for their sectarian purposes' and inadequate police tactics. Dean (SOGAT) condemned the violence of both sides but put the blame for it down to 'troublemakers' on the demonstration, and an indiscriminate police response.

These Labour and trade union leaders are equating the highly organised violence of the state against unarmed demonstrators with the violence of the demonstrators defending themselves against police attacks. They in fact justify the police violence by putting the legitimate self-defence of demonstrators down to 'troublemakers', 'outcasts' and 'outsiders'. In doing this they inevitably end up on the side of the state and its increasingly trained and repressive police force. In the process they sabotage any effective resistance to the growing authoritarian and repressive regime erected under successive Thatcher governments.

Hurd, therefore, had few problems in brushing aside the demand of these Labour leaders

for a public inquiry into the policing at Wapping. They also allowed him to call for the more rapid implementation of the draconian powers embodied in the Public Order Act which give police the power to control the size, duration and location of static demonstrations. The refusal of Kinnock and his allies in the Labour movement to take an unequivocal stand on the side of the demonstrators resisting police brutality and violence has consequences for us all. The Tory attack on our democratic rights has been strengthened. Our ability to defend ourselves has been undermined.

Before the working class can take on and defeat the ruling class it has to deal first with an increasingly reactionary layer in its own ranks—the labour aristocracy and the privileged layers of the working class from which they draw their support. These opportunist currents hold great influence over the working class through their political positions in the Labour and trade union movement. The so-called 'new realism' in the Labour movement is no more than a political defence of the narrow interests of these opportunist currents. Any political activity which could undermine the election prospects of a future Labour government is being condemned and sabotaged for this reason. For it is only the re-election of a Labour government which will guarantee the political status and economic privileges that this layer sees increasingly threatened by Thatcher. In every struggle, therefore, where these people hold positions of influence, we shall see their narrow interests put before the interests of the working class as a whole.

These opportunist currents brought about the defeat of the miners' strike, brushing aside the interests of thousands of striking miners, their families and supporters. They are at work at Wapping, sapping the strength of those rank-and-file printers courageously battling on. They are determinedly at work in the National Union of Teachers, holding back any effective opposition to the Education Bill, which Baker is pushing through parliament in order to impose a settlement on the long-running teachers' dispute. In that dispute 82 members of the council of the Inner London Teacher's Association have been suspended by the NUT executive for organising a strike on 13 January in opposition to the Education Bill. They are at work in the Anti-Apartheid Movement, holding back the struggle and putting far more energy into their vain attempt to destroy City of London Anti-Apartheid Group than into campaigning against British collaboration with apartheid.

Kinnock is the leader these opportunist currents deserve. As the election draws nearer, the content of their politics will increasingly find itself captive to the uncontrolled whims of Kinnock's rampant ego and political ambition.

Strike against Wheeler's

Four Chinese chefs have been picketing Wheeler's restaurant (Market Street, Brighton) since they were sacked on 10 November 1986. Although the chefs had worked in the Wheeler's chain for a total of 36 years, they were put on probation as 'new employees' when the Brighton restaurant was franchised-off to city stockbroker Dennis Bailey in February 1985. Amongst other things, the chefs were told to cook rotten fish and to serve dover sole as lemon sole. Protesting, eight members staged a half-day walkout, eventually forcing the management to back down with an outstanding overtime claim settled.

In November 1986 Bailey instructed the chefs to work to a new menu. Shop steward Chung Sang Hang (the only one of the Wheeler's 4 to speak any English) argued that the chefs would only do this if Bailey showed some goodwill by entering into overdue negotiations on pay and conditions. Chung was promptly sacked, as were three others who stopped work in sympathy. The TGWU have since declared the dispute official.

In the three months since the start of the picket, Wheeler's restaurant has steadily lost business: Bailey told the *Daily Mail* that he had lost half his regular customers. The restaurant has had to close earlier and earlier. Bailey spent £12,000 taking the TGWU to court to prevent them from supporting the picket. The picket is now restricted to only 6 people (the Wheeler's 4, one interpreter and one Union official).

Support for the picket has come from Brighton Council, local Labour Party wards and trade unionists. Local residents have boycotted the restaurant and made false bookings. A recent social was attended by over 400 and £350 was raised on the spot. Channel 4's *Bandung File* screened a 5-minute item on the Wheeler's 4. The dispute is already well known in the Chinese community in London, where a public meeting was held on 2 February.

This initiative must be supported: the pickets take place every day 11am-2.30pm and 7pm until the restaurant closes.

Virman Man

Sanctuary is a prison. If I set foot outside the Church of the Ascension in Hulme, I will be arrested. I cannot even go out for a few minutes for a breath of fresh air. The police are around - the telltale signs are there ...

The church bells ring at 8am. I am already awake. The church workers may need to come into my 'bedroom' - it still serves as the Sacristy. It is small, 15 feet by 10 feet. A considerable part of the room is used for church equipment. It has no windows - if the calor gas heater is left on for a few hours I feel drowsy.

Privacy of course is virtually impossible. The church services involve many people coming into the Sacristy. But this is not a problem! Neither is the fact that over 600 people have been to see me during the five weeks I have been in sanctuary! From David Reed, to the Bishop of Manchester and hundreds of others I have received a tremendous demonstration of solidarity. The visit from Junior 2 from Chevasant College was very educational for me. When I said I have lived here for 13 years, a black girl asked the teacher 'Could I be deported?' The teacher said no of course not 'you were born here'. I wanted to say that if you were born here after 1981 you would not have the automatic right to stay in Britain. The Nationality Act means no 'birth rights' for black

Ethnic monitoring

Since 1982 the Tory government has been attempting to introduce ethnic monitoring into the Department of Employment. Rank and file Civil Service workers represented by the Civil and Public Services Association have consistently opposed this. At best it does nothing to eradicate racial discrimination. At worst it can be used to perpetuate the myth that black unemployment is due to black people being 'workshy' and 'lazy'. Thus it disguises the overt and covert racism on the part of employers and the state. As all ethnic origin statistics end up in the Home Office computers, the exercise really forms part of the government's blatantly racist immigration control policy.

The situation escalated dramatically at the end of January when the government issued a High Court writ against

the CPSA which then capitulated and instructed members in Leeds and Handsworth Unemployment Benefit Offices to

end their successful strike action against pilot exercises being carried out.

The May conference of the CPSA Department of Employment Section passed a motion opposing all attempts at ethnic monitoring despite opposition from the Section Executive which has since paid little more than lip service to Conference policy. Consequently CPSA members have had little support in their opposition to the racist practices of their employers.

We all know that black people suffer massive and pervasive discrimination when applying for jobs or claiming benefit. If we don't fight and win this issue now, this racism may well be enshrined in law.

Martin Lloyd

Secretary Leeds Branch 17/234



Victoria Williams

Bring back Victoria

The first meeting of the Bring Back Victoria Williams Campaign was held at West London Trade Union Club, Acton, on Friday 23 January. It was attended by members of the local community, Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!, the VMDC, Socialist Action, Labour Party councillors and Action Against Racism.

David Williams spoke of the desperate situation of his wife Victoria, stranded in Ghana with no money and no family since she was deported in May last year. He described how he was inspired by reading reports of the Manchester to London march by Viraj Mendis' supporters last summer. So he wrote to the VMDC asking for help to set up a defence campaign. A message from Viraj, now in sanctuary, was read:

'I am glad that your suffering and anguish has now been organised into

a campaign against the racist Home Office. The only way that you can get justice is if you fight.'

The campaign agreed that its focus should be the forthcoming appeal and that as with the VMDC, it should approach all sectors of the community for support.

The next meeting will be held at Acton Unified Community Action Office, Acton Technical College, Mill Hill Road, London W3, at 7.30pm on Wednesday 11 February.

Jan Ali



Viraj Mendis with Father John Methuen

FIVE WEEKS IN sanctuary

people. But I kept quiet. The children were already too horrified. They got to the heart of the matter faster than any adults.

Support has been magnificent. People from all over bring food, cam-

aign members do a rota day and night to ensure my security. Everyone assumed I would get bored, but it has been the opposite! So many people to see, the media to be dealt with - I could spend all day talking to people. But I have to

discipline myself and structure my day so that I can deal with the essential work of the campaign, and also get some exercise to keep me fit.

Hundreds of letters have poured in from young and old. Aydir, 8 years old

Brixton police picketed

On 15 January Inspector Lovelock walked free from the Old Bailey. He was cleared of charges of unlawfully and maliciously wounding Mrs Cherry Groce in her Brixton home. In response, the Black Peoples Campaign for Justice organised a picket of Brixton police station on Saturday 24 January. It began with militant chanting and the air was charged with people's anger. Inspector Lovelock had been cleared but Cherry Groce would never walk down Brixton High Street again.

Huw Kimathi of the Black Peoples Campaign for Justice who organised the picket opened the rally by saying 'An Englishman's home is a castle unless you are poor and black, then police can burst into your home and shoot you in your own bedroom in front of your children. We are told we poor and black people are looters but after Broadwater Farm fought back, 400 homes were smashed into, 400 homes looted by the police, they even stole our children. Who are the looters? Now they are bringing in a Public Order Act to legitimise the fascist carry on that they have practised on black and poor people.'

FRFI argued for the right of all supporting organisations there to speak. This was granted and other speakers included the VMDC, RCG, City AA, the Humanist Party, Wages for Housework, Brixton Young Socialists, Kings Cross Womens Centre, Wages Due Lesbians and others.

Suddenly, without telling the police, following a hurried whisper we leave the police station and march out into the busy Saturday afternoon shopping centre disrupting the heavy traffic. Spectators clap and cheer. We were 100 on the picket. A few yards up the road, near Brixton Tube we are 150 as black youth join us from the pavements. Down Coldharbour Lane and left at Railton Road and back round again. We are 200 now. The police don't know what to do. A handful of unprepared police are not going to dictate to us! We march onto the front of the library for another rally - its slogan 'If police get in the way, they will pay'.

Annie Fury

sent me his pocket money - I won't ever forget that. I keep a Visitors Book - some of the comments are moving. Rahela and Khalid Siddiqui (they recently won their campaign against deportation): 'You'll win! We'll all win! If anyone deserves to win it's you Viraj. We are both with you all the way.' Julie McEntee (12) 'Why should he be sent back? He has done a lot for people and Irish people too.' Canon John Gunstone 'As followers of Jesus Christ we are humbled to support this campaign and pray that Viraj will find his freedom in the UK'.

Many of the meetings I used to attend are now being held in the church. This means I can still be politically active in the anti-deportation struggle in Manchester.

The VMDC has always assisted other campaigns and worked for unity in struggle against immigration laws. If the Home Office think we are stopping this element of our work in this time of crisis, they are wrong. The VMDC is organising a National Conference in Manchester on 11/12 April to bring together all those forces fighting deportations and to make my case and that of immigration laws an issue in the coming general elections.

Viraj Mendis

MARCH FOR MANDELA

City of London Anti-Apartheid Group calls on all those opposed to apartheid to join the National Demonstration on Saturday 14 March:

- Release Nelson Mandela and all South African and Namibian political prisoners!
- Close Down the Racist South African Embassy!
- Sanctions Now!
- Support the Non-Stop Picket!

The demonstration falls on the anniversary of the massacres of Sharpeville and Langa. The apartheid state is now geared up for a permanent state of bloody repression.

We must create a 'State of Emergency' here to keep up a non-stop mobilisation against Britain's collaboration with apartheid. But the Anti-Apartheid Movement has stopped having national protests. It is critical that all those against apartheid come back out onto the streets in their thousands. That is why the RCG fully supports City AA's decision and will be mobilising nationwide for 14 March.

Attempted sabotage

In order to campaign against apartheid City AA has had to fight for the democratic right to do so at every step of the way.

City AA has applied for the use of Trafalgar Square on 14 March, but the Department of Environment is prevaricating on granting permission. The only objection given is that scaffolding around Nelson's Column may present a danger! The scaffolding concerned is surrounded by 12 ft high boarding topped with barbed wire! The DoE is effectively threatening a ban on an anti-apartheid rally just as it has banned pro-Irish demonstrations from the Square.

The AAM leadership has also begun its attempts to sabotage the demonstration. It has advised London student unions to keep City AA and 14 March leaflets off campus! Why doesn't the AAM leadership turn its energy to mobilising against apartheid? Rather than sabotaging 14 March it should be supporting it.

Non-sectarian democracy

City AA is fighting to establish a new tradition of thoroughgoing democracy in anti-apartheid campaigning. All those mobilising for 14 March will be free to distribute their literature, will get speaking rights and will be asked to provide stewards. Open, democratic campaigning of all those agreeing with the demonstration, with no exclusions, is a necessity, a precondition for unity in the struggle.

The mobilising committee is open to all supporters of 14 March and meets at 7.30pm every Wednesday at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1

GOOD RIDDANCE WORRALL

South African Ambassador to Britain, Denis Worrall muddied the waters of Botha's election announcement by publicising his resignation. Supposedly disappointed by Botha's inability to reform apartheid, Worrall is returning to South Africa to 're-enter national public life' and 'build bridges'. What bridges he intends to build remains uncertain.

The press in Britain has consistently labelled Worrall a 'liberal', but this speaks more for his powers in the field of 'public relations' (impressing the media) than it does for Worrall's political performance. This 'liberal' pal of Thatcher has served the National Party throughout a period of sustained barbaric terror directed at the black masses. In practice he has been nothing more than a fascist apologist. His return to South Africa has nothing to do with liberalism, it is merely an opportune political move at a time when he fancies his chances for election.

The non stop picketers outside South Africa House who have been on the receiving end of Worrall's 'liberalism' in Britain - abuse from Embassy staff, threats and court cases - are delighted that he is leaving and hope that his last year in the Embassy was as disrupted and uncomfortable as they could possibly make it.

Main NUM branch who are leading the campaign to ban South African coal, the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign will be leading a contingent 'Fight British Pass Laws! Stop All Deportations Now!'. And City AA's black and anti-racist mobilising group is building a contingent 'Brixton to Soweto Under Attack! We Fight Back!'

Mobilise - Act Now!

Time is short. FRFI urges all our readers to ACT NOW to mobilise for 14 March. What you can do:

- Publicise - leaflets, posters, stickers and 'Non-Stop News' picket bulletin are available from City AA.
- Mobilise all your friends, go out leaf-letting on the streets, at concerts and

'We Are Here Until Mandela Is Free!'

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION Saturday 14 March

Assemble: 1.00pm Whittington Park, Holloway Road, Islington, London N19 (nearest tube Archway)

Proceed to rally in Trafalgar Square
Organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid Group

(nearest tube Holborn). On Wednesday 4 March all supporting organisations are invited to attend to plan arrangements for the demonstration.

One struggle! One fight!

Support for 14 March ranges from Leeds Trades Council who have donated £10, to the Stonehenge community who have taken 1,500 leaflets, comrades in the Sheffield Asian Youth Movement who are reprinting a leaflet in Urdu, Hatfield

political meetings.

- Organise by joining with other groups in your area, act together.
- Invite a speaker from City AA to your organisation.
- Book transport from your area NOW and print tickets.
- Hold a public meeting with City AA and all local groups speaking.
- Sponsor 14 March (£10 organisations, £4 individuals).
- Donate and raise money to pay for the cost of publicity and transport.

Elections in South Africa

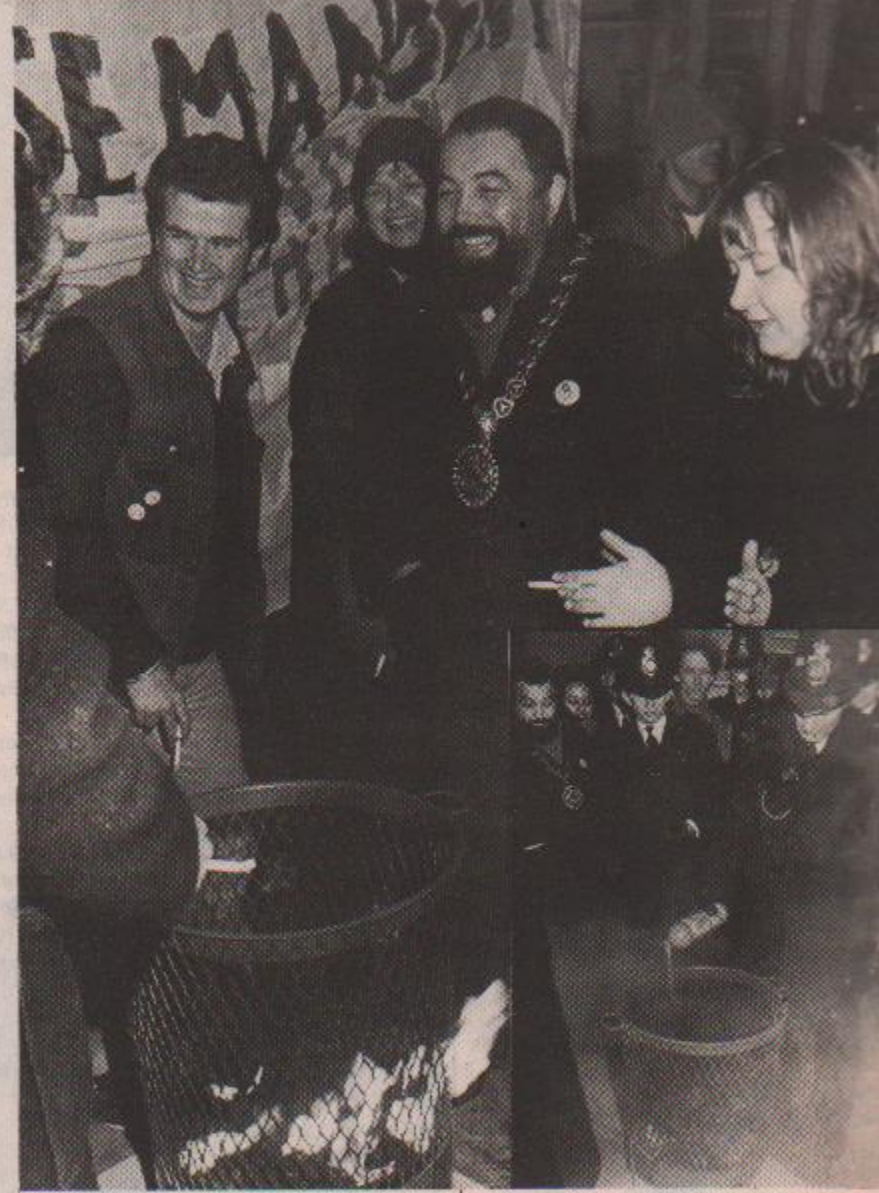
On 30 January, President PW Botha announced that South Africa's all-white general election will be held on 6 May. Botha goes to the polls with a record of more than two years of continuous terror and torture behind him, calculated to impress the most entrenched right-wing section of the electorate and smash the resistance of the black masses. Despite the extension of press censorship in January and the continued detention of thousands of black people since June 1986, it is clear that Botha has failed to quell resistance in the townships. The extent to which he has captured the white racist vote from the far right will become clear as the election draws near.

The apartheid regime's press clamp-down was extended further in January with bans on a series of political adverts in the South African press. Government attempts to prevent a 'Release Mandela Campaign' advert from appearing in some newspapers were followed by the suppression of a UDF advert calling for the unbanning of the ANC. A court challenge by newspaper owners to the press censorship was successful, but within 24 hours the regime had cracked back with harsher restrictions. Amongst those detained are prominent black journalists Zwelakhe Sisulu and Siphon Ngeobo - like many of the detainees, there is no news whatsoever about them.

In the black townships, the fight for supremacy between the 'comrades' on the one hand and the state and its lackeys on the other has continued unabated. In Soweto, the UDF's Christmas Against the Emergency campaign was

met with an outbreak of murderous attacks by a reactionary group calling themselves the 'Russians'. At least seven people died in these clashes before a truce was agreed over Christmas. In the New Year the radicals went on the offensive, with three people necklaced in one day, and an armed attack which seriously injured a member of the security forces in nearby Alexandra.

The following week 1,000 men wearing white headbands went on the rampage in Kwanobhule township in the Eastern Cape, attacking UDF members and their homes, while the police stood by and arrested many of those fleeing from the vigilantes. And on the night of 20 January, 12 people, including seven children, were murdered in an armed attack on the house of a UDF activist. This massacre was certainly carried out by Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha vigilantes using AK47 rifles although the



If there is not a group in your area that is actively building for 14 March then contact City AA to see if there are other Non-Stop Picket supporters near you, then approach local groups and individuals and set up a Non-Stop Against Apartheid Group.

The time has come to break out of the old mould. For too long inaction in Britain has been paid for with the blood of the oppressed in Africa. FRFI asks you to join with us in pledging action against apartheid.

Andy Higginbottom

Literature and further information from: City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, BM City AA, London WC1N 3XX Tel (01) 837 6050
For details of coaches see page 15

regime's official press bureau tried to implicate the ANC - information faithfully repeated by the British press.

The security forces also made direct attacks on the radicals. The funeral in Zwidwe of ANC freedom fighter Livingstone Ntlokwa was broken up by the police. They entered the church, drove out 2,000 mourners, and took over the burial. Armed attacks on the security forces included a grenade attack in a Cape township which killed one policeman and injured 2 others. It is impossible to tell how many other incidents there were which did not penetrate the curtain of censorship.

In the mines, too, there were more violent clashes. Eleven died in clashes at Anglo-American's Steyn mine shortly before Christmas. In January 3,000 workers - half the black workforce - left Gencor's Beatrix mine after a fight which left eight dead and 53 injured. Anglo-American took advantage of the enforced press silence on the causes of the killings to publish an advertisement blaming the NUM for the violence. The NUM replied with an advert which placed the blame firmly where it belongs - 'Let it be known once and for all that the source of the conflict is rooted in the institutions of oppression and exploitation which exist in the mining industry... It is from this brutal and draconian system that Anglo-American has benefited.'

Also in the forefront of the struggle this month have been the black workers in the chain store OK Bazaars. Members of the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers Union (an affiliate of COSATU) have been on strike for over a month - demanding an increase in their poverty-level wages. The employers have responded by sacking 531 for

Above: Bob Crossman, Mayor of Islington, joins picketers round the 'illegal' brazier. Inset: Newman's finest extinguish the 'illegal' brazier.

FUTURE COURT DATES

February 10: Amanda, Amanda, Satisfy Highway and police obstruction from 16 June. Horseferry Road. 10am (case continues)

February 17: Lorna. Noise under the byelaws. Wells Street. 10am (case continues)

February 18, 24, 25, 26: Kayode, Tinuke, Adam, Jan, Linda, Ruby, Teresa and Dave.

Various charges from 13 June 1986. Wells Street. 10am. Picket of the court on February 18, 9.30am

February 19: Anil. Highway obstruction (arrested by AD738). Bow Street, 2pm

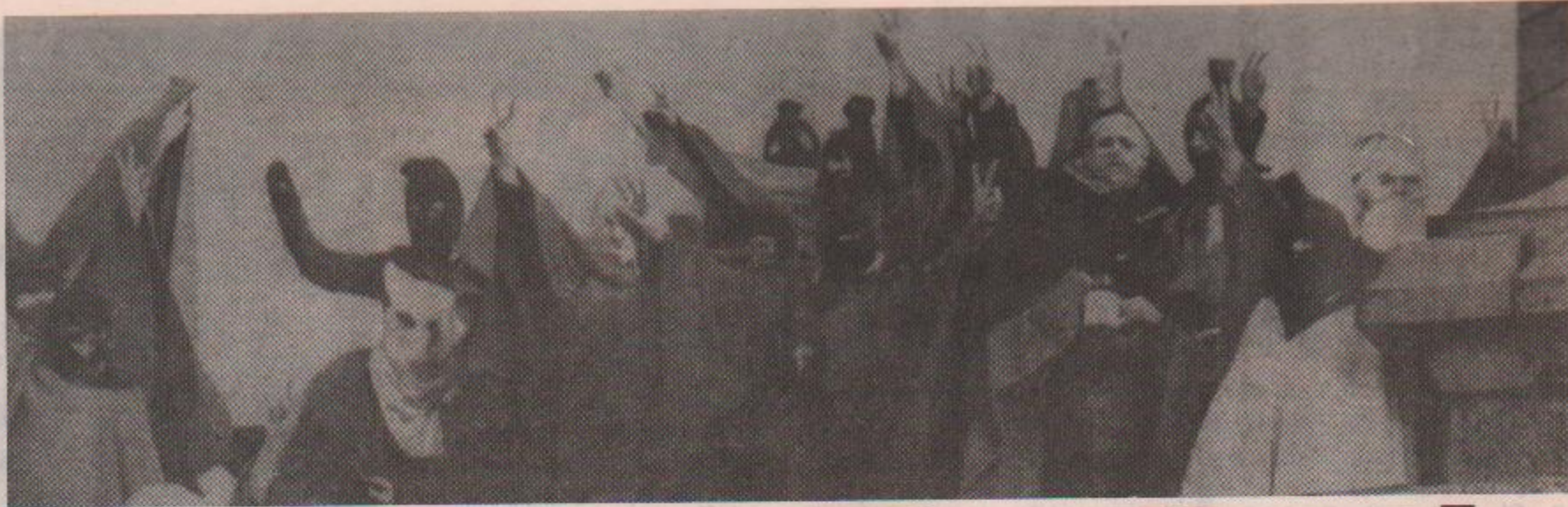
March 11: Simone. Obstruction of the police. Bow Street, 10am

breaching 'strike rules' unilaterally imposed by the company, and calling in the police to attack pickets. Several hundred strikers have been arrested on picket lines, and at least three detained under the emergency regulations. The black community was not slow to show its solidarity - there is evidence to suggest they are now boycotting OK Bazaars, and one store was hit by a ANC limpet mine attack.

It is in the midst of this continuing crisis that P W Botha has given notice of the whites only election. He claims he will be presenting a package of reforms to the electorate, but in practice the repression is intensifying - a formula to prevent losing votes to either the 'liberal' Progressive Federal Party (PFP) or the ultra-right.

But the black masses, whose leaders are exiled, imprisoned or detained, will not be conned by the electoral manoeuvres of their oppressors. As the NUM says, concluding its reply to Anglo-American - 'The NUM believes that only in a society where workers are in control of all aspects of their lives including their lives on the mines, will conflict be eliminated. Anglo-American, the entire mining industry, and those in power should take note that the NUM intends to make the achievement of this its agenda for 1987.'

Dave Hunter



Right and bottom, hooded prisoners on the Barlinnie roof during the January protest. Below, Mick McCallum, chairman of the Dumbarton branch of the Scottish Prisoners Support Committee.



On 5 January Scottish prisoners again took to the roof in a protest at Barlinnie prison: the third major rooftop protest in Scottish prisons since October last year.

The protest was sparked off by reports of the beating of prisoner Sammy Ralston, who held his own rooftop protest in November last year. The authorities, of course, denied that anything had happened to Sammy Ralston. Yet during the Barlinnie protest he appeared in court with dried blood, bruises and a 3-inch gash on his face.

24 prisoners took over cell block B, holding 14 prison officers in unoccupied cells. They disarmed riot squad prison officers, seizing their batons, shields and helmets before taking to the roof.

The protest ended peacefully after more than five days, on 10 January. The prisoners ended it with dignity, singing 'We shall overcome' from the rooftop. Their main demand, as in the other protests, was for an independent public inquiry. This has once again been refused.

Mick McCallum is a man who knows the Scottish prisons from the inside. As a prisoner he spent time in Barlinnie, in the Inverness cages and elsewhere. Inside prison he resisted the onslaught against prisoners' democratic rights. In 1982 and again in 1985 Mick went on hunger strike (see FRFI 46 and 47). He has presented a case to the European Court of Human Rights against the Scottish prison system.

Now free again, Mick McCallum has not forgotten his comrades inside. He continues to oppose the prison system. After the Barlinnie protest he talked to Graham Johnson about the cause of the protests and his own experience.

Barlinnie from the inside

'The real reason behind the recent protest was not so much the beating of Sammy Ralston. It was the accumulated desire of desperate prisoners to expose the physical and mental abuse being perpetrated against prisoners: the physical and mental brutality, the terrible conditions, closed visits, bad food.

For example, look at the conditions for untried prisoners in C Hall. The authorities admit there is terrible overcrowding. The prisoners get no clothing sent in and no food sent in. This is a basic right for remand prisoners. No Scottish prisons, unlike English prisons, allow food or clothes to be sent in. Access to such things as law books is also

severely curtailed. This is because the authorities are terrified of prisoners edu-



cating themselves. They are deliberately trying to keep prisoners ignorant.

There is no question that Sammy Ralston was beaten. David Cochrane, who was involved in the protest, was also beaten.

'I was deprived of all long-term prisoner privileges for over two and a half years while in Barlinnie. I was placed on many petty and malicious reports for things like having a button undone. I was never allowed to stay in one cell for over a week. I must have been in well over 100 different cells during that period. I was moved from hall to hall, cell to cell, so I couldn't get into a steady routine. I was also assaulted by screws four times at Barlinnie.'

A Scottish 'Attica'

I asked Mick how he saw the future for Scottish prisoners. His response was unambiguous.

'The writing is on the wall. The authorities must take notice that the prisoners will no longer accept these daily humiliations and abuses. And unless there are drastic improvements there will be an "Attica" in Scottish prisons. I think that the protests will continue at an ever growing level of violence.

'With the hawks that rule the Scottish penal system today, I see no chance of reform. They always force prisoners into headlong confrontations for basic rights.

'They say it is a small hardcore of

"troublemakers". But just look at the number of prisoners involved in protests over the last four months: five in the Saughton protest, 56 at Peterhead, 28 in Barlinnie, over 300 in a smaller protest in Barlinnie on New Year's Day, and 170 at Perth.

'I have also heard of protests at Greenock, Dumfries, Glenochil, Longriggend and the Inverness cages. All of these have been hushed up by the authorities.

The real criminals

'The real criminals in society are not the mass of petty offenders that overpopulate our decaying prisons, but the people who impose nuclear weapons and restrictions on our rights. Who are the real criminals? People who rob a meter or those who stockpile nuclear bombs that threaten the whole of mankind?

'In this repressive society everyone is a potential victim of the penal system. All I ever saw in prison were poor people. People must support the prisoners by picketing the prisons. They must come out on the streets and support prisoners' rights.

'I, along with some other ex-prisoners, have set up a prisoners' support group in my local area. I regard myself as part of the class war, and I feel I have a duty to educate people as to the nature of the real criminals in society.'

Graham Johnson



VIEWPOINT NUM elections: a lost opportunity

As the February closure date for nominations for the Vice Presidency draws closer, the stamp of inter-bureaucratic struggle has already gutted what could have been a dynamic and important contest over the direction of our union. Indeed the contest now resembles an inter-baronial joust, with the big Area full-timers roping in the peasants to do battle on their behalf.

The machinations of big party machines have seen to it that rank and file contestants are squeezed from the field to leave the way open for a power struggle between Clark and Thompson. Neither of these candidates, with their respective Communist Party factions beating the drum and followed along by a slimy collection of soft left bureaucrats, will address the important issues of reconstruction and consolidation so vital for the survival of the union.

Tragic, when one considers what golden opportunities were opened by the election. McGahey's retirement coincided with a new rule book which built certain democratic features into the post of Vice President. Most important was the fact that the position would be subject to individual ballot and therefore the rank and file, for the first time, would have a direct say in who got the job. Previously it had been subject solely to

branch nomination, which left the selection in relatively few hands, heavily influenced by branch officials, themselves subject to pressure and patronage by Area officials and assorted self-styled 'King makers' and 'election agents'. The kind of manipulation which promises 'you fall the right way on this one friend and we'll promote you for this or that union, Labour Party or council position, in the future'.

Another democratic feature was the reselection factor which ensures that the position comes up for re-ballot every two years. Add to this, that it is not a full-time position, it carries no salary, no house, no car etc and you have a job unlikely to attract the traditional career bureaucrat. The way seemed clear for local activist, rank and file miners to run for the position and take the influence of the pit face direct to the national lead-

ership of the union. Candidates from Kent, Notts and Doncaster began to be talked about.

Sadly the rule had a fatal flaw: it does not require a full-time Area official to resign his existing position before standing for Vice President. It further does not require a full-time Area official to give up his current job if he wins - he can claim BOTH positions at the same time.

Once a candidate like Sammy Thompson, General Secretary of the Yorkshire Area makes it clear he wants to run, the question of achieving the necessary Area nomination becomes then almost a mere formality. Likewise with Eric Clark in Scotland.

CP faction chiefs and soft leftist bureaucrats have rolled out a road show of ex-leaders and union notables to line up behind either of the candidates. Those rank and filers not already persuaded to drop out are simply dismissed as 'also rans', Red Herrings, or individualists. It now seems unlikely that any of the talked of rank and filers will even get on the ballot paper. Even if someone does, it will

probably be only with the nomination of a single tiny Area and this of itself will be seen as a vote of no confidence, choose how good the candidate. The party machine big wigs will see to that.

Socialist miners have no choice other than to consider any rank and file candidate as first choice. (Terry French is still a possibility.) If however, we are left with the choice of Clark and Thompson, tactical voting is all that will be left.

Thompson represents the most powerful Area of the union (Yorkshire). It has some 40,000 members, pays the biggest amount of cash into the national union and all but dominates the NEC as it is. He is the biggest of the barons. His violent opposition to Scargill and rank and file initiative and power is well known. What isn't so well known is his parochial hostility to all other Areas of the union. His 'own patch', his own power position is far more important to him than the national union and the smaller Areas. Under his leadership, the national NUM will continue on Barnsley's terms or it will not continue at all.

Clark is billed as a 'Euro', a soft liner,

and represents an area of about 10,000 (Scotland). The smaller Areas are tending to fall in behind him, solely because he gives them the prospect of some say. Alone, none of them will survive against the Yorkshire bureaucrat monolith. With this saving grace (which is almost incidental) Clark must be reluctantly the better choice of candidate.

Both candidates are anti-Scargill, but Arthur stands a far better chance of keeping Clark in check, choose how many Euros he can wheel in, than Thompson who holds the money, the bulk of the members, and would like to hold the keys of the national office as well.

No matter who wins, we must close that gap in the rules: all full-time Area officials must resign their current positions before standing for elections for the Vice Presidency. At least they must resign their full time positions before taking up office as Vice President. Had that been the rule this time round, there would have been no Thompson and no Clark running, of that we can be certain.

A miner

Martin Ralph of the WRP (Workers Press) takes issue with our analysis (published in November 1986) of the 1956 Hungarian Uprising. Patrick Newman replies for FRFI.

The defence of socialism or bureaucracy?

Janos Kad



The Hungarian Uprising 1956



PATRICK NEWMAN REPLIES

Comrade Ralph's criticism is difficult to answer because it consists of quotations taken out of context and empty generalisations, unsupported by concrete facts. The issues involved can only be understood by analysing their political significance concretely.

Thus the '... right of nations to self-determination and consequently the right to secede, even from the USSR ...', cannot be considered in isolation from the political struggle of which they form a part. In the struggle by oppressed nations against imperialism, self-determination is a central demand; in the struggle to defend the revolution against imperialism, it may acquire a completely different meaning. In order to undermine socialist countries, the bourgeoisie will pretend to support all kinds of democratic rights, including that of self-determination.

The specific case dealt with in the 1922 Lenin article quoted by Ralph was Georgia. In general terms, the case of Georgia involves an even more serious 'infringement' of self-determination than Hungary 1956 - the invasion of a non-socialist Georgia by the Red Army.

Under its Menshevik government, Georgia became a base for operations against the Bolsheviks throughout Russia. In Georgia itself, the Mensheviks suppressed the Communist Party and forcibly prevented national minorities

from organising politically.

Lenin authorised the invasion of Georgia by an estimated 100,000 Soviet troops on 14 February 1921. There was a great outcry by the Georgian Mensheviks, imperialist governments and the western labour parties, that the Bolsheviks had trampled over Georgia's right to self-determination. But the right to defend the revolution is higher than any democratic right. What is the difference between Georgia 1921 and Hungary 1956?

The issue between Lenin and Stalin was not the invasion of Georgia but the actions taken by Stalin after the invasion, in particular the imposition of the Russian language. Martin Ralph's statement that Lenin '... was moving towards a block with Trotsky in order to defeat Stalin' is rather misleading. The truth is that Trotsky failed to carry out Lenin's express request to: 'undertake the defence of the Georgian case in the Party central committee' (Lenin, Collected Works, Vol 42, p607)

The only specific case of national oppression of Hungary claimed by Com-

question.

Rakosi, leader of the Hungarian communist party after 1945 provides the answer:

'There was a single position, the control of which was claimed by our party from the first minute ... this was the state security authority ... we kept this organisation in our hands from the first day of its establishment.' (Quoted in 'Hungarian Tragedy' by Peter Fryer - an eye-witness account by a communist which gives invaluable insight into the real forces at work in October 1956.)

The AVH wore the uniform of the red star. A huge red star adorned their headquarters. They arrested and tortured workers, militants and trade unionists, in fact anyone who raised criticism of the CP control of the state and the soviet domination of the country.

The 'great Russian' influence (Lenin's word) even extended to the enforcement of the Russian language. Such a destruction of the rights of a nation to self-determination must produce the greatest hatred against the nation that is seen to oppress.

The movement of the Hungarian working class was crushed by the red army and the soviets' new man who you so lovingly quote - Kadar.

You make much of criticising the nine points put forward by the workers' councils on 31 October. But the Kadar regime was violently opposed to any negotiations with the workers' councils. It would only negotiate in order to trick and arrest the workers' leaders. This fact also shaped the attitude of the workers' councils to the regime.

What happened in Hungary is completely bound up with the degeneration of the revolution in the Soviet Union. The degeneration found its expression in the rising power of the bureaucracy and the theory of 'socialism in one country' established in 1924 by Stalin.

We defend the gains of the October revolution but the degeneration in theory and development of bureaucratic violence are not amongst the gains. Otherwise you must defend the Moscow trials, the physical elimination of the leadership of the revolution of 1917, the authorised assassination of Trotsky in 1940 and much else.

The only reason that these questions are taken up here is that the RCG have taken up a fight against reformism and stalinism in this country and we stand together in this fight.

I firmly believe that we have to base ourselves on Marx:

'The emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working classes themselves.' (Karl Marx - 1864)

Martin Ralph
Member of the Workers
Revolutionary Party/
Workers Press

MARTIN RALPH'S CRITIQUE

The article on Hungary 1956 in FRFI issue 64 purports to be a defence of socialism. Yet this article at no point examines how a bureaucracy came into being and lasted in Hungary. For a Marxist surely the question is what are the political and social roots of the bureaucracy. How could such a travesty of socialism exist and still call itself socialist, in fact, both before and after October 1956. You say the leadership changed and everything was socialist. How can a Marxist treat these questions so lightly?

The article defends the soviet bureaucracy and its handpicked regime in Hungary and it attacks the movement of the Hungarian working class.

Certainly not a few important facts have to be ignored in order to equate socialism with bureaucracy. Some of these will be dealt with in due course here.

The questions that are raised here have exploded in many different ways before and after Hungary. For example, is the following an example of modern day socialism or bureaucracy? On 16 December 1986 in Alma-Ata, capital of Kazakhstan, riots developed over the imposition of an ethnic Russian as the Republic's Party leader. This 'nationalist' resistance was widespread and aimed against Gorbachev's reforms ie overt Russian control. The Russian news said: 'hooligans and parasites' took advantage of student demonstrations. This can be no answer for a Marxist.

In fact how to build fraternal relationships with other countries became the centre of a bitter dispute between Lenin and Trotsky on the one hand and Stalin's line on the other. In 1922 when Stalin was determined to establish the USSR his plan was categorically rejected by the Georgian Bolsheviks as an attempt to impose Moscow as the centre.

The question of the right to self-determination and consequently the right to secede, even from the USSR was always fought for by Lenin. It is embodied in a communist understanding of the dictatorship of the proletariat let alone a socialist state.

Lenin wrote in 1922 (collected works vol 36, 605-11), 'A distinction must be made between the nationalism of an oppressor nation and that of an oppressed nation ... nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice.'

Lenin wrote this as he was moving towards a block with Trotsky in order to defeat Stalin.

We are obliged to say that your argument is not in the first place with Trotskyism but it is directed against the communism of Lenin.

Did the control of the Hungarian state by bureaucratic and violent means aid the revolution in Hungary? Can the gains of the socialist revolution of 1917 be strengthened by bringing separate nationalities together by bureaucratic and violent means against the working class in one smaller and weaker country?

Comrade Newman says that the system of privileges for party officials and factory managers was enforced by the state security police, the AVH. This, you say, imprisoned, tortured and (we add) killed workers and peasants. It, you say, removed communists from power.

Yet, you do not say who controlled the AVH and you do not even ask the

rade Ralph, is that: 'The "great Russian" influence ... even extended to the enforcement of the Russian language.'

In Hungary, the language used in schools, courts and political life was Hungarian - Russian was no more than a compulsory second language in schools. Is this the '... destruction of the rights of a nation to self-determination ...'?

In fact, this was not an issue as far as the Hungarians themselves were concerned: it is not even mentioned in the students' 23 October 1956 programme of demands (see Tibor Mery, *Thirty Days that Shook the Kremlin* 1959 p 67,68).

Comrade Ralph's fine-sounding phrase: 'We defend the gains of the October revolution ...' is followed by the inevitable 'but'. The emphasis in Ralph's reply is, like all the articles in socialist countries published in *Workers Press* so far, overwhelming on the 'buts'. For instance, from the pages of the 1 November 1986 issue dealing with Hungary 1956 it would not be possible to find out about the gains in education and employment made even before 1956, let alone after 1956.

The crux of the matter according to Comrade Ralph is: '... what happened in Hungary is completely bound up with the degeneration of the revolution in the Soviet Union.' In 1936, Trotsky wrote that if imperialism was not paralysed by the revolution in the West, it would '... sweep away the regime which issued from the October Revolution.' (*Revolution Betrayed 1936: New Park 1986 edition p227*). The USSR defeated fascism unaided by a revolution in the west and 50 years later, far from collapsing as Trotsky had predicted, it is economically and politically far stronger.

Similarly with Hungary. The only source referred to in the reply is Peter Fryer's *Hungarian Tragedy*. In December 1956, he wrote that Kadar's government was '... sitting on a volcano of hatred and resentment. It will be a very long time indeed before the economy covers.' (New Park 1986 edition p74). In fact the economy had recovered within one year; 30 years of political stability and economic growth later, the standard of living of the mass of the Hungarian people is incomparably higher.

The Trotskyist movement should face up to these facts: simply to repeat empty phrases about 'defending the gains of the revolution' 'degeneration in theory and development of bureaucratic violence' is to refuse to face reality.

Patrick Newman

This reply was based on: *Lenin, The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomisation'* (CW 36 pp605-611)

Richard M Pipes The Formation of the Soviet Union 2nd ed 1964

Trotsky, Social Democracy and the Wars of Intervention 1918-1921 1922: New Park 1975 ed

What the papers said

The RCG and City AA are well used to attacks in the press orchestrated by the Anti-Apartheid leadership. The 1984 AGM saw a massive red-scare campaign beforehand intended to mobilise their supporters to what was supposedly an attempted take-over. This year the press confined their comments on 'attempted coup d'etats' to after the AGM itself.

'At one point on Saturday morning stewards had to protect the rostrum against invasion from the floor' said Andrew Rawnsley in the *Guardian* (12 January). A total lie. We would, more accurately have had to be accused of staying in our seats, but that does not fit the image the *Guardian* is trying to create.

The *Guardian* cannot admit that we are well-organised - we have to be 'ruthlessly' well-organised and 'exceptionally' noisy. The new constitution will, according to Rawnsley, 'thwart any further take over attempts by the City of London (!)'. We have never tried to take it over. Warming to his theme, Rawnsley goes on: 'Until now the movement's constitution has invited coup d'etats' - there have never been any in 25 years.

Nothing was said in this scrupulously inaccurate report about what the fight was really about and at no time did Rawnsley approach City Group or the RCG for an explanation. His sole task was to carry the AAM leadership's message to *Guardian* readers. True to form none of our letters of protest were printed.

Sections of the left press were united in their support for the new constitution. 'This decision will greatly increase democracy' said *Socialist Action* (23 January), newspaper of a Trotskyist group (formerly the IMG) most noted for deep entry into the Labour Party. Indeed so deep is their entry that they are now Kinnock's most committed supporters.

'It will mean that the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group (which is not part of the AAM) and the Revolutionary Communist Group will no longer be able to pack AGMs... This will be the last AGM where what is a tiny minority is able to dominate proceedings.'

'Unfortunately,' the erstwhile revolutionaries continue,

'a proposal to make the AGM the policy making body of the AAM was ruled out of order... This peculiar situation where the AGM is not the sovereign body of the AAM will have to be corrected'

By whom, one wonders, when City Group and the RCG were the only forces organised to do precisely that?

But the 'Bob Hughes Prize' for creative journalism (awarded only to his most supine admirers) goes to *New Worker*, organ of the New Communist Party. Never hesitant to sink its teeth into revolutionaries, *New Worker* (16 January) accuses us of howling down the ANC - a lie; anti-working class prejudice for heckling Leicester miners' leader Jack Jones; and racism for calling Ronnie Press (who is white) a racist. One day, *New Worker* will learn that you judge people by what they do and say, not by their position in the labour hierarchy. Ronnie Press is a good example. His credentials as a SACTU veteran, honourable though they are, do not entitle him to call a black delegate an 'idiot', any more than a white SWAPO representative is entitled to assault a black City AA delegate who simply wanted to enter the hall.

After all the gnashing of teeth, *New Worker* decides that City AA is not the real threat 'to be watched'. The real enemy is the Socialist Workers Party and the 'direct links' lobby. These organisations must now consider them-

self the new constitutional changes, not to propose them. So, the National Committee is the only body able to change anything. We opposed the SOC report and raised the issue of censorship of literature. In the middle of a speech by a delegate from Sheffield, Hughes called for the vote and ruled that Standing Orders were carried!

Such undemocratic behaviour had to be challenged and the vote was close. We called for a count. Bob Hughes tried to carry on with the business. We carried on calling for a count. When it was clear that further business was impossible, Hughes ordered that the hall should be cleared and only those who pledged to support his undemocratic chairing would be re-admitted. As the delegates who supported Hughes shuffled out like sheep, we stayed in our seats determined not to accept any political conditions,

'I just want to make one thing clear. The City of London Anti-Apartheid Group is not represented at this AGM'. Bob Hughes MP - the idealist

CITY GROUP ON

The Anti-Apartheid Movement leadership planned the 1986 Annual General Meeting (AGM), held over the weekend of 10/11 January 1987, with a central political task in mind - to seal its relationship with the British Labour Party leadership in the run-up to the next General Election. To do this they introduced a new constitution with the sole aim of ruling out any future political opposition within the movement. The AAM requires the freedom, in the coming months, to shed its principles like confetti.

The AGM was the latest stage of the AAM leadership's attempts to destroy a political trend within the movement which, over the last four years, has consistently exposed its political manoeuvres, lack of democracy, and lack of action. In 1984 they tried to stop City of London Anti-Apartheid Group from actively opposing the police ban on pickets outside the South African Embassy - they failed. In 1985 they tried to crush City AA by expelling it from the movement - City AA has gone on from strength to strength. In 1986 they resorted to a new constitution removing basic rights of AAM members. With every move they are revealing that their concern is not solidarity with the fighting people of Southern Africa, not waging an unremitting campaign against apartheid and its British backers, not building a broad-based democratic movement - but, in fact, forwarding the much narrower political concerns of the British Labour Party.

The Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG), City AA and WRP (Workers Press) went to the AGM determined to fight for our political standpoint and oppose the undemocratic manoeuvres which the AAM leadership has always used against its political opponents. Our intervention centred on three vital issues: the 'new' constitution; the sabotage of the Commonwealth Games boycott by Bob Hughes MP and Brian Filling; and the support of the movement for the non-stop picket outside South Africa House.

changes. Ordinary members can no longer attend the AGM - carried; groups of members can no longer submit motions to the AGM - carried; local groups need only meet 4 times a year - carried; etc, etc.

This routine was, of course, accompanied by a great deal of bluster about growth of the movement (8,500 after 25 years!), and the democratic nature of delegate structures. Richard Caborn MP, with a throb in his voice, treated us to the story of a night-cleaner in Sheffield who couldn't afford to come to the AGM. Why Sheffield AAM members and Richard Caborn MP (£18,500 pa + expenses) in particular did not finance her was not explained, but interestingly enough, the largest body of unemployed, low-paid, black and young people in the hall came to the AGM with City AA, the RCG and Workers Press, simply because we organise to ensure that they can.

The truth is that the new delegate structure has nothing to do with democracy - it has everything to do with political censorship and maintaining the predominantly white, middle-class status quo. The AAM is now fitted up with an ideal constitution which will prevent any political opposition from its ordinary members, prevent any 'deviation' from local groups who take action seriously, and will ensure that the AAM is ready to hold back any forces prepared to challenge British collaboration with apartheid when Kinnock is in power.

For that is the real issue which lies behind the 'constitution'. The issue of the boycott of the Commonwealth

Why we

'It was the last stand... of the ruthlessly well-organised and draws many of its members a Revolutionary Communist Group'

Yes we were organised. RCG co throughout the country to bring a and WRP/Workers Press we org those who want a fighting, demo in the AGM.

At the joint briefing meeting the night before, called by City Group, RCG and WRP/Workers Press, David Reed presided the AGM in its wider political context. He pointed to the year of retreat in Britain, the domination of the corrupt Lab



Above: a clear message to the leadership. Right: City AA marches back to the picket

This page was compiled by Carol Brickley, Amanda Collins, Terry O'Halloran and Andy Pacey

the Scottish people. Wakefield AA, Dundee AA and Dundee RCG submitted motions which were composed, condemning the letter and its signatories. Their motion was simply worded and direct:

This AGM deplores the letter headed 'Commonwealth Games Boycott' which was signed, amongst others by Robert Hughes, Chairman of the AAM and Brian Filling, Secretary of the Scottish AAM, and published on 12.7.86 in 'The Scotsman'.

The letter urged the boycotting nations to think again as they were hurting the people of Scotland and not Mrs Thatcher.

This AGM believes that 1) in a period of mounting resistance to apartheid in South Africa both here and internationally, the boycott of the Commonwealth Games was a welcome and effective action in

'What all the proposals to change to democracy away from the members perpetuating clique of failures and'

uniting millions of people against apartheid and exposing British collaboration with the racist regime 2) the letter was an insult to the sacrifices made by the Frontline States and their millions of friends in the Commonwealth and the rest of the world.

3) for leading members of the AAM to publicly seek to undermine one of the few international actions against apartheid is disgraceful and no excuse is acceptable.

This AGM therefore condemns unreservedly the part played in this letter by two prominent members of the AAM (under clause 2c)



Stand down Bob: City Group opposes Hughes' anti-democratic manoeuvres

selves earmarked for the 'treatment'. For such a small organisation, not known to be active against apartheid or indeed anything else, the New Communist Party devotes a lot of its time to sectarian witch-hunting.

To its credit, *Socialist Worker* (17 January) actually tells the truth of what happened at the AGM. Unfortunately their sectarianism stops them from going as far as naming the organisations whose '200 delegates refused to leave the hall' and who led the fight to expose Hughes and Filling as scabs - City Group, the RCG and the WRP (Workers Press).



Bob Hughes MP: Failure and has-been

Games revealed all. The AAM leadership is already bending to the pressure of the Labour Party. When Labour is in power it will have to bend over backwards. The new constitution lays the groundwork for controlling anyone who raises objections.

Sabotage of the Commonwealth Games boycott

On 12 July 1986 the names of Bob Hughes (AAM Chair) and Brian Filling (Scottish AA Secretary) appeared as signatories to a letter in *The Scotsman* newspaper, calling on any nations considering boycotting the Commonwealth Games to reconsider in the interests of

organised AGM

City of London branch, a small but exceptionally noisy group, which had much of its inspiration from the up.' (*The Guardian*, 26 January 1987) comrades organised in City Group and activists to the AGM. With City Group organised to ensure that the voice of all democratic AAM was heard loud and clear

however, was 'a beacon of light in a bleak threatening landscape'. It is the only serious threat to the Labour Party/ Communist Party of Great Britain faction which controls the AAM. Our task is not only to keep that beacon alight but also to make it light up the whole country.

Doing this demands first of all, the defence of our basic right to distribute literature and participate fully in the AGM's proceedings. As soon as we arrived at the AGM the fight was on.

The AAM's amateur cops (dubbed stewards) - mainly drawn from the CPGB - were out in force. All credentials were minutely examined, especially those of anyone suspected of sympathy

with City Group. Delegates who had travelled hundreds of miles were caught in this and denied entry. We organised to make sure that our supporters got in. Everyone was searched, not for bombs but for banned literature. Leaflets and newspapers were confiscated. We had come prepared, however, for this. Somehow or other, FRFI, City Group leaflets and other banned material appeared in the hall. We were defeating their undemocratic ban on political literature.

As in previous years, the AAM goon squad then turned to violence and physical intimidation. Tony, a leading black comrade in City Group, was surrounded and jostled by stewards. They then tried to throw him out of the hall. Tony defended himself. The next day he was attacked a second time.

Women comrades were attacked by the mostly male AAM stewards. One

was punched in the chest, one was knocked to the ground, others were pushed and shoved around by the thugs. None of this thuggery succeeded. Right to the end of the AGM our literature was distributed in the hall.

The strength of our trend was based on democracy. At the Friday night briefing we discussed the motions and our tactics in detail. Everyone took part. Some thought we were exaggerating how vile the AAM leadership was. The next day taught everyone that we were right.

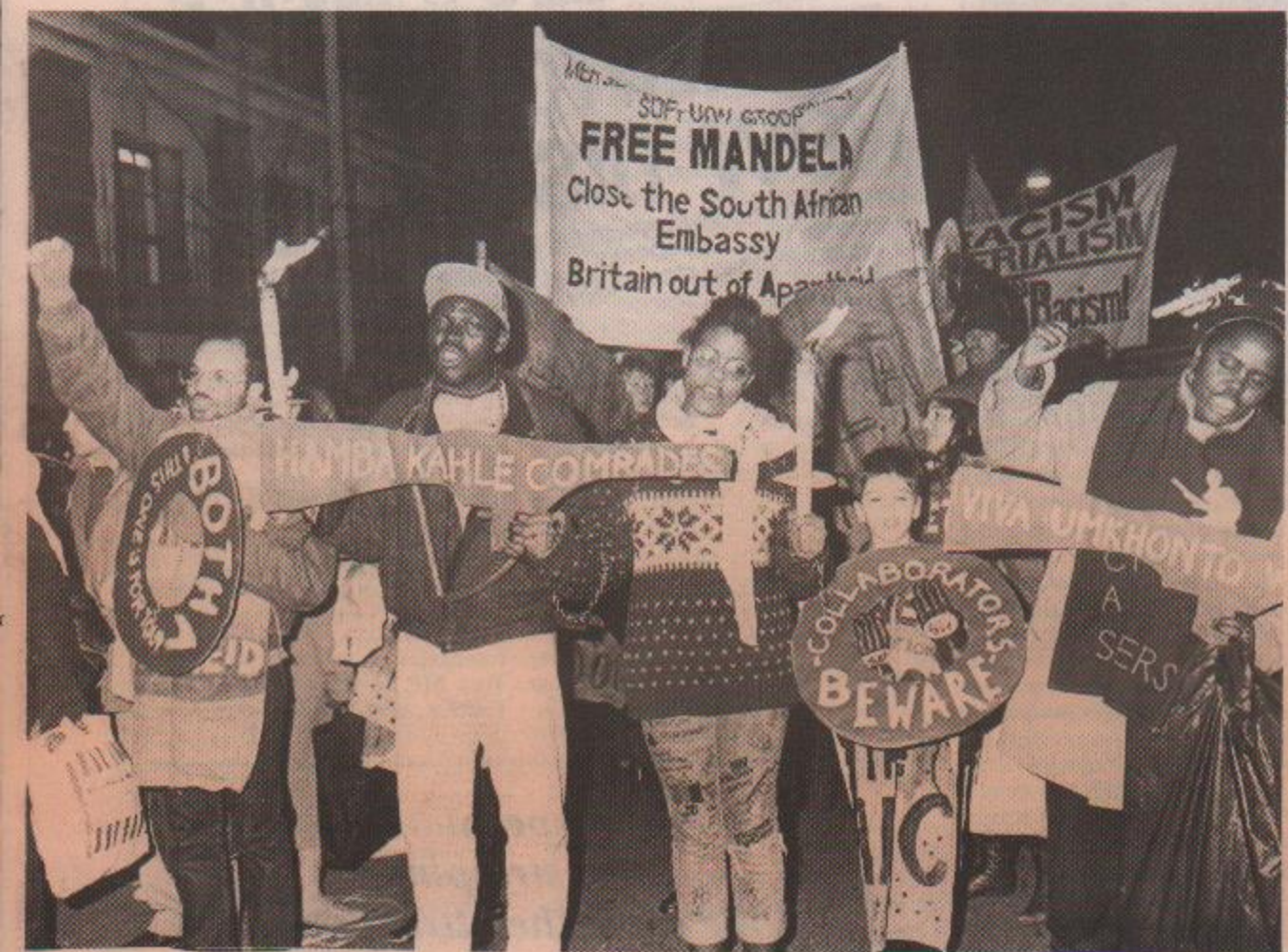
Saturday night we all gathered again, after the very successful march to the Embassy. The march had been organised to provide an opportunity for those at the AGM who wanted to build a positive movement to join us. 400 did so.

At the Saturday night meeting, delegates told of their anger at the AAM leadership's actions and their admiration for our organisation and determin-

ation. Sunday, after the AGM had ended, we met again despite attempted sabotage. The hotel where we were due to meet had received a threatening letter couched in terms similar to those used by the AAM leadership. At this meeting we decided that we would all work flat out to make 14 March a massive national success. We knew that although the AAM sectarians could win in stage-managed meetings, we would win on the streets. Those who want to fight apartheid and British collaboration will be inevitably drawn towards our trend. Indeed, during the AGM people joined City Group.

The RCG organised to expose and defeat the opportunist and corrupt forces represented by Hughes and co. The RCG organised, and will continue to organise, to ensure that the 'beacon of light' lit by the City Group trend is seen all over Britain.

THE MARCH



that the AAM could not stick firmly to the principle of no debate with apartheid because 'some of the AAM's supporters do not fully understand or support this position' (eg Bob Hughes MP).

Lo and Behold! Two days after this AGM, the *Morning Star* headline on page 12 read 'AAM: no Shell jobs will be lost'. Two days after announcing that there would be a new boycott of Shell because it fuels apartheid terror, the AAM were anxiously reassuring Shell management that 'We don't want people's livelihoods affected over here'. 'In a further attempt to minimise any adverse effect their campaign would have in Britain, the AAM also said that they would target garages which are owned by Shell and not those owned by individuals' said the *Morning Star*. It is precisely these politics which kept Barclays in business in South Africa for 25 years. And it is precisely these politics which led to the attempted sabotage of the Commonwealth Games boycott for the sake of Scotland.

Support for the Non-Stop Picket

It had not been a good AGM for Bob Hughes. He started Saturday with a humiliating retreat over his chairing. His credibility was torn to shreds in the Commonwealth Games boycott debate during which he had to remain silent for fear of being called on to account for his actions. He and his fellow leaders were determined that the motion in support of the Non-Stop Picket outside South Africa House would not be debated.

Hughes and his cohorts know only too well that in South Africa the picket is seen as a magnificent achievement in support of the struggle, that the picket raises thousands of pounds for the movement in South Africa and that many people have joined the movement in Britain as a result of its work. He was certainly not going to put the AGM in the distressing position of having to vote for or against the picket which the AAM leadership have done everything in their power to destroy. At the first opportunity he guillotined the motion.

We immediately protested and our delegation raised banners calling on Hughes to account for his scabbing. The AAM leadership had laid their plans well. While we protested the Chair called on an ANC speaker because he knew that as soon as the ANC was

Support for prisoners and detainees

The motion put by SATIS (Southern Africa - The Imprisoned Society) was passed in the face of stern criticism of the lack of activity in support of political prisoners and of the undemocratic nature of SATIS which has a restricted number of affiliates and no room for individual members. It was left to Richard Roques, speaking to the amendment proposed by City Group, to raise the question of Nelson Mandela and the other long term prisoners. Their names were absent from the SATIS motion - and he pointed out that the Free Nelson Mandela banner was being obscured by a line of AAM stewards.

One of the most disgusting items in the Finance report was that the AAM had raised no money whatsoever from the Mandela petition over the past year.

The motion welcomed the Emergency campaign against repression in South Africa. This amounted to a post-card campaign launched two weeks before the AGM, eight months after the State of Emergency began. Yet all moves to make SATIS into a real campaign by adopting an open democratic structure were blocked. The opportunists were allowed to retain their stranglehold on the movement.

Sectarianism

On the Sunday the critical issue of sectarianism came to a head during the debate on a motion from the AAM TU Committee welcoming the setting up of COSATU and encouraging all affiliates to work within the framework laid down by COSATU and SACTU. An amendment was proposed for affiliates to work within the guidelines of the AAM constitution and to support all union organisations campaigning against apartheid. Bob Myers (WRP Workers Press) made the point in supporting the amendment that the AAM had been pitifully slow in recognising the existence of COSATU, was it now going to pretend that the new TU federation (AZACTU CUSA) which represents 400,000 workers also does not exist? Andy Higginbottom of the RCG spoke of the necessity for the solidarity movement in Britain to be non sectarian, to give unconditional support to all forces fighting apartheid.

The only response that National Committee member Mike Terry could make from the platform was to say that the constitution did not state that the AAM should support all groups fighting apartheid. The RCG and other progressive groups made it clear that they condemned this sectarian position and supported unconditionally all sections of the liberation movement in South Africa. It was no surprise when few in the hall apart from our contingent stood to give an ovation, given to all other liberation movements, to Comrade Zolile Keke of the PAC.

1987 - year for sanctions

In the 75th anniversary year of the ANC, the AGM welcomed the programme of activities of the ANC and urged its members to give them every support. Another motion was passed to strengthen the movement's work on Namibia. The focus for 1987 is the campaign for sanctions, to include a March Month of Action, boycott of Shell products and a 'possible' national demonstration in October. A Manifesto for Sanctions has been produced, not available at the AGM, which will be used as part of the intervention in a general election campaign. Once more the AAM is pinning its hopes on the election of a Labour government.

This was far too simple and direct for the AAM leadership. An amendment was submitted on their behalf by the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) which was intent on fudging the real issue:

Delete the first paragraph and insert: 'This AGM totally disagrees with the letter headed 'Commonwealth Games Boycott' and published on 12.7.86 in 'The Scotsman'. Delete all after 'This AGM believes' and insert: 'This AGM believes that the letter underestimated the difficulty in separating Scotland from the deep anti-British Government feeling, misjudged how the letter would be interpreted and its effect of inadvertently relieving the pressure on the Government over its opposition to sanctions and gave support to those who seek to maintain links with South Africa.'

the constitution are about is to take ship and into the hands of a self-as-beens' Andy Higginbottom, City AA

'This AGM also places on record its appreciation of the work of the AAM Scottish Committee for its many activities, including the launching of the petition with Edinburgh District Committee "Save the Games - impose Sanctions", the demonstration against Thatcher during her visit, and the Artists Against Apartheid festival. All of these activities helped to expose the British Government's responsibility for the boycott of the Games by many Commonwealth countries and helped to compensate for the political damage done by the letter referred to.

This AGM agrees that the AAM should support any future action

taken by the Front Line States or Commonwealth countries in support of sanctions and against the attitude of the British Government.'

You are not expected to appreciate the refinements (twists and turns) of this amendment after one reading. Read it again. Dwell on the phrases 'underestimated the difficulty', 'misjudged how the letter would be interpreted', 'inadvertently relieving pressure on the Government'. These are the words that try to cover up for a plain, blunt word which describes Hughes' and Filling's activities - scabbing.

Our contributions to the debate were straightforward. David Reed of the RCG asked the AGM 'Did the National Committee instruct Hughes and Filling to sign the letter in the name of the movement?' - no answer. He pointed to the added perfidy that at the time of the letter being published two South Africans, Budd and Cowley, were still due to take part in the Games. He described the letter as sabotage, 'an attempt to forestall the only serious action against Thatcher that could have led to some change.'

The SCPS performed somersaults in their reply: the letter was signed 'at a few hours notice', 'it was an error of judgement' but Hughes' and Filling's action ensured that 'the AAM will be fully consulted in future' and 'every subsequent action should be applauded'.

John Nelson of Scottish AAM took the floor: the attacks on Hughes and Filling were coordinated by a political group, they were 'virulent', 'dishonest', the issue was 'taken out of context'. Extraordinarily 'if the truth be known, Brian Filling didn't even sign the letter'. (But then the truth isn't going to be known, is it John?, because you are making sure to cover it up.) Nelson even

claimed that the withdrawal of Budd and Cowley was a result of Scottish AA's action. Carol Brickley, City AA convenor exposed this as a shameful lie: Budd and Cowley were withdrawn because of the threatened boycott which Hughes and Filling were trying to sabotage.

Mike Terry told us that the EC was unanimous in its support for the SCPS

'How many times have you (Bob Hughes) and your colleagues in Parliament shouted at Thatcher "Resign, resign, resign". So I say to you, you the letter writer: Resign' Mike Russell, Leeds RCG

amendment - surprise, surprise. There is an area of 'confusion' he says. 'The AAM needs to formulate a clearer policy where there might be a question of retaliatory action against Britain' - not half. 'Some people think that Mrs Thatcher was hoping for a boycott of the Commonwealth Games!'. Suddenly, Hughes and Filling's action might be progressive!

The truth, or at least part of it, came from a Welsh delegate: 'Let's face it', he said, 'we are under pressure from some of our supporting organisations and affiliates [read Labour Party] to bend our principles'. 'We made a mistake'. 'This movement bends under pressure'. 'Let's pass the amendment and make sure this mistake doesn't happen again.'

Hughes and Filling were duly let off the hook with the passing of the SCPS amendment. But this was not the first time that the AAM had bent (we would say 'cast aside') its principles: in 1982 the AAM refused to boycott Rowntree products in Britain in support of the SAAWU strike in South Africa of Rowntree Wilson on the grounds that a boycott might harm British workers (remember the slogan 'Think before you eat your Kit-Kat!'). In 1985 we were told

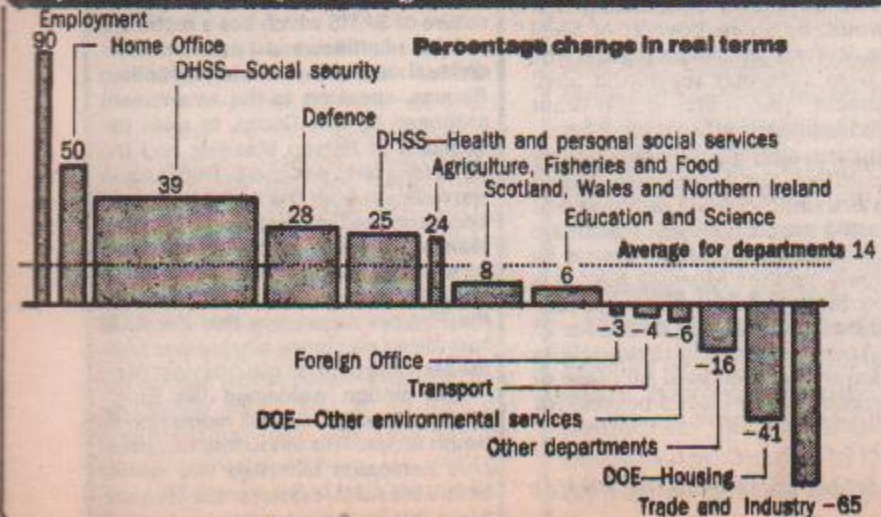
Cost cutting for the poor

By its very character the capitalist system cannot be controlled. Whatever the intentions of capitalist ministers – Tory or Labour – the laws that dictate the path of capitalist development have an inexorable logic of their own. Nothing demonstrates this better than the record of the Tory government on public expenditure. Committed to drastically cut public spending on coming into office it has in fact presided over a rise in general government expenditure of 13.7 per cent in real terms between 1979 and 1987.

Last year the Government Expenditure White Paper told us that its plans were 'designed to hold total spending broadly level in real terms'. This year's White Paper published on 14 January 1987 now speaks of 'a continued deceleration

fact that the government has only put aside £3.5bn reserves for 1987-8, £1bn less than the inadequate amount for the current year, makes government spending targets for next year scarcely more credible than those of previous years.

Departmental spending between 1978-9 and 1986-7



in the growth of public spending'. Little wonder that John MacGregor, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, took refuge in a classic piece of bureaucratic gibberish at a press conference to launch the White Paper, when he told journalists 'we have very good control over public expenditure that we can control.'

The reality is that they have very little control of a great deal of public spending even from one year to the next. The estimated outcome of the current financial year 1986-7 is about £1.3bn above the plans set out in the last White Paper (January 1986). This was made up of £5.8bn additions to the planned programme during the year compared with a reserve of £4.5bn. The main increases were in local authority spending (£2.7bn) and social security (£1.6bn). £10.2bn has already been added to the planning totals over the next two years compared with plans set out a year ago. Comparisons with the 1985 White Paper further confirm the general trend.

	Jan 85	Jan 86	Jan 87
1986-7	136.8	139.1	140.4
1987-8	141.6	143.9	148.6
1988-9	na	148.7	154.2

General government spending (excluding privatisation proceeds) is estimated at 44½ per cent of the gross domestic product for 1986-7, still above the level the government inherited in 1979. The government is, once again, hoping that it will fall below that level in the coming year. This seems unlikely. Local authority spending which accounts for the major part of the 'unplanned' increases in spending is assumed to rise by only 3.8 per cent in 1987-8, that is zero growth once inflation is taken into account. The government has also consistently underestimated the rising costs of social security payments, both in terms of the numbers eligible and the greater take up of benefit rights. There is, in reality, a great deal of spending, which, in spite of punitive legislation and penalties against local authorities and the poor and unemployed, is still out of the government's control. The

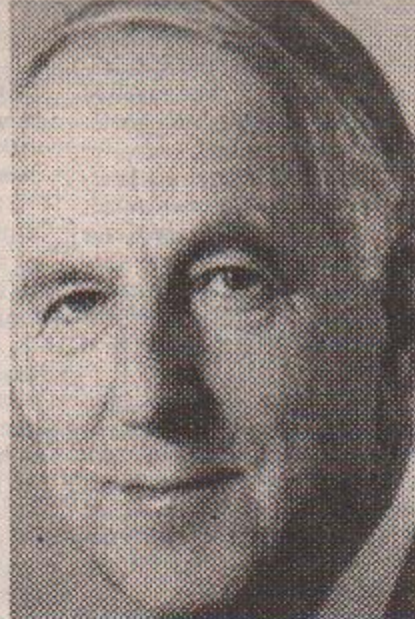
While the Tories have not been able to control overall government spending, they have clearly been able to push through their own spending priorities. Although government spending has increased by 13.7 per cent in real terms since 1979, defence spending has increased by 28 per cent and Home Office spending—law and order—by 50 per cent. The law and order budget will rise above £6bn for the first time next year. The majority of this budget £3.4bn is spent on the police, whose numbers will rise by 1,891 next year to 123,417 (116,323 in 1979-80). £756m will be spent on prisons with a rise of prison officers of just over 1,000 to 25,712 (21,229 in 1980). Two new prisons will be added to the building programme bringing the total to 20. This will still be inadequate, for the average prison population under the Tories is expected to rise to 50,700 in 1989-90 with a 'certified normal accommodation' of 45,343.

The other major increases in spending are the result of the severe recession and increasing demands on the social services. Social security spending rose by 39.4 per cent and Health and personal social services by 25 per cent. The latter rise is to meet the minimal demands of an ageing population and pay for modern technology. The Tory government's efforts to distort the unemployment figures by removing young people from the dole into cheap labour schemes is shown by the biggest rise of all in departmental spending. Between 1979 and 1987 the Department of Employment increased its spending from £2.0bn to £3.8bn, a rise of 90 per cent.

The White Paper also shows us those departments which have little or no priority for this government. Spending on housing fell by 60 per cent (41 per cent, if income from council house sales etc is included), on trade and industry by 65 per cent and on transport by 4 per cent between 1979 and 1987.

All this confirms that state expenditure has to rise even to maintain more and more people at subsistence levels. And the government is preparing for the inevitable resistance to its plans by ensuring that one of the fastest growth areas of public expenditure is that of law and order, the forces of repression to hold us down.

David Reed



Ernest Saunders — 'Pure Genius'

To turn assets into money, and to do it again and again with ever bigger sums, ever more frequently, that is the compulsion that drew the players into what has become the Guinness scandal. Share speculation, asset stripping, these are the attractions of the takeover game. The Swiss Bank Leu, the most reputable of British stockbroking firms, Cazenove, Britain's most successful merchant bank Morgan Grenfell, the governor of the Bank of England's brother-in-law, Mrs Thatcher's dinner hosts, all, and many more, are there, caught like common thieves in the beam of a flashlight.

What is one to make of a deal in which one of Britain's top three export earning firms, Guinness, arranges to pay the multimillionaire head of a British-based international conglomerate, Gerald Ronson of Heron, £5.8 million to get him to buy £25 million worth of Guinness shares, which he can sell at a profit anyway? What indeed, when this kind of arrangement is repeated many times over with dozens of accomplices across the globe, with Guinness further offering to buy back any shares bought from the purchaser, at a later date? Tempting?

Yes, indeed, if you were one of those drunk with prosperity in Thatcher's Britain, but, unfortunately for some, it is against the law. The 1985 Companies Act forbids a company from buying back its own shares or from giving any form of financial assistance for purchases of its shares, except in exceptional circumstances.

So, with the ruse rumbled a few of the players must be sacrificed for the greater good of the game. Roger Seelig, Christopher Reeves and Graham Walsh of Morgan Grenfell; Ernest Saunders, Olivier Roux, Arthur Furer and Thomas Ward of Guinness; and Lord Spens of Ansbacher merchant bank—all resigned or politely asked to leave—are pawns in a match where the big pieces set the rules.

A little bit of what you fancy . . .

'Greed is all right by the way. I want you to know that. I think greed is healthy. You can be greedy and still feel good about yourself.' *Ivan Boesky to an audience of Californian business students. September 1985.*

If it had not been for a tip-off from the US Securities and Exchange Commission to the British Department of Trade and Industry the illegalities in Guinness' competition with Argyll plc for the whisky firm Distillers would probably have never come to light.

An anonymous letter to the giant US merchant bank Merrill Lynch led the US Securities and Exchange Commission along the trail of illegal deals to David Levine, the newly-appointed director of Merrill Lynch's great rival in the merger stakes, Drexel Burnham Lambert. Fortuitous for Merrill Lynch. Levine, worth \$500 million according to the financial press, was arrested in May 1986. He sang. There is, as they say, no honour among thieves. Among those he named was Ivan Boesky, the 'king of arbitrage', speculation on mergers. A single bid by Boesky, and stock markets around the world would reverberate. Boesky and Levine were guilty of 'insider dealing'; using confidential information to make illegal bids for companies. The kind of information that could be bought. In this general spirit of commerce—'you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours'—Boesky was fined \$100 million,

City awash with Guinness

'The bourgeois, drunk with prosperity and arrogantly certain of himself, has just declared that money is a purely imaginary creation. "Commodities alone are money", he said. But now the opposite cry resounds over the markets of the world: only money is a commodity. As the hart pants after fresh water, so pants his soul after money, the only wealth'. *Karl Marx, Capital Vol 1.*

GUINNESS REPORT FOR EMPLOYEES
MAY 1986

MOMENTOUS YEAR! NOW DISTILLERS!

COMBINED GROUP RANKS IN TOP 10 UK COMPANIES | TURNOVER TOTALS £3 BILLION | EMPLOYEES NUMBER 35,000 | EMPHASIS NOW ON PERFORMANCE

agreed to name names, and went free. Among the names was Guinness.

Ernest Saunders, 'Deadly Ernest' or 'Pure Genius' as the press would have him, the chairman of Guinness, and his team hatched a plot to snatch the scotch whisky firm Distillers from Argyll plc. Argyll had announced its intention of bidding for Distillers towards the end of 1985. Guinness would spend millions of pounds orchestrating the purchase of its own shares as it bid for Distillers. As the price of Guinness shares inexorably rose due to the artificially and illegally stimulated demand, Distillers' shareholders

1986 some £270 million worth of Guinness shares had been purchased through illegal operations. Distillers cost £2.7 billion, and Argyll had spent £55 million and got nothing.

All of this money produced not a single bottle of stout or a single glass of whisky. Pure parasitism! A retinue of banks, brokers, lawyers, advertising companies, private detectives and (if a Tory MP adviser to Argyll, Sir Alex Fletcher, is to be believed) professional thugs all took their cut. But none were

'Share speculation, asset stripping, these are the attractions of the takeover game.'

would be fatally lured to surrender to Guinness. Set a thief to catch a thief. By the time it claimed victory on 18 April

A few of the beneficiaries

Gerald Maurice Ronson—a busy man with a fortune estimated at £500 million and 110 directorships in concerns spanning oil, gas, garages, hotels and insurance. Received £5.8 million

Sir Jack Lyons—City financier paid £2 million for his 'valuable advisory services'. Sir Jack was the British agent for Bain and Company, management consultants to Guinness. He recently hosted a private dinner party at Bain's company headquarters in London for Mrs Thatcher. Bain's received £8 million a year fees.

Ivan Boesky—a man able to pay a £100 million fine and still smile about it. Received \$100 million from Guinness, how much of it was a 'fee' he would not say; thought to have spent £70 million on Guinness shares.

Lord Spens of Ansbacher merchant bank—£7.6 million went through Ansbacher and back into Guinness share purchases.

Bank Leu—£50 million was deposited with this Swiss bank run by Saunders' old friend Arthur Furer. Leu now own 41 million Guinness shares.

Anthony Parnes—City stockbroker received £3 million for his 'key advice', a sum, he says, which reflects its 'true value'.

so critical to the success of Saunders' scheme as Guinness' merchant bank Morgan Grenfell, and stockbrokers, Cazenove. Together with Saunders' team they would make the contacts, arrange the credits and payments, and sell the Guinness shares.

Morgan Grenfell's earnings are estimated to have risen ten fold in the last ten years. It is doubtful whether they have the time to count it all up as they spin fortunes out of 32 mergers they have directed in the past few years. Sir Terence Conran of Habitat-Mothercare, Sir Jeffrey Sterling of P and O, and Sir Owen Greene of BTR, as well as Mr Saunders, all have reason to be thankful of Morgan Grenfell's way with money. Interestingly enough, it was Morgan Grenfell's combination with Cazenove that served Sikorsky-Fiat in its successful bid for Westland helicopters early in 1986. Swiss banking laws and stock exchange regulations were successfully used to conceal the identities of the crucial bidders in the race for Westlands. A not unuseful asset to the Guinness plan. Plus the fact that one of Cazenove's two senior partners is the brother-in-law of the governor of the Bank of England.

Now, a handful of the conspirators in the Guinness scandal have been named. They are the unlucky ones, but, like Boesky, few, if any at all, will see a prison wall. Any capitalist will tell you, 'If you are going to steal, steal millions', or better still, hundreds of millions.

Trevor Rayne

Reagan unrepentant

Oblivious to it all he may be, but the Irangate scandal continues to secrete a steady trickle of poison right up to Ronald Reagan's White House door. A Presidential memorandum dated 17 January 1986 makes it unmistakable that Reagan intended to trade arms to Iran for hostages. A fact he has repeatedly denied. The air freight company employed by Lieutenant Colonel Oliver North to fly arms to the contras was used to smuggle cocaine back from Central America into the US. A whole gang of US army colonels and generals are discovered to have been shipping arms to Iran — under loose or no authorisation whatsoever! Key figures in the Irangate affair are linked to assassination attempts on Eden Pastora, a renegade from contra ranks. And Oliver North proposed firing a cruise missile at Damascus.

These and many similar details did not figure in President Reagan's 28 January State of the Union speech. In fact, the only reference he made to the Irangate affair was to express 'regret' that 'it did not work'. Reagan's team have decided that they can get away with stonewalling on the scandal, while offering North and former National Security Adviser Poindexter as sacrifices. The Democrats seem content to have reined Reagan in, and to allow the scandal to stain the Republican's reputation. Neither economically nor internationally is the US ruling class in a position to afford a bitter wrangle: 'A weakened President serves no one. A strong President serves us all' as the leader of the Democrats in the Senate put it.

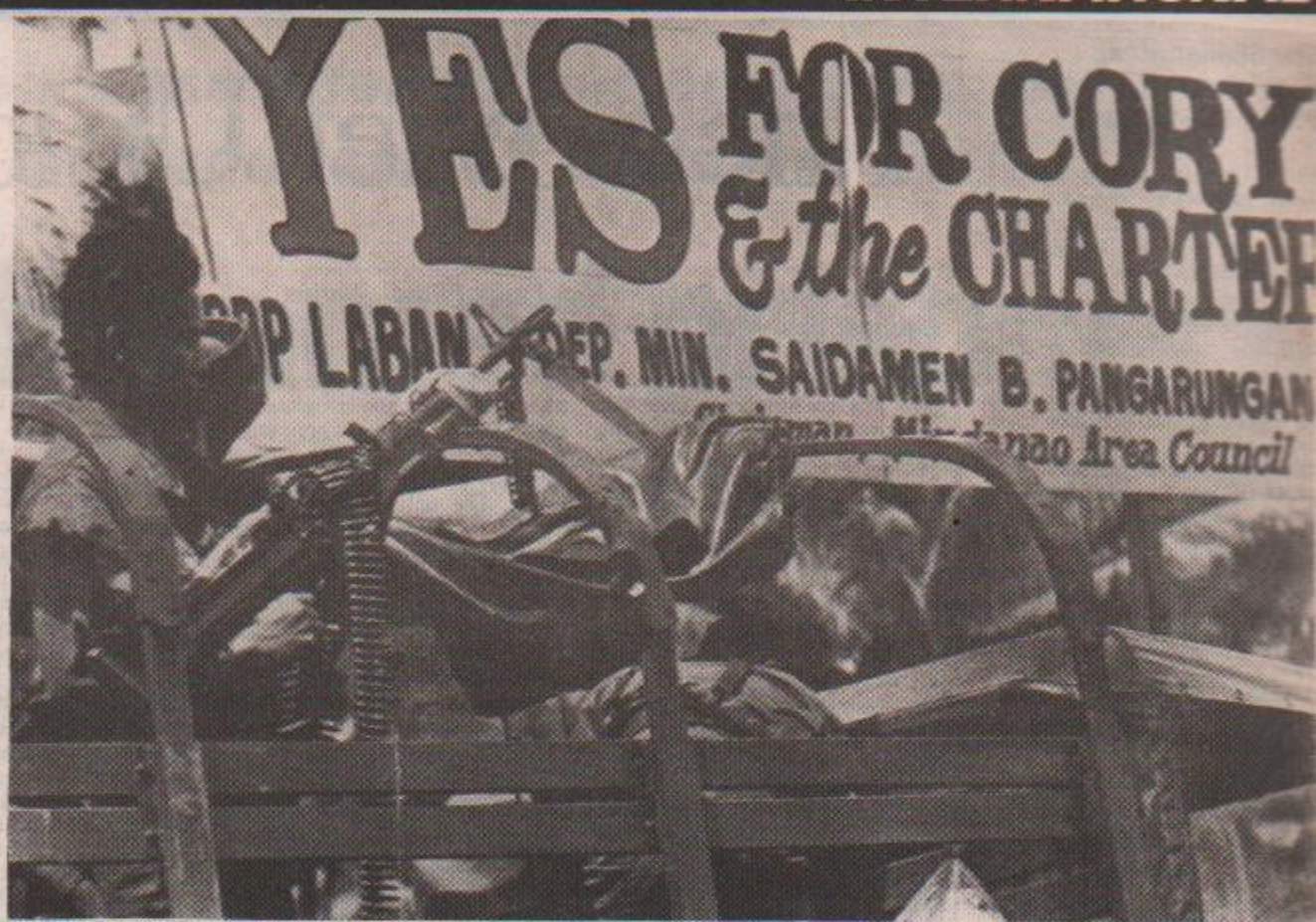
Apart from its tired reiteration of 'Its morning in America' theme, (the man clearly has problems waking up,) and its omissions, Reagan's 28 January speech was noticeable for its adherence to two cornerstones of Reagan policy: the defence of Star Wars, and support for the contras: 'I will fight any effort to shut-off their lifeblood... There must be no Soviet beachhead in Central America'. The proposed 1988 US budget increases spending on Star Wars by 62 per cent, and raises contra funding to \$105 million. The first major test of the new Democrat-led Congress comes this February when the final allocation of \$40 million to the contras, from last year's total of \$100 million, is due to be ratified and forwarded. This money is earmarked for heavy weaponry, including ground-to-air missiles.

Whatever the Democrats and Congress decide, Reagan's policy on Nicaragua is losing credibility. On 1 December Honduran President Azcona

met the US ambassador and secured an agreement that the contras must be out of Honduras and fighting in Nicaragua by May. This move comes in response to growing antagonism towards the contras from Honduran coffee plantation owners, whose crops are being destroyed, sections of the Honduran military, who are loathe to commit their forces to an all-out confrontation with the Sandinistas, and from popular feeling against the gangsters from the mass of Central American people. At the same time the governments of Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica are resentful that US contra aid is growing while theirs is being cut. In this context the ranks of the contras have parted yet again, with two of the United Nicaragua Opposition leaders, Arturo Cruz and Alfonso Robelo, resigning in complaint against FDN domination. Cruz and Robelo are sponsored by the US State Department, the FDN, composed of Somoza guards, is sponsored by the CIA. Above all the contras have failed to achieve any significant military or political successes inside Nicaragua.

US imperialist strategists understand that they must get results quickly if Reagan's policy is to retrieve any credibility. 100 contras have just returned to Honduras from training in Florida, 300 more are due to follow. US forces have recently launched Big Pine '87 manoeuvres along the Honduran border with Nicaragua. As one US official supervising contra operations observed, 'It's ironic, but five years of backing the contras has really come down to what we can do in the next five months'.

Trevor Rayne



Guarding the 'Yes' vote: Filipino soldier in the left-wing stronghold of Mindanao

Aquino massacres peasants

The pathetic attempt at a military coup in the Philippines by pro-Marcos loyalists ended miserably 3 days after it began on Tuesday 27 January. The overwhelming majority of the army and ruling class remained loyal to President Aquino and her backbone, General Fidel Ramos, Chief of Staff of the country's armed forces. With good reason they see in the alliance of these two a better guardian of capitalist and imperialist interests than those hankering after a return to a Marcosite dictatorship.

Aquino has promised 'stern' measures against the rebel officers. But so far none have been charged. Three senior officers have been arrested, with the promise of more and 25 'investigating commissions' set up! Meanwhile both Aquino and Ramos have emphasised the need for army unity to respond to the mounting mobilisation of the Filipino working class and peasantry. For it is from the oppressed and exploited that the Filipino ruling class faces its greatest danger, a danger that is dealt with by bullets.

In one of the most brutal massacres for a decade, marines guarding Aquino's presidential palace opened fire on a demonstration by 10,000 peasants and their supporters, just five days before the aborted coup, on Thursday 22 January. In what was a peaceful march demanding genuine land reform, 25 people were killed and scores more

were wounded. The 10,000 demonstrators represented a class of millions who are not prepared to passively wait on Aquino's promises. They are organising and mobilising now for radical land reform to relieve them of grinding exploitation and poverty. Their demands Aquino is neither willing nor able to meet. Indeed those who organised the killings remain free while the masses are asked to remain 'calm' and await the conclusions of an 'independent inquiry'.

As the organisation and mobilisation of the masses for fundamental social change has become more effective, so has Aquino become more stubborn in her defence of bourgeois and imperialist interests. Before the 22 January massacre, Aquino's constitutional commission barred the revolutionary Partido ng Bayan (PNB) from forthcoming congressional elections on the grounds that

its 'language of class struggle' was 'inconsistent' with republicanism. Days after, leaked tapes exposed Aquino personally pressuring the commission to delete clauses banning US nuclear bases from the Philippines.

Meanwhile, during the course of negotiations between Aquino and the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), following the 60 days ceasefire agreement, Aquino has refused to meet any of the basic requirements for a just and lasting peace. She has refused to discuss NDF proposals for purging fascist military, repudiating the burden of some foreign debt, nationalisation of key industries, radical land reform, removal of US bases and the release of all political prisoners including Rodolfo Salas a top CPP leader.

Recent developments in the Philippines are increasingly exposing Aquino's pro-capitalist and pro-imperialist standpoint. The principled organisational and political work of the NDF and CPP will inevitably draw wider sections of the masses, including larger and larger sections of those who had illusions in Aquino, into the revolutionary camp. The NDF has now broken off talks with the Aquino government and warned in a statement published after the 22 January massacre that:

'If the Cory Aquino government continues to tread the course it is now taking, it shall be on a collision with the advancing people's movement.'

Eddie Abrahams

New York march

New York City under the administration of Mayor Ed Koch, a right-wing Democrat has seen the emergence of racist attacks at a new level. There were the 'vigilante' shootings of three black men by Bernhard Goetz, the police killing of Eleonor Bumpers and Michael Stewart, and murderous assaults in the Bronx on young Latinos by white gangs.

On 20 December, 23 year old Michael Griffith and two friends were attacked and hunted down by a white gang in the Queens area of the City. One of the gang was British. Michael was run down by a car at the end of the chase and his body dumped on the pavement near Howard Beach.

Such was the anger of the black community that even moderate black political figures were forced to join with the recently-formed Coalition Against Racially Motivated Violence in calling for a march of protest. Blacks, whites, Latinos, Asians and Arabs joined a 2000-strong march chanting, 'Howard Beach, haven't you heard, this is not Johannesburg.'

Further demonstrations are now planned and ideas put forward for a selective economic boycott.

Susan Davidson

Israeli repression at first hand

Below we publish some notes from our correspondent in Palestine describing scenes of resistance and repression in the 'Israeli' occupied Gaza Strip. As in South Africa, Ireland and indeed among the oppressed in Britain, youth, the dispossessed youth in Palestine, occupy a central role in the struggle against Zionism, racism and imperialism.

During the week of demonstrations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip following the killing of 2 Gazan students on 5 December 1986 at Bir Zeit University (on the West Bank), a small boy was seen walking in time with a 4 man foot patrol. Suddenly the boy started swinging his arms and legs higher, mimicking the 'Israeli' soldiers, with a big grin on his face. This boy's defiance was ignored. But many other protests were put down with violence — the use of live ammunition, rubber bullets, wooden clubs, tear gas and CS gas. An army camp was used as an improvised detention centre where detainees were severely beaten and humiliated.

The demonstrations throughout the Gaza Strip were spontaneous, triggered off by the murder of 3 young Palestinians at Bir Zeit and Balatta Camp. There were protests every day for a week in each of the 8 camps and in Gaza town, often beginning at local secondary schools and moving then into the

camps. A commercial strike was held for 6 days from 6 December 1986 and school students refused to attend classes. Gazans say they hadn't seen mass protests like this since the early seventies.

On Tuesday 9 December, about 800 students assembled in the playgrounds of a boys and a girls school serving the Jabalya Camp when army reinforcements arrived and surrounded the school.

Provoked by their presence and the previous arrests of their classmates, the students stoned the soldiers. Plastic bullets and CS grenades were fired into the playgrounds. An armoured vehicle broke down a section of the wall near the main entrance to the girl's school. The students, many of whom were suffering from the effects of CS powder ran into the classrooms. Soldiers then forced entry into the classrooms and lobbed more CS grenades. The boys ran into their own school and were chased in



Palestinian students demonstrate

by soldiers beating them with wooden batons. One eye-witness reported seeing a soldier beating a student's head against the wall, and another reported an impression of 'blood everywhere'.

An estimated 20 arrests were made. Another 20 or so had their ID cards confiscated effectively (as with pass laws in South Africa) confining them to their homes since it is an offence for a Palestinian to go out without an ID. It has been difficult to get exact numbers of injured since victims are afraid to go to hospital for fear of arrest. Fifteen of the most seriously injured were taken to hospital. Upwards of 50 boys came to school the following Saturday with ban-

dages on their heads.

In an incident at the UNRWA Girls Preparatory School in Beni Suheila near Khan Younis on 10 December, 'Israeli' soldiers bombarded 450 girls aged 9-14 with what the girls first believed to be tear gas grenades. The youths had been throwing stones at soldiers on the road at the junction outside the school and then retreating and hiding. But instead of tear gas, the soldiers fired CS grenades in rapid succession into the girl's playground. In panic they fled into the classrooms. Then an UNRWA medical team arrived at the school (soldiers fired another cannister after giving the team permission to enter) and found that 200 of the girls had collapsed. 21 of the cannisters collected in the playground were found on examination to contain CS powder used by NATO in its battlefield training.

Acts of violence such as these perpetrated by the 'Israeli' army were not isolated incidents but were widespread throughout the Gaza Strip.

In the next issue of FRFI we will publish further notes on conditions in the army camp used as a detention centre and a political commentary from our correspondent.

The Stalker Affair
Frank Doherty. Mercier Press. £3.95 90pp.

Frank Doherty's book argues that John Stalker was silenced by MI5 because his 'shoot-to-kill' report threatened to expose British Intelligence activities in Ireland.

Stalker's inquiry into the killing of Seamus Grew and Roddy Carroll led him first to MI5's part in cross-border operations and then on to their campaign of subversion in the 26 counties. Doherty briefly covers the history of bombings, shootings and kidnappings organised by British Intelligence in the South with a view to eliminating activists and discrediting the Republican movement. But he claims that Stalker uncovered new information about the 'Badger', a senior Garda officer who is a long-standing British agent, and MI5 plots to discredit Irish politicians.

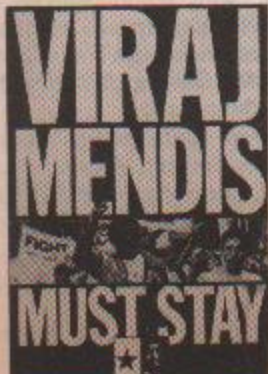
Although it's a bit pricey for just 90 pages this book is a good introduction to British covert operations in Ireland.

Jim O'Rourke

from **LARKIN PUBLICATIONS**

South Africa: Britain out of Apartheid! Apartheid out of Britain!

by Carol Brickley, Terry O'Halloran and David Reed
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published by VMDC,
edited by Terry O'Halloran
32pp, 75p plus 30p p&p

Ireland: the key to the British Revolution
by David Reed
450pp, £3.95 plus 75p p&p

Miners' Strike 1984-1985: People versus State
by David Reed and Olivia Adamson
144pp, £2.50 plus 40p p&p

The revolutionary road to communism in Britain
(Manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist Group)
175pp, £1.50 plus 40p p&p

POWs News and Birthdays

The following Irish political prisoners have birthdays coming soon. We ask all our readers to write to them, preferably recorded delivery to ensure that they receive your greetings.

John McComb, B51715, HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 5TZ, 25 February.

Ella O'Dwyer, D251135, HM Prison, Durham, DH1 3HU. 3 March.

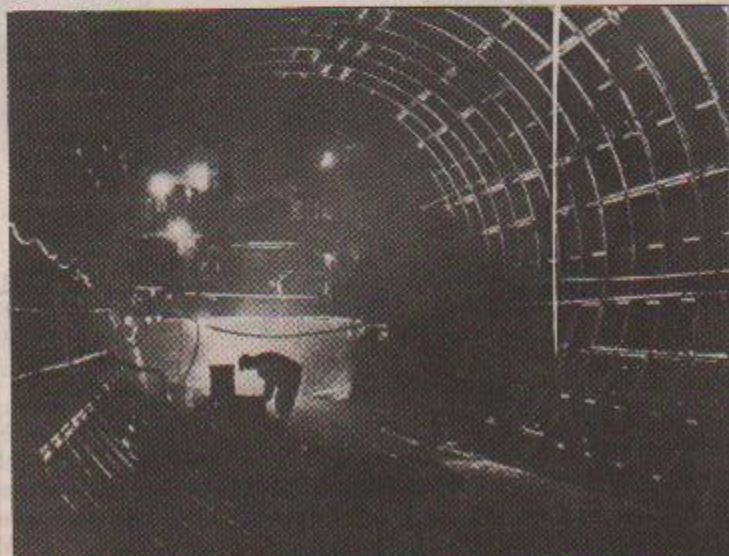
The following prisoners have been moved over the last two months. Hugh Doherty has been sent from Wakefield to Liverpool and is now back in Wakefield; Sean Kinsella, Wakefield to Manchester and on to Albany; Con McFadden, Wakefield to Frankland; and Vince Donnelly, who has been moved numerous times throughout 1986 and was sent to Durham for 28 days, having spent weeks in each of the Scrubs and Wandsworth. He is now due to be moved again. Our solidarity to these and all the prisoners.

Tony Sheridan

The Soviet Union

The Soviet Union Demystified. Frank Füredi. Junius Publications. 1986. £5.95 pb. 271pp.

Despite the unquestionable advantages of a 'not merely historical, but historical-logical' approach (p3), the author cannot make up his mind whether the Soviet Union represents a '... system which has exhausted all its possibilities for social advance ...' (p76) runs the danger that it '... is left with all the disadvantages and none of the advantages of capitalism.' (p101) or whether it already has succumbed to this danger and has become historically bankrupt (p200) and past its peak (p233).



Moscow Underground under construction in 1936

Füredi has an academic economist's obsession with the regulators and mechanisms of the planning process, which leads him to claim that '... only in the Soviet Union is there absolutely no way of ensuring that the products of industry are useful to others.' (p130). An extraordinary claim, given the immense advances made by the Soviet Union - the increase in the provision of health services (proportionally, twice as many doctors as in Britain, 50% more hospital beds - see *The USSR in Figures for 1984* Moscow 1985 pp80, 81), the finest public transport system in the world, and an extensive flat-building programme (2m units in 1984, with rent fixed at 3% of the working people's family budget - *ibid* pp211, 212).

The author includes a wealth of

statistics and newspaper reports to highlight the economic failures of the USSR, but makes only one grudging reference to its social achievements, a sentence in a book of 271 pages. The only achievement he admits to be spectacular is - the Moscow Underground (p119)!

He also dismisses the most striking success of the Soviet Union, full employment since 1932, with the cheap comment: 'Workers in the slave camps of Nazi Germany and on the estates of feudal Europe were fully employed, but nobody would

argue that these systems were superior to modern capitalism.' (p251). Only a middle-class academic could dream up such a distorted historical comparison between social systems in which people exist with no hope of rising above starvation level and a system in which full employment goes hand in hand with a rising standard of living.

Not only does the author show complete ignorance of the achievements of the Soviet system, he even argues that the USSR only continues to exist by grace and favour of imperialism. Thus one of the book's 'central themes' is that '... the survival of the Soviet Union has depended on developments in the West.' (p 163). Does the author include in such 'developments' the 25m Soviet citizens killed as a result of the wars

of intervention (1918-21) and the war against fascism (1941-45)?

Despite the book's sub-title, 'A Materialist Analysis', it completely ignores the material realities of Soviet history. This is the attempt to build socialism in a country in which at the time of the revolution 80% of the population were peasants; and which has suffered from major imperialist intervention.

At the end of the Civil War (1921) overall industrial production was 31% of the 1913 figure, and the grain harvest 43% of the pre-war average (see: Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR* 1969 p86). The war against fascism destroyed a large part of the industrial and transport system, and left 25m homeless. The author makes fleeting references to these events, not to underscore the USSR's achievement in building socialism despite such tremendous setbacks, but in order to support his 'theory' that the USSR is dominated by the party bureaucracy.

Following the general line of Trotsky and his followers, the author completely undervalues the effect of the military pressure of imperialism upon the development of the Soviet Union. In his main work on the subject, *Revolution Betrayed* (1936) Trotsky repeated the argument he had used several times previously: 'Military intervention is a danger. The intervention of cheap goods in the baggage trains of a capitalist army would be an incomparably greater one.' (Pathfinder 1973 edition p9).

At this time military intervention was not just 'a danger' - the Soviet Union was completely isolated internationally, facing an invasion by Nazi Germany in the west and a border war with Japan in the east. The immediate problem was to defend the Soviet Union militarily against imperialist intervention, which aimed at the complete destruction of socialism, not at undermining socialism by providing 'cheap goods'. These essential military priorities caused major distortions in the system of socialist planning.

Despite his minor criticisms, Füredi essentially accepts Trotsky's position. The arms race is only 'the most striking example of the way the deployment of Soviet resources is circumscribed by the capitalist world.' (p175). As with Trotsky, even this is merely a token reference.

pointer to the future. It has three main components. The story of an Afro-Caribbean family, the Baptistes, interwoven with scenes of resistance and protest in a Britain in capitalist crisis and a dramatic dialogue between a black man and black woman set in an isolated and devastated landscape. The family episodes confront us with the issues of women and of gays - the daughter seen asserting herself against male chauvinism, her brother seen living an 'ordinary' happy relationship with his unemployed boyfriend. We are given a series of vivid vignettes of their family life. These scenes subtly connect to the explosive drama in the desert landscape where the woman challenges the man's attempts to define the limits/arena of political struggle. But this loses force through over-intellectualising and narrowing the scope of the challenge.

The most exciting aspect of the film is the footage of the struggles of all those exploited and oppressed by a system in crisis. We see women giving a lead in Grunwick or at Greenham, grassroots black community struggles like the Colin Roach marches, the Newham 7 and Justice for the Poyces protests, to last years Lesbian and Gay Pride march and the struggles of the miners, and of the risings of 1985.

This film speaks of a new generation asking questions about the way forward in racist, imperialist Britain in the 80s. It recognises implicitly the necessity for alliance with others in struggle. Perhaps we could have done with more passion and less intellectualising. But this film is a real beginning. See it!

Kayode Olafamihan

Thus he ascribes the difficulties of the Soviet Union in increasing the productivity of labour and improving the quality of goods, especially consumer goods, to - the 'bureaucracy'.

These difficulties do exist, but their primary cause is the pressure of imperialism. Military armaments are a crushing burden on the Soviet economy, not simply in quantitative terms, but also in terms of priority. The best resources, both human and material, are drained off into arms production. The problems of quality control and technological innovation which affect the rest of Soviet industry do not occur here, where from the 1941-45 war onwards, the Soviet Union has shown that it can match and, on occasions excel, the capitalist world.

Füredi also minimises the role played by the Soviet Union in the struggle against imperialism. He cites the numerous occasions where the USSR has not helped revolutionary movements, while 'occasionally' backing 'radical challenges' to the 'world order' ('imperialism) in the case of Cuba, Vietnam and Angola. Yet the balance overall is quite

clear. The support of the USSR was decisive in the Vietnamese national liberation movement's struggle for power; in bringing to power socialism in East European countries; and in the case of Afghanistan, China (from 1949-60), Cuba, Ethiopia, Vietnam in maintaining revolutionary regimes in power. 'Cuba alone is being subsidised to the tune of 3 billion dollars a year, and Western intelligence estimates suggested that, in the 1970s the cost to the Soviet Union of supplying subsidised oil to Eastern Europe had exceeded 20 billion dollars. Non-military aid to Vietnam alone was approaching to 2 billion dollars a year in 1974 ...' (Martin Walker, *The Awakening Giant*, p108).

In his conclusion, the author counsels 'Marxists' to learn that the Soviet Union should serve 'as a grim reminder of the price to be paid for failing to carry through the revolutionary transformation of society.' (p252). The reviewer found this book a 'grim reminder' of the mystifications of academic Marxism and of the ignorant anti-Soviet prejudice prevalent among Trotskyists.

Patrick Newman

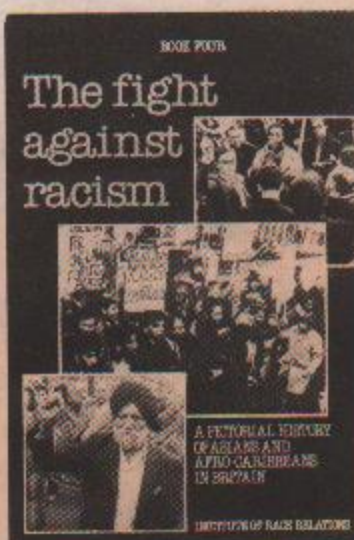
Fighting racism

The Fight Against Racism. A Pictorial History of Asians and Afro-Caribbeans in Britain. Institute of Race Relations. £3.50. 48pp.

After the Soweto uprising in 1976, black people in Britain demonstrated in solidarity outside South Africa House. After Enoch Powell's racist speech in 1968, 7000 marched in protest. A picket of Harlesden police station in 1976 demanded an end to racist police attacks - one banner read 'Hands Off Black People - Hands Off the Irish'.

With striking photographs, *The Fight Against Racism* depicts these and other struggles: campaigns against bussing, against colour bars in pubs, against racism in schools. The historic Grunwick strike led by an Asian woman, Mrs Desai, is only one of a number of struggles depicted, all led and inspired by black women. One in particular shows black women with hatchets ready to defend their homes from the racists during the 1956 Notting Hill race-attacks.

From the 1964 visit of Martin Luther King to the uprisings and



anti-deportation, anti-fascist campaigns of the 80s, the pamphlet is a powerful documentation of black resistance in Britain.

Against Racism and Fascism in Europe. Socialist Group. European Parliament. 47 pp. Free from 2 Queen Anne's Gate. London SW1.

This pamphlet usefully covers the activities of fascist and racist groups in Europe. Notably the 'safehousing' network which enables fascists

Deportations and Removals. Paul Gordon. Runnymede Trust. £1.50. 60pp.

Paul Gordon's foreword states that the pamphlet is intended to 'provide information to those involved in campaigns around specific issues, to anti-racists and to those concerned with the injustices and harshness of current immigration law and control.' The pamphlet does this. Although not new, the information is valuable and relevant and, apart from the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign pamphlet and 'The Right to Be Here', constitutes the only advice on resisting the immigration controls. It gives concise and accurate information on the successive acts and their import. Most importantly Paul Gordon gives examples of the campaigns and fightbacks which have taken place, including that of Babit Bakhtaura who stood in the 1983 General election under the demand of 'Stop the



Deportation of Black People'. He won. So have others who have fought.

Those who haven't already got hold of Paul Gordon's pamphlet should do so now.

Gary Clapton

The force of black film

An East End Story. Handsworth Songs. The Passion of Remembrance.

These are three new films from the black independent film industry making a major impact in Britain and abroad.

Of the three, *An East End Story* is the least 'experimental'. It is a simple and effective account of one Asian youth's experience of racist attacks in the east end of London and the consequences of fighting back in racist imperialist Britain. In one particularly forceful scene, not only is the reality of racist attacks brought home as the youth's mother hides terrified in their cramped and squalid house but also the hostility and indifference of the police to their predicament.

This half-hour long story distils many essential features of the experience of working class Asian families in a terse and vivid way. I look forward to more.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of *Handsworth Songs*. This film uses a more documentary technique, juxtaposing archive footage of images of black people arriving in Britain with interviews with the black communities in Handsworth about the 1985 uprising, all set with-

in the framework of reciting, anonymous voices. Parts of the film include some striking sequences - a black man chanting down the police and Maggie Thatcher; black youths berating a Labour MP for failing to present the black community's case on television. However, the film loses by its lack of structure and its tendency away from the concrete to the abstract and pseudo-philosophical. One typical example comes when we are told 'last night an idea became a possibility'. Who had the idea, what it or the possibility was, is never revealed. Such self-important meanderings serve only to distance us from rather than engage us more immediately in the film.

It is strange that after a major clash between the state and black people from which emerged no effective defence campaign and left 600 imprisoned, a major black film which deals with these events should have divorced itself not only from the process of struggle that preceded the rising, but also its aftermath.

The Passion of Remembrance is an assessment of past black struggle, an expression of the present and a

Birmingham Six case referred to Court of Appeal, but no action on Maguires and Guildford Four

Free all framed prisoners



'If the six men win, it will mean that the police were guilty of perjury, that they were guilty of violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary ...'

On 21 January the Home Secretary announced his long awaited decision to refer the case of the Birmingham 6 back to the Court of Appeal. At the same time Hurd announced that there would be no reopening of the Guildford 4 and Maguire family cases. He justified this on the spurious and misleading grounds that while new evidence had come to light in the Birmingham case this was not so in the other two cases. In fact sufficient evidence of a frame up has existed in all three cases for many years now and has been common knowledge in the Irish community. By handing the Birmingham hot potato to the Court of Appeal Hurd has done the bare minimum he could possibly get away with.

There are no guarantees that the Court of Appeal will now release the six. Only continuing public interest and mobilisation will force them to grant the demands of the six for a new jury trial. Even more will be needed to crack government intransigence on the Guildford and Maguire cases.

In the case of the Birmingham 6, after a fifteen month review, the pressure on the Home Office to act had simply become irresistible. Not only was the forensic evidence on which the convictions were based totally discredited but last month a former police officer emerged to substantiate the men's testimony of beatings and intimidation in custody. A substantial public and media lobby in support of the six had built up both in Ireland and Britain. Hurd and the government have therefore acted to minimise damage, calculating that to do

nothing would be more politically damaging than to take the risk of exposing a frame-up in which the police, the Home Office and the judiciary are all implicated.

Steering a safe path through the numerous storms reopening the case will involve, will be very difficult for the Establishment. As Chris Mullin, author of *Error of Judgement* wrote after Hurd's announcement:

'To admit that the men convicted of the biggest murder in British history are innocent is to accept that a world record quantity of perjury was committed at their trial; that the forensic evidence was mistaken; and that the judicial system has been bent from top to bottom to achieve and sustain these results.'

It will also show the extent of police bru-

tality (and of police perjury - more than 20 officers testified at the trial that no policeman had assaulted the six) and the cynical connivance of governments, both Labour and Tory, in the continuing imprisonment of six innocent men.

Already in the press Lord Denning (now safely retired) is being criticised for the extraordinary judgement he used in 1980 to stop the six suing the police for beating them up in custody. He said:

'If the six men win, it will mean that the police were guilty of perjury, that they were guilty of violence and threats, that the confessions were involuntary ... and that the convictions were erroneous ... This is such an appalling vista that every sensible person in the land would say "It cannot be right that these actions should go any further".'

This judgement which basically says that not justice but expediency dictates legal practice, has been known to the reporters and others now criticising for years. But now that the wind has changed direction it can safely be criticised and made known to a wider public.

For the Guildford 4 and the Maguire family the situation is even more difficult. Those involved in their frame-up are still securely lodged in top Establishment positions. Sir Michael Havers, now the longest-serving Attorney General

this century, was the Chief Prosecutor against the Guildford 4. Moreover for the Home Office and the Appeal Court to be able to keep any credibility, they must be able to argue that if the Birmingham 6 case was 'a miscarriage of justice' then it was an isolated one. How could they sustain this fiction if not only the six but also the Guildford 4 and the Maguires - 17 people in all - were all shown to be frame-up victims? To admit this would be to admit that a systematic policy of denying all rights and all justice to Irish people had been adopted by the courts of this country and sanctified in such legislation as the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

To avoid this 'appalling vista' the Home Office has used the convenient fiction of 'new evidence' to separate the Birmingham 6 from the Guildford 4 and the Maguire cases. It is a manoeuvre that they must not be allowed to get away with. Now can be seen the full tragedy of the needless winding up of the campaign for the Guildford 4. The Guildford 4 have served the equivalent of a seventeen year sentence. The Maguires and their relatives have had their lives effectively wrecked by the frame-up. It is now up to all those who know the truth to combine to ensure that *all the framed prisoners* are released.

Maxine Williams



The campaign against the Anglo-Irish Agreement is facing problems

Two faces of Loyalism

Despite the New Year's Day bonfires, lit as a symbol of continuing loyalist opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, their campaign has yet to spark any reaction from the British government. At the moment the 'Grand' petition to the Queen demanding a referendum plus a publicity campaign against the Agreement are all the campaign consists of. Even the much-vaunted refusal to hold council meetings as a form of protest looks set to crumble in the face of court cases and possible fines.

But behind the constitutional protests the usual loyalist menace and terror are still at work. Last year 1,100 families were driven from their homes by loyalist terror. No doubt door-to-door canvassing for their petition will be another method of intimidation.

The less constitutional side of loyalist politics was also revealed at the Dublin trial of Peter Robinson, Paisley's Deputy in the DUP. Last year he led a mob of 300 in an invasion of Clontibret, in the Twenty Six Counties. Evidence in court showed that physical brutality, criminal damage and mass terror was inflicted on the small town. A gardai was beaten severely and the mob only dispersed by shots.

The case could have provided an excellent opportunity to teach bully-boy Robinson a lesson. Typically, the court made a deal with Robinson and he pleaded guilty to one charge thus having the other eleven dropped. He was fined a miserable £15,000 for illegal assembly - less than the cost of the damage done and far less than the cost of bringing him to the feeble justice of the Irish ruling class. The judge withdrew even his very mild criticism of Robinson as an extrem-



Peter Robinson

ist. Murderous gangs of loyalists are not 'extremists' for the Twenty Six Counties courts whereas Republicans certainly are and can be extradited and imprisoned.

Maggie Mellon



Bloody Sunday Commemoration

Over 3000 people marched on Saturday 31 January to commemorate the brutal murder by the British army of 14 unarmed civilians on Bloody Sunday 1972. The demonstration marched through Sheffield City Centre to a rally in Sheffield Town Hall. Small groups of fascists harassed and attacked the march and there were 19 arrests.

Speakers at the rally included: Sinn Fein's Tony Docherty (whose father was one of those murdered on Bloody Sunday); Brenda Downes (United Campaign against Plastic Bullets); Women Against Pit Closures; IBRG; Sheffield Asian Youth Movement. The Irish Freedom Movement along with several other solidarity organisations including the Irish Solidarity Movement, was denied speaking rights and IFM members mounted the platform and forced the organisers to allow them to speak. Such scenes would not have occurred had the organising committee been set up on a broad, democratic basis rather than a sectarian and exclusive one. Gordon

Fine Gael

End of the line

After four years the Fine Gael/Labour coalition government in Ireland has finally collapsed. On 17 February 1987, election day, FitzGerald and Co will almost certainly be thrown out of office having bankrupted the country. Officially Labour resigned from the coalition and forced an election over proposed new spending cuts of close to IR£140m in public services, especially in health and education. In reality Labour has accepted every such attack on the working class but seeing that an election was inevitable, pretended to be opposed to the latest cuts.

FitzGerald and his monetarist policies have left the Irish economy in ruins and thrown thousands into poverty. Unemployment is at an all-time high of over 250,000 - 19.3% of the workforce. The national debt stands at IR£24 billion - almost all income tax revenue goes on just servicing this huge debt. 100,000 people have emigrated during this government's term of office. Over 30% of the population rely on social welfare benefits. It is these very people that FitzGerald's budget wanted to hit. At the same time foreign investment has poured in, taking advantage of low wages and tax-free profits. FitzGerald has served the imperialist banks and multinationals well.

Alongside this has gone even greater slavishness towards imperialism. FitzGerald will be remembered for the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement which legitimised the British presence in Ireland and gives direct state aid to the British murder machine. Extradition on demand is now a reality following the 1986 Extradition Act. As a result Republicans are handed over to face British injustice. Fine Gael also renewed Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act on the day before the government collapsed. This bans Sinn Fein from TV and radio.

Ireland today is the most policed state in the world per head of the population. There is one policeman for every 309 people in the South. In 1985 of the 11,300 Gardai, 2,000 were armed detectives. So much for the myth of an unarmed police force. The democratic rights of many sections, be they nationalists, civil liberties groups, active trade unionists,



have come under attack from the police and courts.

Hell bent on getting Ireland into NATO (officially) FitzGerald rushed through the Single European Act. This Act ties Irish foreign policy to that of the EEC, whose member states are all NATO members.

The electorate will not forget the record of the Coalition. Haughey's Fianna Fail party looks set to form the next government. Despite loud claims that he offers an alternative, Haughey's policies are effectively the same. They are already boasting that they are more repressive towards Sinn Fein and supportive of the British Army!

However, there is a real alternative. Sinn Fein are entering this election and are promising to 'challenge the corruption of the Twenty Six County political and economic system'.

Cathal McGrath

Letters

Abortion — the right to decide?

Dear FRFI
I'm concerned about the series of comments which have been made in the pages of FRFI on the questions of abortion in relation to the struggle for self-determination in Ireland.

The question of abortion, as with all other internal policy decisions, is singularly a matter for the Irish people to decide upon, and with a struggle for determination in progress it is, at least, ill-considered for a British communist newspaper to interfere.

One aspect of this issue is the obvious chauvinism involved but there are also the religious considerations.

'Chauvinism', 'offending religious sentiments', 'ignorance of communist principles' — by a small mention of the issue of abortion in Ireland we seem to have sinned greatly in the eyes of cde BM. No such response was forthcoming when we previously commented on the appalling divorce laws in Ireland or on other social issues. Forgive the suspicion, therefore, that this is really an objection to our position on abortion rather than adherence to the principle of non-interference in the affairs of oppressed peoples.

'Sensitive' issue or not, access to abortion is a democratic right the denial of which intensifies the oppression of women and serves only the Irish ruling class. There is no communist principle that forces us to be silent on this point. Nor does our support for the fight against British imperialism in Ireland bind us to agreement with the programme of any Irish political organisation on abortion or other social issues. Cde

Increased repression at Long Lartin

Dear FRFI
Tension is inexorably growing here at Long Lartin, formerly considered the most liberal and protest-free prison within the entire British long-term prison system. Earlier last year the Home Office Prison Department appointed a new Governor here, Joe Whittie, a ruthless and belligerent disciplinarian whose treatment of and attitude towards prisoners at Gartree during the seventies was chiefly responsible for the uprising there in 1978.

Whittie likes to boast that he was sent here to Long Lartin as 'a man with a mission', interpreted by the prisoners as a frank admission that he was put here to screw the place down, and bring the regime into line with that of more oppressive and barbaric long-term prisons like Albany, Frankland and Wakefield; Whittie denies this when confronted directly, though he speaks in terms of 'protecting' the tolerant regime from the 'manipulation' of 'subversives and trouble-makers'.

Some of the measures he has so far implemented in order to 'protect' the regime include tighter restrictions on visits, often to the degree of having a prisoner's visitors strip-searched; the automatic imposition of solitary confinement and substantial loss of remission for the most trivial of rule violations; significantly more cell and body searches, and greater use of the CI 10/74 'lay-down' system. Before he arrived at Long Lartin, the segregation/punishment block here was rarely used. Now it is always overcrowded, necessitating the removal of prisoners on to a 'lay-down' elsewhere simply in order to create space in the block. This is of course a flagrant abuse and violation of the CI 10/74 system.

This year free association time in the evenings shall be reduced by an hour, and vocally dissatisfied with the profitability of the prison workshops, Whittie has threatened the imposition of a new disciplinary code for 'offences' relating to 'being late at labour'.

The Long Lartin Prison Officers

Communists must take the greatest care not to offend the religious sentiments of those they seek to support.

The oppressed in Ireland don't suffer from the illusion that overpopulation is the cause of their problem, they, and communists in Britain should understand that British rule is the one and only cause of the oppression and that no amount of fiddling will alter that.

As Lenin pointed out 'the conditions in the oppressed nation are not the same as those in the oppressor, not in any way.' Hence can British communists apply their particular social guidelines, without breaking this fundamental point.

Sincerely comradesly

BM
Liverpool

BM would have a point about chauvinism if we made our support for the liberation movement in Ireland conditional on its having a progressive position on the question of abortion. We make no such condition.

As for the overpopulation red-herring — what exactly is cde BM saying? Women don't seek abortion for reasons of overpopulation but out of dire necessity. The provision of abortion may be 'fiddling' (so is paying unemployment benefit — are you against that too?) but it would help to relieve the suffering of those women who need it. Or are these women's questions just too insignificant to 'fiddle' with and so the reactionary status quo should stand?

The liberation of women in Ireland is intimately connected with the fight to defeat imperialism. We have every confidence in the ability of the Irish women, who have fought alongside the men, to secure their own emancipation.

Maxine Williams

Increased repression at Long Lartin

Association (POA) consider Whittie something of a messiah, and had long demanded the appointment here of a 'hard' governor prepared to sanction their new 'get tough' approach towards prison discipline. The prison department have now given the screws the man they want.

Whittie, a former uniformed screw himself, aligns himself totally with his staff and shares completely their crude jailers' philosophy that prisoners' basic rights are incompatible with 'secure containment and effective control'. During the suppression of the 1978 Gartree uprising Whittie organised, deployed and in some instances even led the riot-squad that was later accused of attacking defenceless and unarmed prisoners with illicit weapons such as claw-hammers and crow-bars.

Whittie's appointment here is clear evidence that the Home Office prison department intend to instigate and provoke a major disturbance at Long Lartin in order to justify the imposition of an oppressive 'post-riot regime'. This has been their general strategy in regards to the entire long-term dispersal prison system since the mid seventies when a political decision was taken to roll back the reforms and rights achieved by long-term prisoners during the struggles of the late sixties and early seventies. The pattern began at Hull in 1976 and took shape at Gartree in 1978, D Wing Scrubs 1979 and Albany in 1983.

Before the present decade is over the prison department will have completely restructured the entire long-term prison system, and in the process have crushed and destroyed the most basic and elemental rights of those confined and contained within it. Joe Whittie is banking on his ability to savagely put down any rebellion here, caused by his intolerant and provocative treatment of the prisoners. His whole 'career' depends on it, but the cost in 'taking the prison back' might well involve more than a physical skirmish with disorganised and defenceless prisoners, in preparation for which he has recently begun a 'MUFTI squad' training programme.

Long Lartin Revolutionary Prisoners Nucleus

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

They may take my freedom . . .

Dear Comrades

I would like to thank you for the FRFI paper that so far I've been receiving without any trouble.

I would like to relate to you an incident which has just cost me seven days remission today. I was placed on report yesterday after a social visit because the screws said that the VO that was used had been altered and that I obtained a visit from my wife that wasn't due. The charge brought against me was one of good order and discipline which as we all

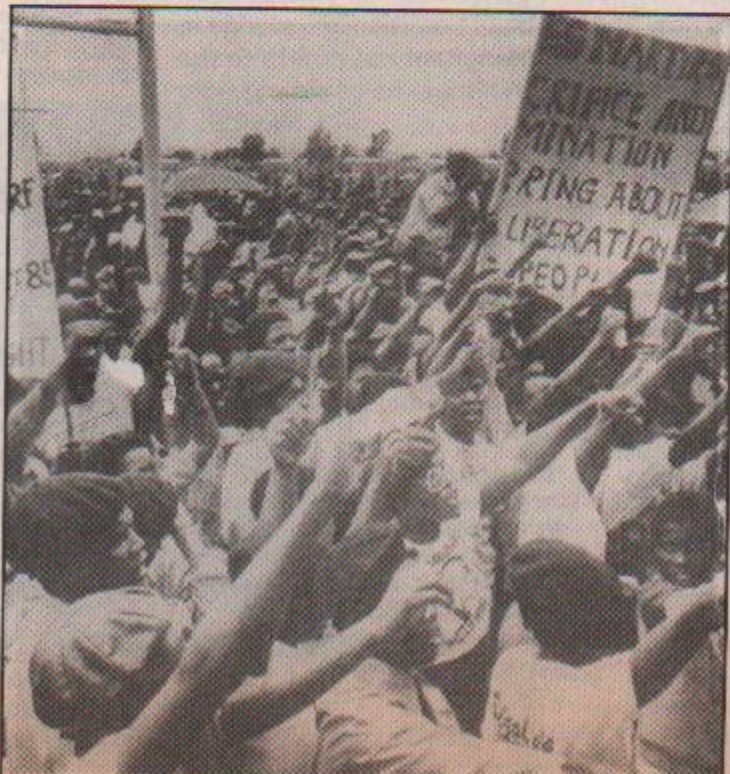
know is a catch all rule. I wrote my case out on the back of the charge sheet explaining that I applied for a VO and that it was sent out through the proper prison channel, and that if there was any kind of discrepancy why was it allowed out of the prison.

But the governor chose to ignore my question and of course the charge was found proven, which as I say cost me seven days remission, plus the forfeiture of a VO. The governor said that she wasn't satisfied with my explanation which was a foregone conclusion with me anyway.

Still comrades, they may take my freedom, but one thing they will never be able to take away from me is my pride, dignity and spirit.

Yours in the struggle
Danny Doolan
HMP Coldingley

PS I've just heard on the radio that Douglas Hurd has referred the Birmingham Six to the court of appeal. Not before time. Let's hope it will be successful and justice at long last can be seen to be done.



South Africa — breaking through the censorship

To all at FRFI
To date, as a subscriber, I have so far received about six or seven copies of FRFI. Each one of these has shown a great spirit of concern for society, and I must congratulate everyone involved in putting FRFI together each month.

As you are aware, press freedom no longer exists in South Africa, and viewpoints alternative to those of the government are hard to come by at this time. For these reasons, and others too, I no longer view reading FRFI each time as merely a chance to come into contact with these 'alternative viewpoints'; FRFI now provides me with basic information

about what is happening in my own country. My right to hear about these things 'legally' here in South Africa has been denied.

I value each article highly and just wish that such publications as FRFI were freely available to me in South Africa. Especially I appreciated the piece 'The Irangate Scandal: Reagan unmasked' (Jan 1987). It is this type of journalism that I hardly ever get to see — and it was brilliant.

Best wishes for 1987. May I wish you also every success in your campaigns against all injustices — you have the right attitudes. It is really great to see that people so far away from the various injustices care enough to get up and react, and do something towards improving the situation.

Many thanks
From a reader in South Africa

Ireland — asset strippers' paradise

Dear FRFI
In his article in FRFI, issue no 63, Jim O'Rourke gave a vivid and graphic description of life in the Twenty Six Counties under the present Fine Gael coalition 'government'. The appalling unemployment figures, coupled with mass emigration and poverty for hundreds of thousands of working class people must be condemned for what it is — greed! The greed of the rich — who like vermin live off the backs of the poor and oppressed section of the Irish people.

On a recent visit to Ireland I met many of these people who have been thrown out of their jobs, seen their factories shut and dismantled, and in some cases — in fact many cases — have received no compensation or redundancy of any kind. It has become an asset strippers paradise. And the unemployment figures continue to rise even higher. In October the figure was 238,000 men and women on the scrap-heap. The figures just recently admitted are 250,178 victims and even these are not true, the real figure is more like 260,000, and many trade unionists I met claim the figure is much higher, with 'government' hacks juggling and falsifying the true records.

In the 1960s (and even the early seventies) some gains were made by

organised working class action, and better conditions were won, and wages rose steadily — up to a point. But James Connolly has been proven right time and time again. When speaking to a rally in Dublin in 1914 and saying that 'governments in capitalist society are but committees of the rich to manage the affairs of the capitalist class' — could he even have known that the present Twenty Six Counties puppet state, seventy three years later, would be the best example of why he was right, and how this evil system works?

Of course it is true also to say the coalition is in crisis and will crumble soon. But returning to power a Fianna Fail regime will not in any way change the economy or the continuing oppression of the hardest-hit section of the population — the working class, the unemployed, and the deprived. Haughey, the multi-millionaire leader of Fianna Fail has no intention of changing anything. Control of the economy is out of his hands, and the rich multi-nationals rule the roost, as they have for a long time.

This is the reality of the situation, and only by the defeat of the Irish ruling class bureaucracy can Irish workers defend themselves against this onslaught.

Fraternal greetings
Michael Holden
Branch Secretary
Acht Hemel Hempstead)

Immigration laws — the Jewish experience

The following is a letter sent to the Guardian last month in support of Viraj Mendis. It was not printed but we are pleased to publish it in FRFI.

Sir,
Several letters have already appeared in your columns correctly condemning the threatened deportation of Viraj Mendis to Sri Lanka — where he will be in undoubted danger of arrest or execution because of his acknowledged support for the Tamils. Immigration lawyers are daily aware of the Home Office's refusal to grant asylum to those fleeing persecution. The only resort to which asylum seekers now have is not the law — though there is a theoretical exception in the immigration legislation for refugees — but publicity and campaigning.

The case of Viraj Mendis well illustrates this. It also reveals as hypocritical the assumption that this country in some way welcomes those fleeing persecution. The entire history of immigration controls proves this is not the case.

The Jewish experience is revealing. The first immigration law, the Aliens Act of 1905, was deliberately designed to keep out Jewish refugees fleeing massacres in Eastern Europe. Though the Aliens Act again con-

tained an exemption for asylum seekers yet this was only nominal and rarely invoked. The *Jewish Chronicle* for the period 1905 onwards provides many instances of Jews being deported back to certain death. A well-known case in 1907 was that of Pinhas Serachim who was refused asylum even though he was a member of the Bolshevik Party who had escaped from Russia after being imprisoned for shooting a police spy. Exactly the same attitude was adopted towards Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution three decades later.

The Home Office in the 1930s blocked the entrance of all but a handful of Jews. The *Times* of 20 August 1938 reported how one magistrate sentenced to imprisonment a group of Jewish refugees who had smuggled themselves into the UK from Nazi Germany. This magistrate stated that it was 'becoming an outrage the way in which stateless Jews are pouring in from every port in the country' and as far as he was concerned he intended 'to enforce the law to its fullest extent'.

It is this tradition that David Waddington is now following in attempting to deport Viraj Mendis — and it is to the credit of the congregants of the Church of the Ascension in Manchester in providing sanctuary to this further victim of British immigration law.

Yours
Steve Cohen
South Manchester Law Centre

Opportunism in Iran and Britain

Dear Comrades

The Iranian revolution in 1979 was betrayed by the 'Communist' Tudeh Party of Iran. The Tudeh Party had the opportunity to lead the working class of Iran towards a socialist revolution. Instead they sided with the bourgeoisie and Khomeini's capitalist aims.

This resulted in the establishment of a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and Khomeini's reactionary regime. The Tudeh Party, fully behind this oppressive regime, made a stand which was viciously hostile to the progressive anti-Khomeini organisations so much so that they joined the firing squads at the time of the mass executions of Mojahedin and other anti-Khomeini activists.

Tudeh's support for the Khomeini regime did not change until the regime had no further use for them and arrested Tudeh's leading members. These days Tudeh claims its most important task is to overthrow the

Khomeini regime. But one cannot forget that not very long ago Tudeh blew the horns for the very same regime.

Today in Britain the Tudeh Party and the 'Communist' Party of Great Britain (CPGB) go hand in hand. The *Morning Star's* pages and Tudeh's bios have made an inseparable alliance. In fact, the CPGB's stand in the Anti-Apartheid Movement is identical with and parallel to the stand taken by Tudeh at the time of Iran's revolution.

Attacks on progressive movements by Tudeh in Iran are now applied to the progressive City AA by the CPGB and the leadership of the AAM. This was clearly demonstrated at the AAMAGM in January. The CPGB stands side by side with the bourgeoisie and aristocrats in the AAM. We should not underestimate the importance of organising against such opportunists. The Iranian people have paid thousands of lives for the collaboration of the Tudeh Party.

Yours in struggle
Kamran Mashadi

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March 8: British imperialism and the split in the working class

March 15: Building a communist movement in Britain



WEEK OF ANTI-FASCIST ACTION

called by
Leeds Anti-Fascist Action and Leeds Trades Council
Saturday 7-14 February

● LEEDS AFA BENEFIT

Saturday 7 February
8'til late

Rock and Root Against Racism

with the Merons, Creation Rebel and Chumbawamba

● OPEN MEETING Fascism, Racism and the Right

Tuesday 10 February
7.30pm

Leeds Trades Club, Savile Mount, LS7

Speakers: Michael McGowan MEP, Karen Roberts (VMDC), Searchlight and Newcastle AFA

● PUBLIC MEETING

Combating Fascism - a Women's Issue

Wednesday 11 February
7.30pm

Leeds Trades Club, Savile Mount, LS7.

● DAY OF ACTION

Leeds Trade Union & Community Defence Campaign

Saturday 14 February
10am to 2pm

Dortmund Square, Leeds
Build broader links - street theatre, displays, City Group Singers and speakers

GLASGOW FRFI

● WEEKLY PICKET SOUTH AFRICAN CONSULATE

Come and join us - every Saturday from 3-4pm starting 21 February

Close down the South African Embassy and Consulate! March with City AA to Trafalgar Square!

● PUBLIC MEETING

Tuesday 3 March 7.30pm
AUEW Union Halls, West Regent Street, Glasgow.

● Glasgow FRFI holds regular fortnightly educationals, discussing everything from Scottish prisons to the imperialist crisis.

For details of all FRFI meetings and activities in Glasgow, write to Glasgow FRFI, Box 10, 340 West Princes Street, Glasgow.

FRFI FUND DRIVE

A warm thanks to all our readers and supporters who helped us reach a grand total of £654.02 for January. This is £154.02 over target!

We want the February figure to be even larger. We rely on our monthly fund drive to keep FRFI at its current low price.

Have YOU thought of making a contribution to our fund drive. You can make a one off donation. Or you can join us in our work campaigning against apartheid, racism and imperialism. Join one of our supporter groups and help them raise money for our newspaper.

FRFI is now campaigning urgently to save our comrade Viraj Mendis from deportation and death in Sri Lanka. Help us in this, rush a donation in immediately.

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

I/we want to donate £_____ to the FRFI Fund

Name/Organisation _____

Address _____

Do/do not publish my name/organisation

Organise to fight with FRFI

Last month we said that both the campaigns that FRFI is centrally involved in were facing decisive challenges. The events of January have borne this out. Our members and supporters must take the lead in both of these campaigns in pushing on to new levels of organisation and mobilisation. Even greater numbers and wider political forces must be reached NOW!

Non-Stop Against Apartheid

The AAM AGM proved conclusively that a line has been drawn between those who are prepared to fight non-stop against apartheid and those who would rather remain as 'Kinnoek's poodles'.

The greatest possible forces must be drawn behind the line of uncompromising action against apartheid which City AA and the Non-Stop Picket represents. City AA's national demonstration on 14 March is the test of our ability to build a new fighting movement against apartheid. Thousands of people must be mobilised from all over Britain to march with City AA in support of the picket and non-stop action against apartheid.

This can be achieved if our trend within the movement is reflected in an organised fashion up and down the country. City AA is asking all its supporters outside London to begin



this process by setting up Non-Stop Against Apartheid groups, which identify with the fighting spirit of the non-stop picket and respond to and launch local initiatives. FRFI is asking all of its members and supporters to launch these groups in areas where we are active. Invites

must go to all those who want to see more action against apartheid to attend meetings to launch these groups. The 14 March demonstration must be seen as the first important mobilisation - one which will prove that a new fighting tradition is being born.

● Write immediately to trade unions and trades councils for sponsorship, ask to come and speak to their meetings in support of the request.

● Get to local colleges and schools. Ask Student Unions to provide transport, to mobilise and support.

● Write to and visit local organisations and groups - Labour Party, Socialist Workers Party, solidarity groups. Convince them of how important it is to support the initiative of City AA.

● Build for public meetings in each area with speakers from the Non-Stop Picket and with the FRFI Non-Stop for Mandela video on the picket.

● Work out a programme of activities - actions such as 24 Hour pickets, Shell boycott actions and trolley protests in apartheid-buying stores.

The aim of these groups must be to provide an alternative to the bureaucratic inaction of the AAM, and to step up the level of protest throughout the country. Urgent - Non Stop until all the buses to 14 March are filled!

Viraj Mendis Will Stay! Stop the Deportations!

This is the mobilising demand for the mass conference called by the VMDC for 11/12 April which the FRFI comrades in the campaign argued for. It represents both the immediate interests of the Viraj Mendis campaign and the interests of all those faced with fighting the racist nationality laws. The fight to keep Viraj Mendis in this country must be won so that we can have a movement strong enough to stop all deportations. However, we recognise that his campaign can't be won if it is not seen as part of the whole anti-racist resistance in this country, that it is state racism which we are fighting and that thousands more must see their struggles in this light.

Viraj has been in sanctuary since 20 December. Now the task is to greatly broaden the active support. The publicity which we have gained for his struggle must be used to build a whole network of action and mobilisation, radiating from the Manchester VMDC outwards.

The 11/12 April Conference has to be mobilised for all around the country and all anti-racist groups and individuals urged to attend. The London Support Group can do invaluable work with this in getting sponsorship, mobilising and publicising. With the run-up to a General Election approaching it is vital that all candidates are approached and asked to sign the pledge initiated by Paul Boateng when he spoke at a VMDC meeting in London last summer. That is that he, if elected MP, will undertake to invite Viraj to a Grand Committee in the House of Commons to hear his case against the racist laws which are threatening his life.

All local supporters must now:

● Book transport for the April conference.

● Get as wide sponsorship for the event as possible - from trade unions, political groups, and parties, church groups, colleges and universities.

● Make the pledge of action an issue with every Labour Party constituency.

● Get local publicity for Viraj's fight - in the press, through flyposting and leafletting.

Make sure that all those against racism take a stand for Viraj and make sure that they know about and will attend the April Conference.

Eddie Abrahams and Maggie Mellon

VMDC - a challenge to the Left

Viraj Mendis' fight against deportation demands all the support which left and progressive organisations in Britain can muster. He is an avowed communist, in sanctuary in a church, fighting for his life against deportation to Sri Lanka. His campaign to defy Britain's racist immigration controls is a major challenge to the British ruling class. It is also a challenge to the left in Britain - will they help to win a victory for Viraj and for all black people fighting deportations?

Unfortunately, the left, with the exception of the WRP (Workers Press) has signally failed to support the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign (VMDC). A typical example of the left's attitude is found in the Socialist Workers Party's (SWP) newspaper. In the 10 January issue of *Socialist Worker* (SW) we found a brief report on the VMDC tucked in an obscure corner of page 14. The report describes Viraj as 'active in the Sri Lankan Communist Party'. This is at best ignorance, at worst a deliberate lie. Viraj has never had any relation with the Sri Lankan Communist Party. He is a member of the RCG in Britain. Commenting on the Saturday 20 December VMDC demonstration SW says:

'Unfortunately, the size of the demonstration together with the lack of trade union and Labour Party banners illustrated the weakness of the campaign... It is difficult to see where the campaign can go from here. Supporters were encouraged to write

to MPs, but it is this kind of strategy that has hamstrung the campaign for the last two years.'

Unfortunately the size of the demonstration had something to do with the fact that the SWP and much of the left did not support it. The SWP's report can only drive support away from the VMDC. Why should SWP members support a campaign which is 'hamstrung', offers nothing but appeals to MPs and, worst of all, has no trade union or Labour Party support?

In fact, the VMDC has won significant trade union and Labour Party support: at least eight trades councils, branches of NUPE, ASTMS, T&G, ASTMS, ACTSS, NUM, NALGO, the CPSA Home Office branch (who attend the London Support Group), Peter Heathfield of the NUM, and dozens of Labour Party branches and constituencies and others. So much support has built up that the Labour Party NEC voted on Wednesday 28 January to support the VMDC. The VMDC has worked hard and successfully to win trade union and Labour Party support. But it recognises that the Labour and trade union movement dominated by the 'new realism' is not going to be the force which will lead a serious anti-racist, anti-deportation struggle in Britain.

Instead, the campaign has provided the framework for uniting all possible forces to fight against Viraj's deportation. Anti-deportation campaigns, black organisations, many labour movement organisations (including the Labour Party NEC), churches, the AAM, Republican prisoners in Ireland, prisoners in Britain, anarchists, peace campaigners, Amnesty International, and many others have all

London FRFI

Public Meeting

Support Viraj Mendis in sanctuary

Monday 2 March
Small Hall, Conway Hall
Red Lion Square, Holborn
London WC1
(nearest tube Holborn)
7.30pm

Invited Speakers

Revd David Haslam, Karen from Manchester VMDC, CPSA (Home Office), FRFI, City AA, Kings X Women's Centre

FREE



VMDC pickets and occupies Waddington's surgery

On Saturday 3 January VMDC supporters picketed Home Office Minister David Waddington's surgery at Longbridge Conservative Club near Preston. Having set up our picket, 4 VMDC representatives entered the building for a discussion with Waddington. He was not in the least interested, preferring to stick to his routine of lies, insults and racist propaganda.

After 15 minutes of his slurs and racist abuse he declared there was no point in further 'discussion'. In response the VMDC supporters announced that they were occupying the building and started putting a banner up. Desperately Waddington tried to pull it down. After 10 minutes prevarication Waddington called the police before disappearing through the fire exit. We continued our occupation and then joined the picket outside to great applause.

A fortnight later on 17 January a coachload of VMDC supporters descended on Clitheroe Conservative Club for another picket of Waddington's surgery there. We were greeted by the Lancashire Constabulary. However, our reinforcements soon arrived in the form of contingents from Lancaster University, Leeds VMDC and women from Clitheroe CND who had heard news of the picket on the local radio.

Karen and Morna this time went in for another discussion with Waddington and were met by his now customary racism 'Viraj is a damn nuisance, and so are you for encouraging him'. Waddington described the VMDC as being 'on the lunatic left of politics and belonging to the Communist Party'. So much for his claim that his political views do not enter into this case. After the surgery ended, we staged an impromptu march through Clitheroe town centre.

Nick Hill

Support Amnesty International

'Throughout 1986, Amnesty International has received reports of arrest and detention of hundreds of Tamils under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). It is receiving an increasing number of reports that Sinhalese also are being arrested under the PTA and Emergency Regulations (ER), reportedly on suspicion of having links with armed Tamil groups in the north which advocate the establishment of Tamil Eelam. At present, it is estimated that over 400 Sinhalese are detained on these grounds. Detainees held under the PTA and ER have frequently been subjected to torture and ill-treatment especially during periods of incommunicado detention. There is a risk that

Viraj Mendis could face such treatment if returned to Sri Lanka against his will (our emphasis).

Statement 23 December 1986

Labour Party National Executive

On Wednesday 28 January, the Labour Party NEC meeting discussed and voted to support the campaign being conducted to prevent the deportation of Viraj Mendis.

Anti-Apartheid Movement

At its annual general meeting on 10/11 January, the Anti-Apartheid Movement voted unanimously in support of a VMDC emergency resolution opposing the Home Office's attempt to deport Viraj.

Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester M15 5AL (phone 061-234 3168)

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

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

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

Tyne and Wear VMDC Support Group, c/o Gateshead Law Centre, 13 Walker Terrace, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear

Dundee VMDC Support Group, c/o FRFI, PO Box 27, Dundee DD1 9DR

Bristol VMDC Support Group, Joanne Mayer, 33 Kingston Road, Salthville, Bristol BS3 1DS

Leeds VMDC Support Group, Box FRFI, 59 Cookridge Street, Leeds 2

JOIN THE RCG

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

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

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

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

I wish to join/receive more information about the RCG

Name _____

Address _____

Tel. _____

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

Solidarity from prisoners

This month a tremendous show of solidarity has come for Viraj Mendis from prisoners incarcerated in British prisons. From behind the walls of prisons as far apart as Parkhurst in the South and Durham in the North, warmth and greetings have been extended to our comrade fighting against deportation and support for his right to stay in Britain.

Just days before Winston Silcott faced the vicious revenge of the state in court, he wrote from Wormwood Scrubs, calling on 'more organisations and campaigns' to join the fight to help Viraj stay. He asked why Waddington wants to send 'a young man to possible death' in Sri Lanka from a country that 'is supposed to be civilised, believe in free speech also equal rights'. And his answer is clear—Waddington is a racist. 'Doesn't he know a man's life is at stake. Colour can't stand as an excuse'. Winston ends his message with truly international spirit, 'Remember many people in this world are fighting for their freedom. Just like Mandela—but yet they can't lock up his spirit. And yours is strong.'

John Schofield, after months in solitary in F Wing, Wakefield, condemns the 'heartless fascists Waddington & Co' and Berny Glennon (Parkhurst) urges Viraj to keep his 'spirits high... you have a lot of comrades helping you in your struggle for freedom...'

Also from Wakefield, George Moulson exposes British state hypocrisy. He asks why the Tories have turned a blind eye to evidence gathered by Amnesty International and the United Nations Working Group on widespread torture and murder of political opponents by the Sri Lankan regime. His answer is 'British

profiteering... They do not want to jeopardise their investments in Sri Lanka and money not only talks, it shouts!'

Qayyum Raja (Frankland), Tommy Curless (Lewes) and Bill Tonks (Leeds), all salute Viraj's stand in supporting the Tamil people fighting for freedom in Sri Lanka. And Danny Doolan and fellow comrades at Coldingley send 'moral support in your plight... our thoughts are with you all the way. Never give up hope.'

Bruce Childs and 8 fellow prisoners in Parkhurst prison hospital, urge Viraj to keep resisting 'the political manipulation and legal system' which oppresses them as prisoners and Viraj. Lastly, for now, Bob Bensusan (Parkhurst) hopes that by the time he is released, later this year, Viraj will have won his right to stay.

From sanctuary Viraj sends this message in reply:

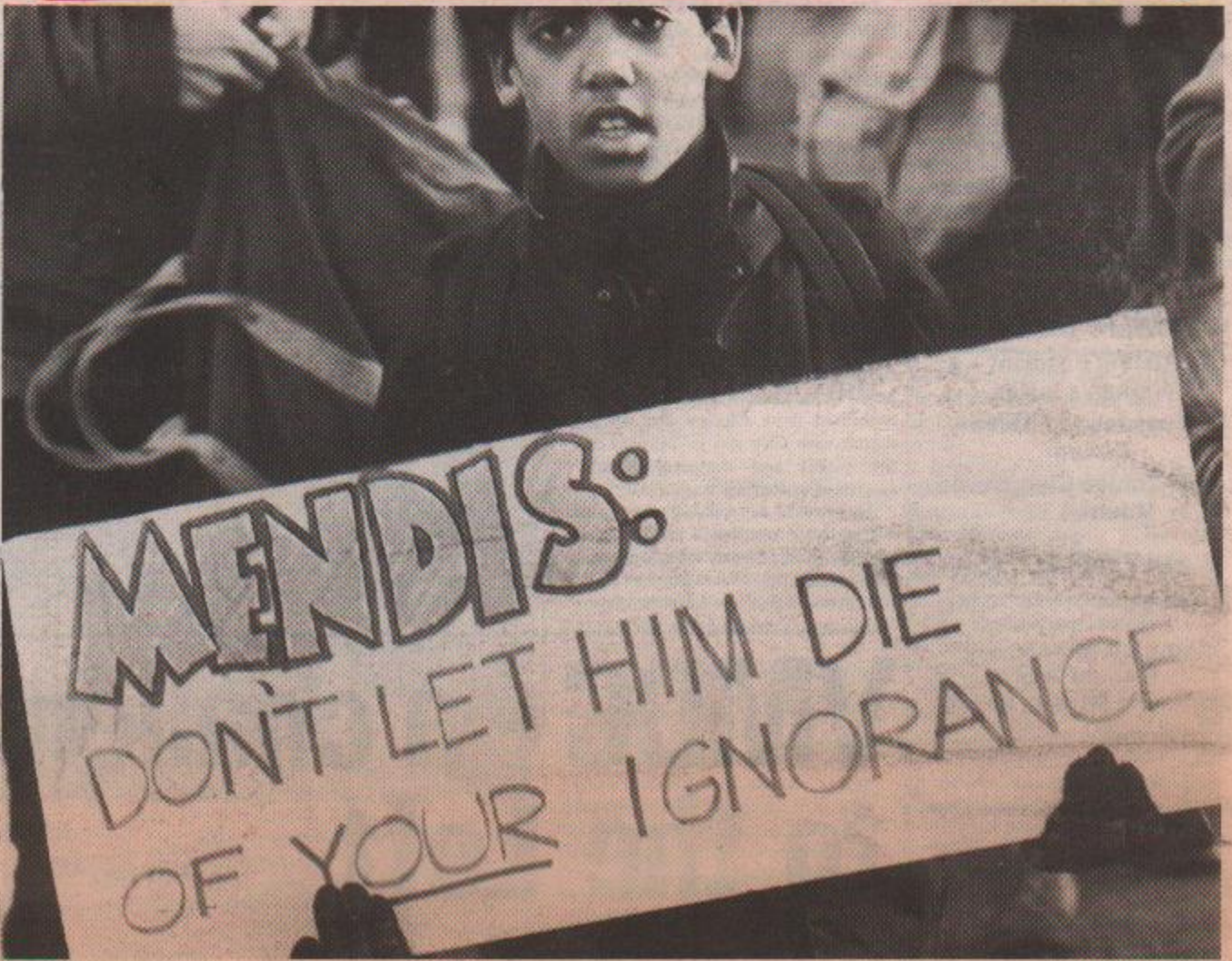
'I am moved and honoured to receive so many letters from prisoners. I too am a prisoner in this church. A prisoner because I'm black and because I'm a communist. But "our day will come".'

Alexa Byrne

Solidarity from prisons in Ireland

To Comrade Viraj, In solidarity and the hope that you will succeed in your immediate struggle against deportation so that you can continue your wider revolutionary work. Signed by Gerry Kelly and 43 other Irish Republican Political Prisoners in 'A' Wing, Crumlin Road Jail, Belfast.

And from the Twenty Six Counties, Damien Bird, PRO for IRSP POWs from Portlaoise Jail in a letter of solidarity ends stating: 'Finally, we hope at even this late stage enough pressure can be mounted to ensure Viraj's right to life and liberty.'



Build the VMDC!

In the 6 weeks that Viraj Mendis has been in sanctuary enormous support has built up for his fight against deportation. Viraj has received literally hundreds of messages from individuals, trade unions, student and community organisations, prisoners in Britain and republican political prisoners in Ireland. While well over 600 people have visited him, new support groups have been established in Bristol, Milton Keynes and Dundee. In Manchester itself new groups have been formed in Chorlton, the North Hulme Centre and Loretta College. Amnesty International, the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Labour Party NEC have also declared opposition to the Home Office attempt to deport Viraj.

Waddington is clearly under pressure! But this arrogant and racist lackey of British imperialism has not yet been forced to move. On 21 January, Home Office officials entered the Church of Ascension under false pretences to issue Viraj with a deportation order. Viraj was told that the police had copies and were authorised to arrest him if he left the Church. Incensed by the groundswell of support for Viraj, Waddington has responded with a hysterical witch-hunt against the VMDC and its supporters accusing them of being 'lunatic left' and 'irresponsible'.

Organise to break Waddington's back

Waddington has been stopped in the past and can be stopped again. If we are to save Viraj's life and defend the rights of all anti-deportation activists in Britain we must now *organise* all supporters into a formidable force capable of forcing Waddington to revoke the deportation order.

● There are now 10 VMDC support groups around the country. **Join one immediately.** If there isn't one in your

area then form a new one. Contact Manchester VMDC for help in this.

● The VMDC has been invited to speak at dozens of meetings, rallies, trade



unions and student unions and Labour Party meetings. Get your own organisation to invite VMDC speakers.

● The VMDC has been astounded by the generosity of supporters throughout the country. But it still needs more money. Organise a collection wherever you are.

● Read our article on Amnesty International and bombarding the Home Office with letters demanding Viraj's right to stay.

● Organise street events, pickets and occupations of Home Office buildings in your area. Go into the community and raise the question of Viraj Mendis.

● On Saturday 14 March, VMDC will join the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group demonstration in London. The VMDC is now working energetically to build a massive anti-racist contingent for that demonstration. **Join us in this!**

● On Saturday/Sunday 11/12 April, the VMDC is organising a national conference under the banner *Viraj Mendis Must Stay! Stop All Deportations Now!* We aim to unite all forces who have supported Viraj and who oppose the racist deportations to discuss how to further pile the pressure on Waddington and force him to back down. We know that if we win Viraj's case it will be a great victory for all those fighting Britain's vile racist immigration controls.

Act now! Organise. Join your local VMDC support group. For more information, leaflets, posters, badges, stickers and petitions contact the VMDC. If you want speakers, or help to set up a support group contact the VMDC.

VMDC, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Manchester M15 5AL (or phone 061-234-3168)

Left, Waddington can be stopped