

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Anti-imperialist paper of the Revolutionary Communist Group

Issue No 47 March 1985

Price 30p – 20p unwaged

Thatcher bows
to the dollar

IN THE BIG CASINO

Economists voiced their forebodings, politicians sniped at each other across the Atlantic, but Margaret Thatcher saw fit to use her January US trip to strike up a pose of star-struck adolescence. 'I think he's marvellous. I'm his greatest fan... I feel no inhibitions in describing our relations as very, very special'. This was the President of the United States that she was talking about. It was left to Deputy Prime Minister Whitelaw to sober up the proceedings: the high dollar 'has very serious consequences for the world economy'.

Neither ludicrous flattery nor sombre warning impressed Reagan. No sooner had Thatcher boarded the aircraft for home than Reagan was dismissing her plea to bring the dollar down: 'I think that the problem of the dollar today is that our trading partners have not caught up with our recovery... what we really need is their recovery to bring the value of their money up in relation to ours'. So much for 'special relations'.

US military budgets running up to \$300 billion a year have forced record government deficits of over \$200 billion. The US depends upon massive government borrowing and a quarter of all US investment was syphoned from overseas funds. In just six months of last year the US economy absorbed \$160 billion of foreign capital. This money was drawn out of Europe and Japan by high US interest rates. To slow the drain on their savings European banks have had to raise interest rates to competitive levels. Four successive interest rate rises in Britain this year have together sucked out of British firms about £2.2 billion. As the Chairman of the US Federal Reserve (government bank) put it, the US is 'in a real sense living on borrowed money and time'. European capitalists see it as their money and their time.

THE BIG CASINO

Talk of 'special relationships' is meant to soothe doubts and sweeten the pill. The partners in crime are turning into wrangling pirates, squabbling over the booty they have filched from workers and oppressed around the world. The Observer reports a British Cabinet Minister '(The US) believes that it is unbeatable and the rest of the world will simply have to bow to the fact. Just as with Vietnam, America may have to learn differently the hard way'. In a bitter riposte to Reagan's criticisms of European capitalism the West German Finance Minister stated 'To the blue-eyed admirers of the high flying dollar and those who hold Europe's fundamentals in contempt, I would like to say that we have been able to maintain long-term interest rates 4 per cent below US rates'. The massive co-ordinated \$1½ billion dollar intervention in the foreign exchange markets by European banks will only produce a temporary respite in the financial chaos.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon is lobbying for more funds, and Reagan is unable to get the government deficit down without savaging the US economy and millions of families' living standards. Speculators are placing their bets, and every day \$200 billion spins through pounds, dollars, francs and whatever in the Big Casino's frantic chase for profits. Money markets are seething like cauldrons, fermenting, rising and falling, ready at any time to convulse and explode their ingredients of banks, industries, regulations and governments. And as Mrs Thatcher herself explains, there was 'very, very little that could be done'.

Trevor Rayne

MINERS FORCED BACK one year of heroic struggle

Almost one year to the day after MacGregor announced the NCB's pit closure programme, a national delegate conference of the NUM decided on 3 March on an organised return to work for Tuesday 5 March. The Executive was evenly split and made no recommendation. But, by 98-91 votes, the delegates decided to go back and to seek an amnesty for the over 700 miners sacked. So ended the most heroic strike the British working class had seen for decades.

The delegate conference had essentially four choices available to it: 1) to fight on in spite of the growing number of

miners being forced back to work; 2) to accept the surrender terms demanded by the NCB/Thatcher government; 3)

to return to work without an agreement; 4) to leave the decision to the individual areas. It decided on the return to work.

By the end of January the initiative had passed to Thatcher and the NCB. However in spite of the confident forecast of the end of the strike at that time by government ministers and the media, the predicted 'surge' back to work did not reach anything like the peak levels of November 1984, when nearly 6,000

miners went back in one week. By mid-February the Thatcher government was coming under pressure due to the escalating costs of the strike rising at some £55m-£60m a week, a turnaround in the current account balance of payments from a forecast £2bn surplus to a £200m deficit and a reduction in the growth rate of the economy by some 1-2%. Leaked CEBG figures showed the huge cost of avoiding power cuts by burning oil. Last year the Electricity Board made £200m profit – the forecast for this year is a staggering £2,000m loss. In addition the miners' strike has certainly played some part in the falling pound and record interest rates which have wrecked the Tory financial strategy.

Opinion polls in mid-February showed a marked fall in the Thatcher government's popularity. With the damaging political defeat for the government after an Old Bailey jury acquitted Clive Ponting in the Ministry of Defence secrets case, and the threat of industrial action by teachers and other workers looming ahead, sections of the ruling class believed it was time for a negotiated settlement of the miners' strike. Thatcher, however, was still determined to inflict a humiliating defeat on Arthur Scargill and the striking miners. And she had one crucial card to play. The TUC leadership was equally determined to see an end to the strike and a return to 'normality'. The doors to MacGregor, Walker and even Thatcher herself were suddenly opened to Willis and the TUC leaders. Their role was to be decisive in finally breaking the back of the strike.



In Whitehall 24 February: 'The actions of the police made it perfectly clear that anyone who supports the miners is a legitimate target for brutality.'

Anti-Apartheid Movement expels City Group

FORWARD EVER BACKWARD NEVER

Eighteen months ago, in the RCG manifesto, 'The revolutionary road to communism in Britain', we wrote:

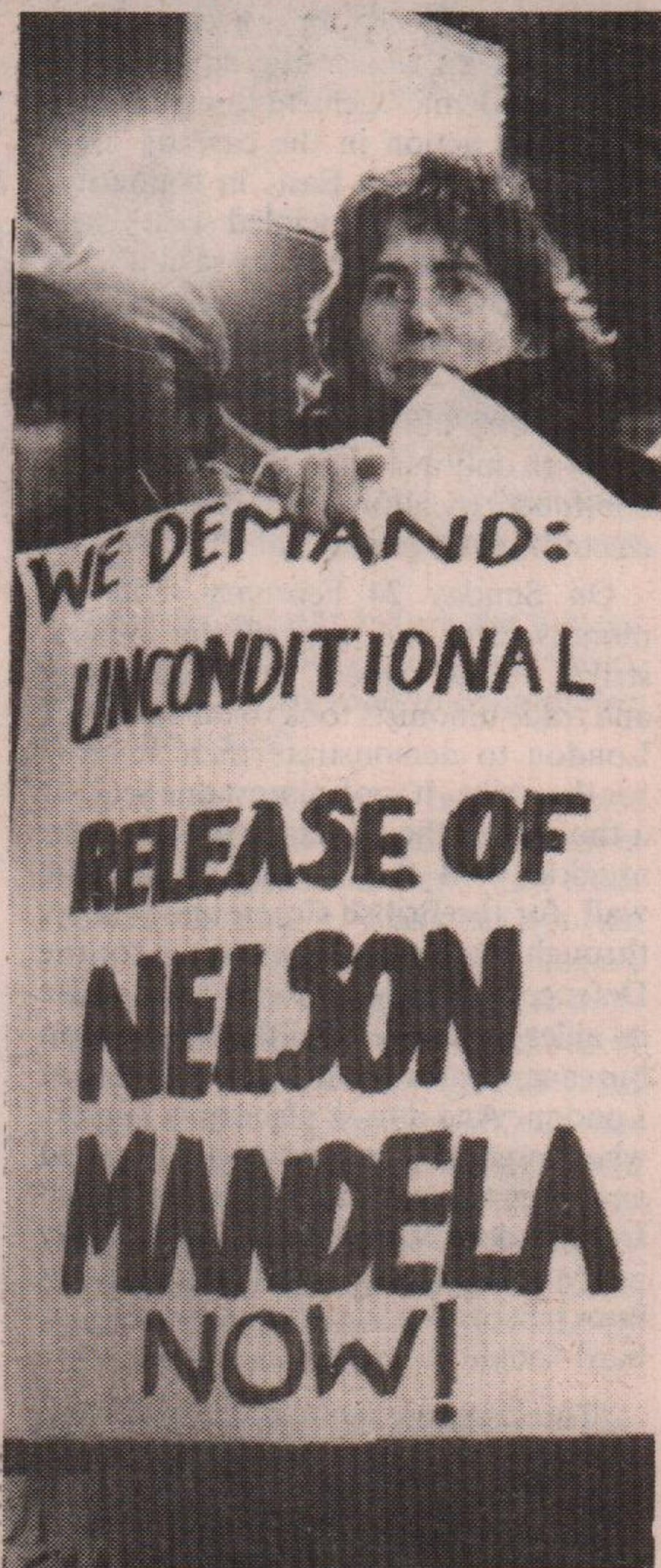
'Every severe crisis of a social system brings forward something new. It pushes to the fore those forces which represent the future and shows ever more clearly the bankruptcy of those forces which desperately try to hold onto the past. The present crisis of imperialism is no exception.'

The miners strike has dramatically confirmed this point of view. Over the last twelve months the labour movement in Britain has rapidly polarised between the striking miners and their allies who have taken the struggle forward, and the leaders of the Labour and trade union movement who have betrayed the struggle in order to get it under their deadly control. In every battle those determined to fight will find not only new allies, but also false friends. The anti-apartheid struggle is no exception to this.

There could be no greater contrast than that between the singing youth, black and white, employed and unemployed, on the 24 hour picket outside South Africa House organised by City of London Anti-Apartheid Group on

22/23 February, and the tired, cynical and manipulative body of AAM committee men and women who met in Cardiff on the same day to rid the movement of City Group's influence and enthusiasm.

continued on page 5



CENTRE PAGES

The continuing struggle for basic rights in prison
page 4

AIDS – a 20th century
witch hunt

**NATIONAL
DEMONSTRATION
AND RALLY**
Fight Deportations!
Unite Families!
Fight Racism!
Saturday 23 March
1985
Manchester

Assemble: 12.30 at All Saints,
Oxford Road, Manchester
Rally at 2.15, Town Hall, Albert
Square
Activities all afternoon and
evening at the Town Hall – films,
videos, theatre, displays,
speeches etc.

TUC opportunists do their dirty work

At the end of January Thatcher and MacGregor demanded that before negotiations could start the NUM had to give a written guarantee that the closure of uneconomic pits should be the central item on the agenda. The NUM refused, and preliminary talks between Peter Heathfield, NUM General Secretary, and the NCB broke down. The NUM pointed out that such a precondition invalidated the NCB/NACODS agreement of October 1984 which introduced a new independent colliery review procedure in the case of a dispute over the closure of pits. NACODS secretary, Peter McNestry, even went through the motions of threatening to ballot his members for strike action if the NCB refused to withdraw the demand for a written guarantee. On 6 February a joint meeting of the executive committees of NACODS and the NUM made a demand for talks without any preconditions. This demand was rejected by the government and the NCB. Once again Thatcher's intervention prevented any negotiations taking place.

It was at this point that Willis stepped in. He had been having secret talks with MacGregor and the NCB, resulting on 15 February in an 8-point document which effectively spelt out the NCB terms for a settlement. Central to it was the acceptance of the right of the NCB to close uneconomic pits. For example item 2 of the TUC/NCB document states

'The NUM recognise that it is the duty of the NCB to manage the industry efficiently, and to secure sound developments in accordance with their responsibilities and the NCB recognise that the NUM represents and advances the interests of its members and their employment opportunities. In this regard the NCB is firmly of the view that the interests of the membership of the NUM are best served by the development of an economically sound industry.'

As for the modified independent review procedure the document clearly states 'At the end of this procedure the board will make its final decision'. For the NUM to accept this document in its entirety would have been a complete surrender.

It had taken Willis half-a-dozen meetings with MacGregor over a period of two weeks to produce such a document – a total betrayal of the striking miners. The NUM tried to amend this document. The NCB said it was 'non-negotiable'. Willis was undeterred. On Tuesday 19 February he and six other trade union leaders achieved their longstanding aim to get back into 10 Downing Street to talk with Thatcher. They told Thatcher and Walker that the NUM was prepared to make concessions and on the basis of this an amended document was drawn up and presented to the NUM EC as the 'final word' which was not negotiable. The NUM EC rejected this out of hand. It was said by Arthur Scargill to be '100% worse' than the previous document. Willis pleaded with the NUM EC that the document – which spelt out in even more precise detail the terms for surrender – was 'the best they could get' and had been hammered out at the highest possible level with the Prime Minister in Downing Street on Tuesday. The miners had been betrayed. The consequences were to be disastrous for the NUM.

The TUC had given the government a vital lever to further isolate Arthur Scargill and the striking miners. For now the government could justify its refusal to negotiate on the grounds that the NUM had been totally unreasonable in rejecting what Peter Walker and the NCB called the 'TUC document'. The TUC had done its dirty work. Of all the weapons in Thatcher's arsenal the TUC proved to be the decisive one.

Return to work accelerates

During February a steady flow of miners were forced back to work through the financial hardship and cold imposed on their families. After the NUM delegate conference had overwhelmingly

rejected the 'TUC document' on 21 February, and further negotiations had been ruled out by the government, the next day showed the highest return to work on any Friday since the beginning of the strike. The following week proved to be the watershed as the NCB claimed a return of 9,455 and that 50 per cent of miners were now working. While the NUM disputed these figures and stated that nearly 60% of miners were still out – representing over 75% of those originally on strike – there could be no denying the significance of this return to work. Yorkshire saw more of its membership back at work in the five days to 1 March than in the previous five weeks.

Very quickly miners' leaders called for a national return to work without an agreement as a way of holding the union together. A delegate conference was called for 3 March to decide on the way forward. On Friday 1 March, Durham, Lancashire, South Wales area councils and the clerical workers COSA voted for a national return to work without an agreement. Scotland also added a rider that the NUM should return only if a general amnesty is granted for the more than 700 miners sacked for 'offences' directly related to the strike. Eight out of thirteen members of the Midlothian Strike Committee in Scotland have been sacked. Yorkshire area council voted 42-22 to continue the strike. However the council was recalled for Saturday 2 March to give time for delegates to consult their members at branch meetings throughout Yorkshire. The recalled conference voted narrowly (4 votes) to continue the strike. Kent area council also voted against a return without a negotiated settlement. The 3 March delegate conference narrowly voted to go back. The pressures which built up against areas which wished to continue the strike proved too great.

A divided working class

At a meeting in Castleford, West Yorkshire on 26 February, Arthur Scargill attacked the trade unionists who had failed to come to the assistance of the NUM:

'When history comes to examine this dispute there will be a glaring omission – the fact that trade unionists have been standing on the sidelines while this union has been battered by government, Coal Board, police and the whole media propaganda campaign'.

He also emphasised that the level of international support 'from both East and West' had been tremendous, in contrast to Britain where the TUC had failed even to impose a 50p levy on its members. Many members of the NUR and ASLEF refused to move coal throughout the dispute – resulting in the movement of only 200,000 out of the normal 600,000 to 700,000 tonnes a week. Similarly National Union of Seamen members defied management pressure and even legal action in the case of some ships in the North East, in solidarity. But despite their principled stand, coal continued to be mined – by scab miners – and moved – by scab lorry drivers. Steel production continued at almost full rate and – most damaging of all to the striking miners – the power workers, with only a few sporadic exceptions, continued to allow the production of electricity using scab coal and oil.

On Sunday 24 February, over 11 months after the start of the miners' strike, 50,000 miners, their supporters and trade unionists took to the streets of London to demonstrate their support for the strike. It took almost one year, at a time when the miners and their communities had their backs against the wall, for the British Communist Party, through the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, to organise its allies on the 'left' of the trade union bureaucracy for action on the streets of London. And it took place on a Sunday when most of those streets are deserted and when the least sacrifice is demanded from trade union members. At the rally in Trafalgar Square, Arthur Scargill put into perspective nearly 12 months of hard-fought struggle:

'The strike has brought a new dimension to British politics with hundreds of thousands of people involved in support groups not only in this country, but all over the world...'

'The dispute goes on' – Arthur Scargill

At a press conference on 3 March soon after the decision to go back to work, Arthur Scargill made it clear that 'the dispute goes on'. He said:

'...we will continue to fight pit closures and job losses – and make no mistake, don't underestimate this union's ability to fight pit closures and job losses. This union will continue to fight, and if that means we have to consider taking action again then we

shall do so...'

Scargill made clear that the major reason for the return to work was the fact:

'...that the trade union movement in Britain, with a few notable exceptions have left this union isolated. They have not carried out TUC congress decisions, to their eternal shame.

'We faced not an employer but a Government aided and abetted by

'The trade union movement in Britain, with a few notable exceptions, have left this union isolated... to their eternal shame.' (Arthur Scargill, announcing the end of the strike, on 3 March 1985.)



Norman Willis, number one scab

'When history comes to examine this dispute there will be a glaring omission – the fact that trade unionists have been standing on the sidelines while this union has been battered by government, Coal Board, police and the whole media propaganda campaign'. Arthur Scargill

We have already achieved a magnificent victory by showing that working people are not prepared to lie down under this Thatcher government. Stand firm. Lift your hearts and eyes to a new horizon and towards saving this industry and our jobs...'

Even while Scargill spoke, the forces were at work that have inflicted so much brutality on the mining communities – Thatcher's riot police. 1,000 police, among them mounted police, were hidden off Whitehall and, after an incident had been provoked by them, they came out to attack the last half of the march. Women and children were caught under horses' hooves and even TV cameras later that day showed the sight of an elderly woman being attacked by police and one demonstrator being batoned to the ground. The actions of the police made perfectly clear that *anyone* who supports the miners is a legitimate target for brutality.

The demonstration in London on 24 February was an exceptional event largely due to the number of miners and their families present. In contrast the Day of Action 'organised' by the South East Region of the TUC on Monday 11 February was a pathetic affair. Having declared a Day of Action, they then pro-

ceeded to say that they had not asked people to take strike action! Consequently the mass picket of Neasden power station numbered only a few hundred, and the picket of Price Waterhouse – the accountants who have carried out the legal theft of NUM funds – numbered less than 100. The Yorkshire and Humberside Day of Action called on the same day was unable to mobilise significant forces.

In the mining areas, particularly in Yorkshire and Scotland, a number of mass pickets took place during February and picketing continued at a basic level at most pits. It is significant that on the day (13 February) that a High Court judge outlawed mass picketing at 11 Yorkshire pits and forbade the Yorkshire NUM to spend any money on mass pickets, coal was moved for the first time from the key Gascoigne Wood pit in North Yorkshire and from two other Yorkshire pits – Silverwood and Thurcroft. While the injunction did not specifically cover these 3 pits, the NCB was now clearly determined to begin to move coal from the pit heads in Yorkshire. And, as throughout the dispute, the courts paved the way. The Yorkshire NUM EC agreed to abide by the ruling, pending a challenge by South Wales NUM over a similar ruling. Picketing

the judiciary, the police and you people in the media. At the end of this time our people have suffered tremendous hardship...'

Scargill vehemently opposed calling off the strike but the national executive tied 11-11 on putting a motion to conference – so none was put. As we go to press the Scottish area NUM voted narrowly, 7-6, and a Kent area meeting of a 1,000 miners voted overwhelmingly to continue the strike until an amnesty is granted to the miners sacked for 'offences' connected with the strike. The Yorkshire area NUM voted by a large majority, 68-8, for going back. The frustration and anger of many miners at the strike being called off was demonstrated by attacks on NCB property – especially in Scotland where the Scottish Area Director, Mr Wheeler, has so far refused to take any of the sacked miners back. Sacked miners in a number of areas have said they will continue to picket their pits.

continued in Yorkshire – even at most of the 11 pits covered by the ban. A further major blow to the striking miners was the decision by the Notts miners on 25 February to end the 16 months long overtime ban.

9,542 had been arrested in England and Wales up to 15 February, and 7,785 charged up to 26 February. In Scotland a further 1,471 had been arrested up to 1 February. Mass arrests and charges have been used to intimidate miners. On 26 February 23 out of the 87 miners arrested at Harworth colliery in August had charges against them dropped. This is expected to happen with all but 8 of the 87 miners. Their solicitor said this was 'unprecedented' in the case of such serious charges and the miners are suing the Chief Constable of Notts for wrongful arrest and false imprisonment.

While pickets, marches and rallies continued, primarily in the mining areas, little was done to draw on the powerful potential allies outside the mining areas. Only a massive campaign on the streets of the towns and cities could have provided the momentum to challenge the Thatcher government. The fighting force of these ordinary people, the unemployed, the black and white youth, low paid workers – especially women – who have every interest in seeing Thatcher defeated remained unorganised during the miners strike. This lack of movement in support of the strike finally allowed opportunists like Willis and co to step in and do their dirty work – something they had been trying to achieve all along.

Building for the future

The organised labour movement did not come to the aid of the miners in any

decisive way. There was no significant pressure on trade union leaders to carry out their promises and their reactionary stranglehold on the working class movement has continued. Yet there has been no effective challenge to the opportunism of the Labour Party and TUC leaders from within the miners' ranks. While thousands of miners have come to hate and detest these traitors and while Arthur Scargill has appealed over the heads of the trade union leaders to the rank-and-file and has consistently defended pickets' rights to use violence to defend themselves – against Kinnoch's and Willis' criticisms – no organised political challenge to opportunism has emerged.

The total ineffectiveness of the British 'left' means that there is no organised revolutionary current among the miners or in the working class as a whole. The miners' strike, however, has produced a deep crisis in the ranks of the left.

The British 'left' has without exception ignored the split in the working class which has deepened during the strike. Like the Labour Party, the British left is based on the more privileged sections of the working class, and, more importantly, its politics are directed towards the relatively privileged layers

Police harassment and arrest of collectors picked up sharply after Christmas. In Islington, Lambeth and other areas many more people have been added to the list of those awaiting summons to the court for 'illegal collection' and the 'illegal' sale of papers and badges.

SUPPORT THESE PICKETS!

Monday 11 March Southwark Magistrates Court 9.30am
Wednesday 13 March Camberwell Green Magistrates Court 10am – Mass picket organised by Lambeth Miners Support Group.

DUNDEE FRFI

Public Meeting 'The Miners Strike – Free Class War Prisoners!' Thursday 7 March Wellgate Library, Dundee 7-9pm, admission 25p.

EDINBURGH FRFI

Public Meeting: 'Miners in Gaol! Defend Class War Prisoners!' Thursday 14 March 7pm Riddles Court (top of High Street)

FITZWILLIAM PRISONERS AID COMMITTEE

Since our formation the Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee has grown in stature and confidence. The ongoing convictions of miners and subsequent gaoling sentences have left us with a pretty heavy workload.

We have held regular meetings and also nationwide collections. We have also attended many meetings of support groups all over the country. One of our most important attendances was the picket of Wandsworth Prison in support of Terry French, the Kent miner gaoled for five years for an alleged assault on the police. Two committee members have also attended a tour of meetings in Scotland, speaking at FRFI meetings and support group meetings.

At the start of February we attended a meeting in Ollerton Miners Welfare Club to set up a national co-ordinating committee in support of imprisoned miners, called the 'National Association of Miners and Supporters Prisoners Aid Committee'. A national conference in full support of our imprisoned comrades is to be held.

FPAC urges everyone to help us in the work of fighting this injustice. We ask that you write to the miners in prison so that they do not stand alone. FPAC will come and speak at your meetings about miners in prison. FPAC has bulletins and a petition calling for the release of miners in prison – if you would like copies and any further information please contact us. We also need donations to help us with our work, so please send cheques/POs payable to Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee.

Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee, 4 Rockingham Street, Fitzwilliam, Nr Pontefract, Yorks meets weekly on Tuesdays 7.30pm, Kinsley Hotel, Kinsley, Nr Pontefract
PUBLIC MEETING Sunday 24 March 7.30pm Kinsley Hotel. Speakers invited: Davey Miller (NUM), Brenda Greenwood, Revolutionary Communist Group.

of the organised labour movement. Because of this the left does not and has never recognised the revolutionary role of the most oppressed sections of the working class. As the RCG alone argued would happen, right from the start of the strike, miners have come to see new allies among the most oppressed sections of the working class, in those fighting for freedom in the Six Counties of Ireland, and in black people fighting here against the racist British state. This, one of the major political gains of the strike, has completely passed the British 'left' by.

The CPGB has refused to break its links with the Labour Party and TUC bureaucracy. With its internal crisis coming to a head during the strike, the CPGB has been forced to cover up the TUC's scabbing on the strike – covering up the most basic split in the working class. The day after the TUC had said it couldn't contemplate breaking the law to help the miners, the *Morning Star* (7 December 1984) headline read 'TUC pledges "we will keep NUM going"'. The SWP, like most of the Trotskyist left, sees only a split between the rotten bureaucracy and the fighting rank-and-file. Because of this they can only ex-



FREE TERRY FRENCH

250 demonstrators, including miners from Kent, Wales and Notts, defied police threats of arrest to stand cheering and singing as hands appeared through the cell bars of Wandsworth Prison where Terry French, Betteshanger NUM leader, is imprisoned after being given a ferocious five year sentence.

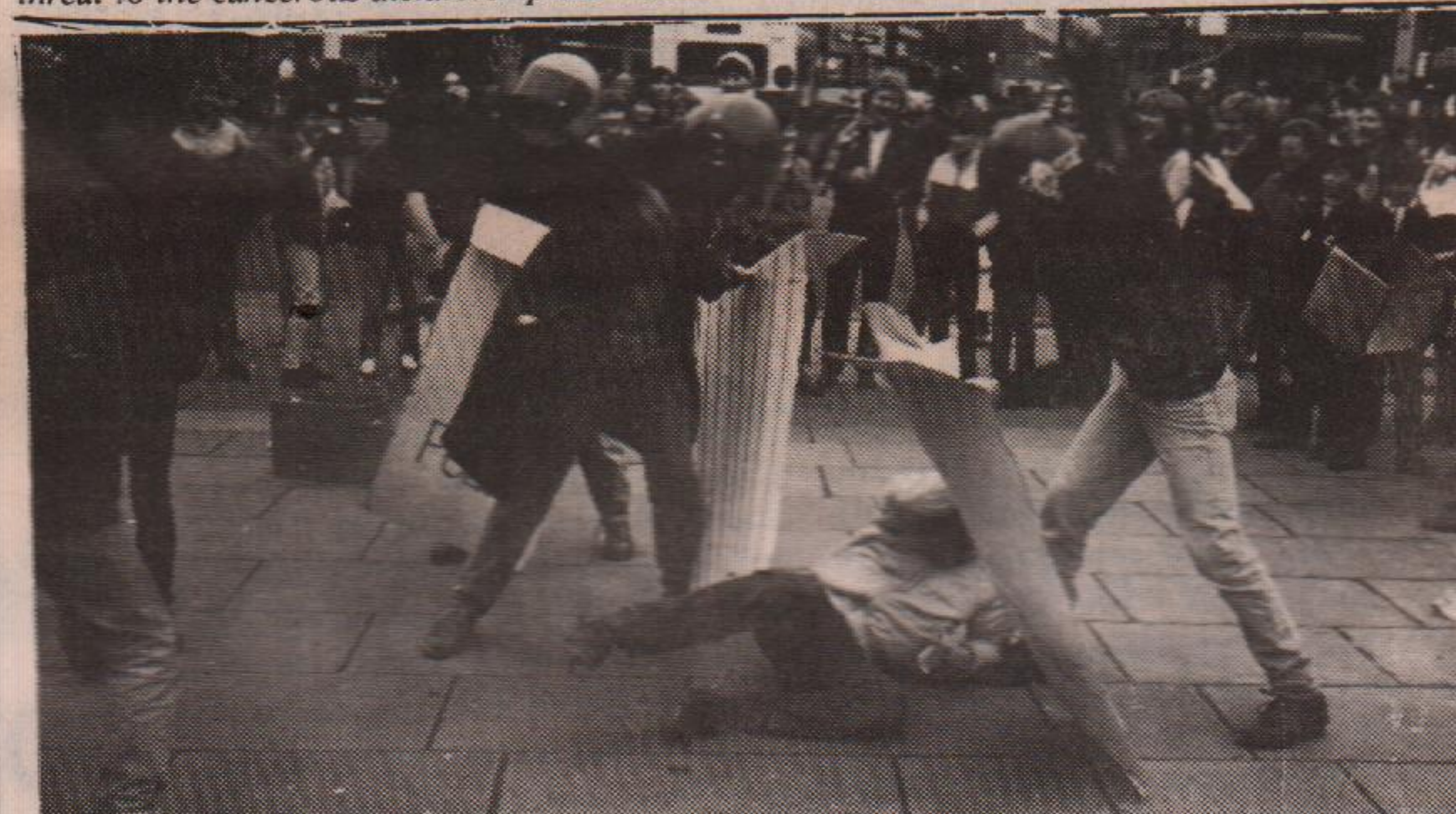
The demonstration on Saturday 16 February was initiated through the Islington Miners Support Group by RCG comrades and other local activists – it was supported by Miners Support Groups from Hackney, Wandsworth and Caxton House and by Kent NUM and Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee.

EXTRACTS FROM TERRY FRENCH'S MESSAGE TO PICKET

'Comrades and friends, I thank you for demonstrating on our behalf. I say our behalf because Liz needs your support as much as I do.

'We all know why myself and all the other miners have been imprisoned by Thatcher's puppets in the Judiciary, it's because we pose a threat to the cancerous dictatorship she wishes

to impose on the working class of this country, but beaten she can be and beaten she will be. I am being treated no differently than the other prisoners except for a few remarks by the odd Tory officer. I am concerned however about the sanitation in here. Two toilets, one hot water tap for 58 prisoners on my landing. All washing of eating utensils and personal washing is done in your cell. You are allowed two letters to be sent out each week, one of which you must buy from your earnings of



Street theatre in Dundee

'Go Out to the People!' was the rallying call of Scottish FRFI's weekend of action in solidarity with the miners; and that was just what we did. On Saturday 23 February about 50 people assembled in Dundee City Square from Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow, prepared for all-out activity to build support for the miners. Two Yorkshire miners also travelled up from Fitzwilliam to tell the people of Dundee about the Prisoners Aid Committee which had been set up to defend the hundreds of miners who are now being sent to prison. Collections took place all over Dundee, both in the city centre and in working class areas. About 40 people attended the Sunday Day School.

The tour by the Fitzwilliam miners around the Weekend of Action to Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Fife was a major step forward for all those working for the miners' cause. Seeds have been sown which now need the hard work of dedicated people if the ideas are to be carried through. FRFI will be in the centre of this.

Helen Anderson

plain the inability of the miners to win an outright victory by blaming firstly the Labour Party and trade union bureaucracy, and secondly the leadership of the NUM and, in the last few months, Arthur Scargill himself.

So the scabbing of the majority of Notts miners is put down to the wrong picketing tactics of the NUM leadership and the failure of the great majority of the organised labour movement to support the miners is attributed to 'right wing union leaders'. Chris Harman tells us, in a SWP pamphlet *The miners strike and the struggle for socialism*, that:

'The enthusiasm for solidarity from rank-and-file activists has not been matched by the official leaders' (p10)

This simplistic division is easily destroyed by a cursory examination of the actual positions taken by many rank-and-file dockers, electricians, power workers, steel workers, transport workers, especially the lorry drivers. The fact that many railway workers and seamen have given active solidarity to the strike only highlights the overall betrayals throughout the organised working class movement. A point which might escape Har-

man but which thousands of striking miners fully understand.

The TUC and Labour Party has scabbed on the strike not simply because its leaders are rotten and well off but because the movement itself represents the interests of the more privileged layers of the working class. It is their movement.

Refusing to recognise this, the British 'left' in the last few months of the strike, with the pressures on the mining communities to abandon the strike becoming more intense, saw fit to attack Arthur Scargill – the most outstanding and principled trade union leader in Britain for decades. The SWP, for example, attacked Scargill for not speaking out openly 'about the lethargy, the incompetence and bureaucratic sabotage of so many of the officials under him'. They said his silence was 'almost criminal'.

At the very moment when the ruling class was intent on isolating Arthur Scargill as an unrepresentative 'extremist', the left wants him to purge his own officials. Scargill, unlike the left, has troops to lead and has to deal with political reality and the real balance of forces within the miners' strike. The NUM is not a revolutionary organisation, but a trade union with all the political limi-

CLASS WAR PRISONERS

The sentence, if known, is given in brackets
HMP Ranby, Nr Retford, Notts DN22 8EU
 Rob Andrews, Derby; Paul Brothwell, Derby (12 mths); Peter Cooper, Derby (6 mths); Ron Staniland, Derby (6 mths); M Wyzille, Derby.
HMP Sudbury, Derby DE6 5HW
 Kevin Beal, Derby (2½ yrs); Graham Cooper, Derby (2½ yrs); Steve Goodall (2½ yrs); David James (2½ yrs); Ian Kestle, Derby (2½ yrs); Peter Pearson, Derby (2½ yrs); Michael Southwell, Derby (2½ yrs); Glen Wright, Derby (6 mths)
HMP Lincoln, Greetwell Rd., Lincoln LN2 4BD
 Jimmy Lees, Derby; Steve and Victor Gregory (remand) Derby
HMYO Centre, Glen Parva, Safron Rd, Wigton, Leicester
 Simon Brookes, Derby (18 mths); Robert Travis, Derby (18 mths)
HMP Wellingborough, Northants
 David Gaunt, Derby (3 yrs); Paul Jones, Derby (2½ yrs); David Mason, Derby (2½ yrs); Phillip Sterland, Derby (2½ yrs)
HMP Armley, Armley Rd, Leeds 12
 Ian Black, Yorks (6 mths); Michael and Alan Eyrebowho, Yorks; Gary Milward, Yorks; Steve Wakefield, Yorks
HMP Haverigg Open, Milham, Cumbria
 Peter Hurst, Yorks (6 mths)

HMP Cardiff, Knox Rd, Cardiff, South Glamorgan CF2 1UG
 Dean Hancock 899410, Wales (Remand); Russell Shankland 883752, Wales (Remand); Mr Williams, Wales (Remand)
HMP Walton Gaol, Liverpool
 William Bannister, Staffordshire (2 yrs); Michael Jones, Staffordshire (2 yrs); Stephen Lowe, Staffordshire (2 yrs); Raymond Patton, Staffordshire (2 yrs)
HMP Strangeways, Southall St, Manchester M60 9AH
 Dennis Pinnington, Lancs (3 mths)
Risley Remand Centre, Warrington Rd, Risley, Warrington, Cheshire
 Gary Mould, Staffs (2 yrs)
HMP Wandsworth, PO Box 757, Heathfield Rd, London SW18 3HS
 Terry French B73383, Kent (5 yrs)
HMYO Chelmsford
 Chris Tazey A29398, Kent (3 yrs)
HMP Featherstone, New Rd., Wolverhampton WV10 7PU
 John Ellis; Mark Grove; Peter Newbold; Billy Taylor
Wymott Prison, Leyland Lancs PR5 3LW
 Gordin Miller E46197, Durham (4 mths)
HMP Prison Rudgate, Weatherby LS23 7AZ
 Gary Hopper E46193, Durham (4 mths); George Richardson E46187, Durham (4mths)

about £1.50 per week. I have already had a final warning about the mail I am receiving (keep sending it). The vast majority of men have no work and are kept locked up for 22 out of 24 hours every day. This is Thatcher's Britain 1985.

'... Finally in the words of Emlyn Williams, "They cannot sequester an idea or imprison a belief"'.
Victory to the miners and the whole of the working class
 Terry French

EXTRACT FROM DAVID REED'S SPEECH TO PICKET

'The whole world knows of Bobby Sands and his determined struggle for freedom. He gave his life for it. He is admired by freedom fighters the world over. The whole world knows of

Nelson Mandela, he could be out of prison today but after twenty years in prison he refuses to give up the revolutionary struggle for freedom in South Africa. Bobby Sands and Nelson Mandela will be remembered long after Thatcher has been confined to the dustbin of history. So it must be for those resolute fighters in the miners' strike. The class struggle must not end at the prison gates. Those facing imprisonment on picket lines must be confident in the knowledge that should they be sent to prison they will join their comrades to continue the class struggle inside. We owe it to our comrades inside to organise political and material support for their struggle. We have to publicise their conditions. We have to expose any denial of their rights, and if we do this then the prison system will be turned against the gaolers themselves, the Thatcher government and the capitalist system she upholds...'

Scotland goes out to the people!



In the last issue of FRFI (No 46) there was an error in the last sentence of the miners' editorial on page two.

Instead of '... the heroic struggle of the striking miners, their families and communities...' this should have read, '...the heroic struggle of the striking miners, their families and communities...'

join the RCG

The Revolutionary Communist Group and its newspaper *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* take the side of all those struggling against imperialism – the striking miners, black people, the Irish people, oppressed people all over the world.

If you want to know more about us and our newspaper *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* return the slip below.

Please send me more information about the RCG and how to obtain FRFI regularly.

Name _____
 Address _____

Tel _____
 Return to FRFI BCM Box 5809 London WC1N 3XX

tations which that entails. Arthur Scargill cannot change this and neither can the SWP.

Some six months before the miners' strike began, the RCG, in its manifesto, *The revolutionary road to communism in Britain* stated:

'...a revolutionary trend cannot arise or be built first and foremost in the existing Labour Party and trade union movement. This does not rule out the development of massive working class struggles as rank-and-file trade unionists are forced out of desperate necessity to defend jobs, wages and living standards. Only that such workers and their struggles will inevitably be betrayed by the very same leaders who have consistently betrayed the Irish people, the black people and all peoples oppressed by British imperialism.'

The miners' strike has confirmed this, but a year of bitter struggle has thrown up new class organisations that can take the struggle of the working class forward. We have seen this in the work of the women's support groups in the mining areas and the miners' support groups in the towns and cities – organ-

isations outside the control of the Labour and trade union bureaucracies. The resistance of the mining communities has indeed 'brought a new dimension to British politics'.

The miners' struggle will go on even with the miners back at work. Resistance to NCB management bent on attacking the more militant miners will be necessary. The over 700 miners victimised and sacked for fighting for their class have to be defended and reinstated in their jobs. The over 150 class war prisoners, the most resolute class fighters among the miners, must likewise be defended and their struggle for political rights in prison centrally taken up in the movement outside. Material and financial support must be organised by the NUM and the support groups for the victimised miners and their families until they are reinstated, and for the imprisoned miners and their families. If all this is done and the political gains of the strike are consolidated and its political lessons learned, then history will confirm that the miners' strike 1984/5 was a turning point in the struggle of the British working class.

Olivia Adamson/David Reed



POLICE FILE

● Snatch of the day

In the streets of the St Mary's housing scheme on 29 and 30 November 1984, the police of Dundee arose (in all their pomp and majesty) to avert a 'potential uprising' among the youth of that area.

Thirteen policemen and a dog, several in plain clothes with unmarked cars, carried the master plan into execution, arresting 9 youngsters aged between 16 and 18.

What, you may ask, had these youngsters done to deserve such attention from the police? Well, firstly, they had been playing football at the entrance to a multi-storey, terrorising the public in a way that only a game of football can. One woman, newly out of hospital and still under the effects of the anaesthetic complained to the police about the noise.

She phoned the police at 6.20pm As is normally the case with the police, this was followed by immediate action, and two hours later PCs Jeffreys and McGoldrick arrived fresh on the scene.

The footballers, used to having their games spoiled by pitch invasions by the local police, dispersed quickly.

Then, in constable Jeffreys own words, the youth began to shout 'Miners rule', 'Arthur Scargill' and 'If you hate the Dundee polis, clap your hands.' Each time the police chased them, they ran through a narrow path that the police could not get through. By the time the police had driven the long way round, the same thing happened, and the kids ran off down the path.

Arriving less swiftly on the scene in cavalry fashion, PC Anderson, dog in hand, came to the rescue. The dog was unleashed upon the youths, biting a sixteen-year-old girl who received no medical attention, but was thrown unceremoniously into the back of a police car and in her own words 'treated like dirt'.

Two kids were arrested with the aid of the dog, but this only led to a lust for greater glory in the heart of PC McGoldrick (known as Ivor to the locals). He called over one of the youths, Brian Mitchell, and told him that if he and his mates wanted a re-match he would give them a performance the next night.

True to his word, he laid out careful plans for a 'special operation' (his words), blessed by his superiors and to be launched the next night, a Friday. Twelve policemen were drafted in, a system of zonal marking was used that would have done the Italian football team proud, and PC McGoldrick and his colleagues gave a virtuoso performance that justified all their training and experience. In short, they went bloody mad, arresting any youngster that happened to be in the area that night, some who had never even met one another. A further seven youths were charged, many of them for their so-called crimes of the previous night.

In court, however, the unorganised and chaotic side of the police was seen when no two Constables out of the half dozen in the witness box gave the same story. Some obviously didn't even know who they'd arrested.

Five of the nine were freed, whilst four await background reports, having been found guilty, among them the wee lass savaged by the police dog.

David W

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Ponting acquitted by vetted jury

On Monday 11 February, in an historic decision, a vetted Old Bailey jury acquitted Clive Ponting of charges under the Official Secrets Act. The acquittal amounted to a direct refusal by the jury to accept the rulings given by trial judge Justice McCowan. McCowan had ruled that the 'interests of the state' were the same as the policies of the government – this was, in effect, a direction to the jury to convict Ponting. The jury acquitted.

This action by the jury was an important victory for democratic rights. The jury were declaring that the right of the people to know is greater than the 'right' of the ruling class to deceive. It was a verdict of guilty against the Tory government for its continuing attempts to cover up its war-lust in the Malvinas war.

Ponting's 'offence' had been to leak documents to Labour MP Tam Dalyell. These and the trial exposed further details of government lies on the sinking of the Belgrano. The Belgrano was sunk on 2 May 1982. 368 Argentine sailors were killed. The government has lied about the sinking ever since. It claimed that the Belgrano was close to the exclusion zone and a threat. It was moving away. The government claimed that the Belgrano was sighted at 8pm on 2 May. It was sighted the previous day and tracked up to the moment of being sunk. The government claimed that the decision to sink the ship was taken by the submarine commander.

It was ordered from London. The government claimed that the Belgrano was a threat. The Belgrano never engaged in any attack manoeuvres. The government claimed that the Belgrano was part of a 'pincer movement' with the Veinticino de Mayo. This was an invention of Naval Intelligence. These lies expose the reality: the British government was engaged in an all-out undeclared war to defend its own imperialist interests and was, and is, ready to tell any lie possible to cover up this fact.

The Belgrano affair is only one example of the ever-widening gap between the supposed norms of bourgeois democracy and law (both national and international) and the reality of a ruling class forced to trample on its own laws and democracy in order to defend its profiteering and power. As the crisis of British imperialism grows daily more intense the conflict between profit and democracy grows sharper. The ruling class seeks, however, to disguise its actual wars – against the Irish; against the miners; against the peace movement – under a cover of 'law' and 'democracy'. The gap between reality and this disguise can only be filled by deceit and secrecy. Hence the lying about the Belgrano. Hence the prosecution of Sarah Tisdall and Clive Ponting.

As this conflict grows, more and more servants of the state itself will find themselves confronted by a crisis of conscience. Most will remain silent and continue drawing their considerable salaries. Some will speak out and thus help to

reveal to more and more people that the truth of our 'democracy' is democracy for the rich and oppression for the poor or anyone who opposes the interests of the ruling class. Those, like Ponting, who decide to speak out are performing an invaluable service in the struggle for democratic rights. The jury at the Old Bailey are to be congratulated for defying McCowan's ruling. It is no surprise that the reaction of one Tory MP to the verdict was to demand a more 'careful' 'selection' of juries. There will no doubt be further covert attacks on the role of juries.

Predictably the real lessons of the Ponting affair were immediately obscured by Neil Kinnock. He chose to fulminate about whether Thatcher had spoken to the Attorney-General. The prosecution of Clive Ponting would not have taken place unless the Attorney-General was certain of Thatcher's approval – whether they actually spoke about it is irrelevant. However, this irrelevancy allowed the Labour Party to avoid discussing the exposure of the great Parliamentary fraud (and the never-to-be-forgotten fact that the Labour Party supported the Malvinas war).

The victory in the Ponting case is a blow to the government's campaign to frighten its own servants into silence. Clive Ponting is to be congratulated for deciding to fight. That decision made possible a significant victory for democratic rights.

Terry O'Halloran

AIDS - a 20th century witch-hunt

The recent sensationalist media coverage given to AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) has led to a virtual witch hunt against gay people. Journalists are using AIDS to attack gay people and set back the struggle for gay liberation.

Firemen have been warned by their union not to give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to suspected male gays. A pub owner in Liverpool banned all gays from his chain of pubs. Mike Murphy has been banned from a workingmen's club unless he can prove that he does not have AIDS. A South London taxi firm has refused to collect passengers from gay pubs and clubs. Gay men have reported hostility and isolation at work, in canteens, in trade union meetings and so on. Some gay men have been driven to attempted suicide as a direct result of the AIDS hysteria promoted by the media. A letter smuggled out of Wandsworth prison recently threatened attacks on gay prisoners unless they were immediately put in isolation. The Prison Officers Association (POA) has instituted temporary bans on the movement of prisoners at Chelmsford, Wormwood Scrubs and other prisons.

The media-induced AIDS panic comes at a time of increasing oppression of gay people. Gay men have been stopped, strip searched and had allegedly 'obscene' material confiscated. Nine people from Gays The Word are presently on trial for 'conspiring to import indecent material'. 'Queer-bashing' is once again on the increase. Crisis-ridden British capitalism uses every rotten prejudice it can manipulate to justify oppression. Against gay people it is using the medical problem of AIDS as a means of justifying its own onslaught on basic democratic rights. In November *The Times* declared that AIDS '... excites repugnance, moral and physical, at promiscuous male homosexuality.' Only a system as rotten as British imperialism could blame the victims of a disease for that disease's existence. Gay men are no more the cause of AIDS than polio victims are the cause of polio.

AIDS is caused by a virus which attacks the body's normal defences against

disease. Of those who contract the virus only one in ten will actually develop AIDS. To date there have been roughly 120 confirmed cases of AIDS in Britain since the first AIDS-related death of Terrence Higgins on 4 July 1982. At the time of writing there have been no confirmed cases of AIDS amongst prisoners. Neither in the US nor in Britain have there been any confirmed cases of health workers contracting AIDS as a result of caring for AIDS patients. It is estimated that the present risk in Britain is 1 out of every 2 million men, or 1 out of every 40,000 gay men.

AIDS cannot be contracted by casual contact with an AIDS sufferer – the virus has to directly infect the bloodstream. It appears to be passed on by close sexual contact, by transfusion of infected blood or by use of infected needles by drug users. Although the virus has been found in saliva there is, as yet, no evidence that it can be passed on through saliva. It is not confined to gay men although some 75% of AIDS sufferers in the US and Britain are gay men.



Gays in the US protest

AIDS is a very serious disease. Those who contract it are almost certain to die. There is, at present, no known cure. Despite the seriousness of AIDS the government and the DHSS have done next to nothing about it. AIDS was first identified as a disease four years ago. Terrence Higgins died 2½ years ago. Nothing was done. Ignorant and vicious media lies

about a 'gay plague' were allowed to circulate in order to promote attacks on gay people's rights.

The criminal irresponsibility of those seeking to manipulate the AIDS issue for their own ends is best shown by the actions of the Prison Officers Association. Four suspected AIDS cases amongst prisoners have been luridly publicised. None have been confirmed as AIDS cases. The death of AIDS victim Gregory Richards, chaplain at Chelmsford prison, was used by the POA leadership as the basis for a ban on the movement of prisoners. Local officers opposed the ban. The POA is only using AIDS as a means of demanding more staff and more pay from the Home Office. They are quite prepared to put gay prisoners at risk and stir up trouble to feather their own nest. The intolerable and dangerous conditions in British prisons – overcrowding, too many prisoners sharing too few toilet facilities, filth and squalor – were not caused by gay prisoners or AIDS. They make the dangers of

LEGAL THREAT TO TEACHERS

Members of the National Union of Teachers are threatened with having their pay docked if they continue to take action in response to a breakdown in pay talks. Teachers want an extra £1,200 across the board but have only been offered 4%. A growing number of education authorities are writing to NUT members warning them that salary deductions will take place if they continue with their action. According to the authorities, withdrawal from voluntary duties is a breach of contract while the NUT insists that it is withdrawing good-will and not taking industrial action.

When Solihull took the NUT to court on 22 February the union was ordered by the judge to call off its 16 day campaign, because it had been called without a ballot. The NUT immediately ordered a ballot of its members and said that it was sure of winning support for resumption of the action.

Given the response of the TUC to attacks on trade union rights and its scabbing on the miners' strike, the government, via the local education authorities, is now feeling confident to dock teachers' pay for not carrying out voluntary duties. The NUT has promised to stand by members whose pay is cut. 'We will not allow them to be penalised' a spokesperson said.

The outcome of the teachers struggle remains to be seen. Unfortunately the NUT Executive and many teachers are governed purely by their own sectional interests. The NUT EC refused to support the 11 February Day of Action called by the South East Region of the TUC in support of the miners and warned teachers wanting to take action that it would be 'unofficial'. However many individual teachers did take action in London where at least 20 schools were entirely closed and many others affected.

Sian Bond

'THE ENEMY WITHIN'

On Wednesday 20 February the 'Independent' Broadcasting Corporation banned a documentary made for Channel 4's 20/20 Vision programme, clearly showing that the IBA is nothing but another arm of the government and the ruling class.

In the banned programme, two MI5 intelligence officers revealed that leading members of the NUM, CND and NCCL, as well as many other groups, have had their telephones tapped by MI5. Political information about strikes and campaigns is regularly passed to government ministers, breaking MI5's own 'rules', which hypocritically state that 'the security service should be kept absolutely free from any political bias or influence'. Information about the activities of members of CND is passed on by MI5 to DS19, a propaganda unit set up by Michael Heseltine in 1983.

As well as Arthur Scargill, Scottish NUM president Mick McGahey has been a recent target of MI5. He has had his telephone tapped, as well as being bugged in his London hotel room and in a cafe where he met other trade unionists.

Leon Brittan, defending the use of phone tapping, has reiterated the government's 'right' (introduced by the Labour

government in 1975) to intercept 'subversive' phone calls involving 'activities which threaten the safety and well-being of the state which are intended to undermine or overthrow parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means.'

These leaks about illegal operations are particularly blatant when it is remembered that only a few weeks ago the government issued new guidelines about the role of Special Branch in monitoring 'subversives' – the ruling class breaks its own laws whenever it suits them.

Special Branch officers continuously spy on anti-racist groups. Recently they expressed their concern about the growing fight-back against deportations and particularly 'a concerted effort by the Bradford Asian Youth Movement (left wing) ... to overthrow the Home Office's policy on deportations and removals.' Special Branch has played a major role in gaining information about miners' leaders, NUM militants, picketing arrangements and NUM finances.

Meanwhile, the TUC in its usual spirit of compromise with the ruling class, argues that Special Branch must 'achieve a reasonable balance between its operational needs and traditional liberties' (!)

There are over 3½ million people on Special Branch files – Thatcher's 'enemy within' is growing daily and will not be silenced by the state or the opportunists.

Graham Johnson

CITY GROUP EXPELLED BY AAM FORWARD EVER BACKWARD NEVER!

The rift in the British Anti-Apartheid Movement has inevitably grown as the struggle in South Africa has escalated and has demanded greater solidarity and activity from the British people. As in all periods of political crisis, the opposing trends have been sharpened. Who is going to give solidarity to the people of Southern Africa? How is that solidarity going to be built? These are the questions posed before the movement. The Anti-Apartheid Movement national committee has given its answer. It will not tolerate any development in the movement over which it cannot exert its deadly control. Far better little activity than City Group activity.

The AAM leadership values its links with the Labour Party, particularly the Kinnock wing, far more than any real struggle against apartheid. In spite of years of betrayal of the South African and Namibian people by every Labour government in power, it steadfastly prefers this alliance to really building an activist movement on the ground.

City Group's pickets and activities have attracted large numbers of people – especially working class youth – who want to be politically active against apartheid. They are a challenge to the status quo. They do not regard anything as sacred, and will accept no 'order', no 'party line' until it is proved to be the correct one. Above all they want to be involved at every level in activities and decision-making. They hate imperialism and oppression everywhere. They see the links between their own struggle, the striking miners, the Irish, the people of Southern Africa – the oppressed all over the world. They believe in democracy – they believe that everyone should be allowed to have their say.

This is a threat to the AAM leadership. This is why they are content that

there are very few black people in the AAM; very few young people in the AAM; very few oppressed people in the AAM. They do not want people who refuse to limit the AAM's activities to the conference room, to secret talks with the government and the police. They certainly do not want those who see the unity of different struggles for democracy and freedom as central to strengthening the AAM.

No further proof of this policy is needed than the AAM leadership's response to the South African Embassy Picket Campaign, and more recently its response to the Birkenhead protest against Zola Budd.

Last summer the AAM leadership publicly attacked the campaign to win back the right to picket outside the South African Embassy. They claimed that secret negotiations with the police would result in a lifting of the ban, and that a direct confrontation with the police and the embassy was unnecessary and would bring the AAM into public disrepute. They were proved wrong. But it mattered little, for they did not want to fight British collaboration with apartheid here in Britain at all.

The successful disruption of Zola Budd's race in Birkenhead on Sunday 14 February by a group of black and white people in Liverpool, drew forth the same criticism. Cate Clarke, deputy secretary of the AAM, in an interview on Radio 4 the day after, was anxious to make it clear that 'We don't support it, we wouldn't encourage members of the AAM to disrupt meetings in that way'. Further it was said that 'the official AAM say they are hoping it won't cause them to lose public sympathy because of bad publicity'.

This was in stark contrast to the

response of a member of the Liverpool group who, when challenged that their activities might be unlawful, said: 'It was proved effective on Saturday, whether it was unlawful or not. There's unlawful things going on in South Africa and nobody seems to care, but when a group of black and white people get together to protest against her [Zola Budd], people start shouting it's unlawful. What about the unlawful acts going on in South Africa at the moment?'

The contrast in responses, between City Group and the AAM on the issue of pickets, between black people and the AAM about Zola Budd, is at the heart of the matter. Just as Neil Kinnock and his lackeys are more interested in attacking the 'violence' of the striking miners than the police terror orchestrated by the NCB and Thatcher, so the AAM is anxious to dissociate itself from anti-imperialists and anti-racists fighting apartheid, in order to maintain its image of respectability. They would rather make many concessions to the police and even the Thatcher government, than make one concession to City Group or other groups of anti-imperialists and anti-racists. If the AAM leadership believes that British collaboration with apartheid will be destroyed with the election of Neil Kinnock as Prime Minister, they should look at the past record of Labour governments and openly justify their stand.

The AAM leadership, just like the Labour leaders who betrayed the striking miners, are forces of the past. Indeed they both should beware – the forces of the future are upon them and they will not be held back.

Carol Brickley/David Reed

SUPPORT FOR CITY GROUP

The following people, and many, many more, have signed the statement calling on the AAM National Committee not to expel City of London Anti-Apartheid Group.

Richard Balfe MEP; Tony Banks MP; Tony Benn MP; Ron Brown MP; Bob Clay MP; Harry Cohen MP; Jeremy Corbyn MP; Iltyd Harrington (GLC Chair; Eddie Loyden MP; Bob McTaggart MP; Dave Nellist MP; Bob Parris MP; Terry Rich (Lambeth councillor); Ernie Roberts MP; Brian Sedgmore MP; Dennis Skinner MP; Valerie Wise (GLC)

● *City Group is dominated by a political group which has a vested interest in operating all over London and that is why City Group won't accept geographical limits (Vella Pillay)* 1) City Group has accepted geographical limits – but not the derisory 1 square mile of the City of London. 2) Readers get no prize for guessing that the 'political group' unnamed is the RCG which, for the information of Vella Pillay, requires no seal of approval from the national committee to campaign wherever it chooses and does so!

● *City Group has its own letter heading, telephone number and (dare we say it?) is funded by the GLC (Alan Brooks)* In any other movement City Group would be congratulated for its enterprise. Is it case that, in the AAM, the national office is jealous that others, with a little effort, will appear more professional than they are?

City Group was also accused of singing liberation songs!

After such elevating discussion, City Group was duly expelled from the movement (28 for 3 against) and hopefully the National Committee went on to dwell more seriously on the other political matters before it.

Carol Brickley

AAM National Committee stamps on progress

Three members of City of London Anti-Apartheid Group attended the national committee meeting of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) in Cardiff on Saturday 23 February. The meeting decided to expel City Group from the AAM on the grounds that 'City Group is not acting as a local group of the AAM'. Under the item dealing with matters arising from the minutes of the December national committee meeting, the AAM disposed of any pretence at democracy by successfully concluding its 2½-year-old witch-hunt against City Group.

First of all, the national committee had to be reminded, by a member of City Group, that the minutes of the last meeting were inaccurate. They failed to record any reference to the two motions proposed by City Group, and overwhelmingly carried at the October AGM, about the struggle against racism in Britain and the need to broaden the movement's support. All the other motions from the AGM were recorded.

The report and discussion of City Group's expulsion (a word they were reluctant to use) was little more than an opportunity for National Committee members to repeat the lies and slanders they have rehearsed over the last two and a half years. The letter from City Group agreeing to operate in the City of London, Holborn and Westminster was rarely mentioned. After Mike Terry had refused to read out the messages of support for City Group sent from all over the country, national committee members were treated to, among others, the following bizarre allegations:

● *City Group, despite invitations, has never attended the London committee meetings (Vella Pillay)* City Group members attend all London committee meetings, and indeed were asked to send fewer representatives on the grounds that their numbers were 'intimidating'.

City Group was the only local group in London to attend the last 'all-London event' – a picket of Barclays – apart from the committee's secretary and one member of Croydon AA.

● *City Group invented a story that Nelson Mandela was dying in prison (Vella Pillay)* City Group did no such thing. It called a picket for the release of Nelson Mandela and included in the publicity, news from Mary Benson that Nelson Mandela and his comrades were 'entombed alive' in a damp prison cell and that there were grave fears for their health. Indeed this information was highlighted on the front cover of an ANC news briefing, reported to the UN Special Committee on Apartheid, and was the subject of a letter from David Steel, Dennis Healey and the Duke of Devonshire in *The Times* 24 May 1983.

● *City Group uses its own petitions (Bob Hughes)* Quite true, but only because the AAM demands that all donations collected on its petitions are handed over to the national movement. None can be used where it counts – by local groups who are doing the campaigning on the streets.

● *City Group is a parasite on the movement... sometimes the parasite is stronger than the host (Alan Brooks)* No comment!



On Thursday 21 February two City Group members, Kayode and Andy, climbed to the roof of the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square to hang a banner calling for the release of Nelson Mandela! They were accused of 'conduct likely to provoke a disturbance of the peace' – presumably they disturbed the peace of the fascists in the South African Embassy opposite. Kayode and Andy say 'We must all ensure that there will be no peace until Mandela and the people of Southern Africa are free'. They appear in court on 11 March when the trial date will be set.

FREE MANDELA NOW – UNITY IN ACTION!

Hundreds joined the City of London Anti-Apartheid Group 24 hour picket of the South African Embassy on 22/23 February for the immediate, unconditional release of Nelson Mandela. Enthusiasm for the liberation struggles of the ANC and SWAPO, solidarity with the United Democratic Front, support for City Group and determination to continue the pickets as a focus for action were ever present themes.

The picket opened on Friday evening with a rally that soon grew to over 250 people. We announced the support from MPs to the picket and circulated the Statement of Support for City Group to stay in the AAM. Many messages of support were given including Wilmette Brown (Kings Cross Women's Centre); Mick Gavan (Tower Hamlets Trades Council); Terry Rich (Lambeth councillor).

Youth and students from numerous colleges stayed overnight. Special thanks are due to LSE, Southampton University and King's College Cambridge students. The 50 picketers who were still singing freedom songs at 4am had been joined at midnight by folksinger Peggy Seeger.

Richard Balfe MEP greeted the picket on Saturday morning and called for greater protests against apartheid. Performing artists included Skint Video and the Big Red Band.

Collections were held for the striking miners by Westminster Teachers Miners Support Group, for two unemployed women to travel to the Armagh Women's prison picket on International Women's Day and for FRFI's prisoners page. Black youth, striking miners, women from Greenham Common, the South London Women's Hospital occupation, St Albans LPYS, Islington Miners Support Group and many more – unity is our strength. Unity cannot be achieved in practice without democracy for all political trends against apartheid. The picket demonstrated this – newspapers on sale as well as Anti-Apartheid News included FRFI, Morning Star, Labour Herald, Marxism Today and Socialist Worker. That 436 FRFI were sold shows that this paper is indispensable for building the anti-imperialist trend within the AAM that opposes all collaboration with apartheid. The interest in FRFI is due to FRFI supporters' work in City Group. 40 picketers signed up to work with FRFI.

On Saturday afternoon the picket heard of the AAM National Committee's decision to disaffiliate City Group. Speaking for FRFI Ruby Khan said the AAM cannot be restricted to a lobbying group for Neil Kinnock. 'They cannot disaffiliate the struggle. These pickets will continue!' and pledged the RCG's commitment to fight for the reaffiliation of City Group. David Kitson said that young people in South Africa are out on the streets fighting and have made great strides forward, and that determination and vigour will also be necessary in Britain. Jeremy Corbyn MP told the picketers, 'You fought long and hard battles on this pavement. Don't ever give up for anybody'. Andy Goddard

MARCH MONTH OF ACTION

Boycott apartheid! Smash British collaboration with apartheid!

DUNDEE

Picket of W M Lows
Thursday 7 March, 2-3pm
W M Lows, Overgate
Picket of Littlewoods
Thursday 14 March, 2-3pm
Littlewoods
12 Hour Picket
Saturday 16 March, 8am to 8pm
City Centre
Picket of Betty Whites
Thursday 21 March, 2-3pm
Betty Whites, Nethergate
Picket W M Lows
Thursday 28 March, 2-3pm
W M Lows, Perth Road
All organised by Dundee AA. FRFI will be supporting

LEEDS

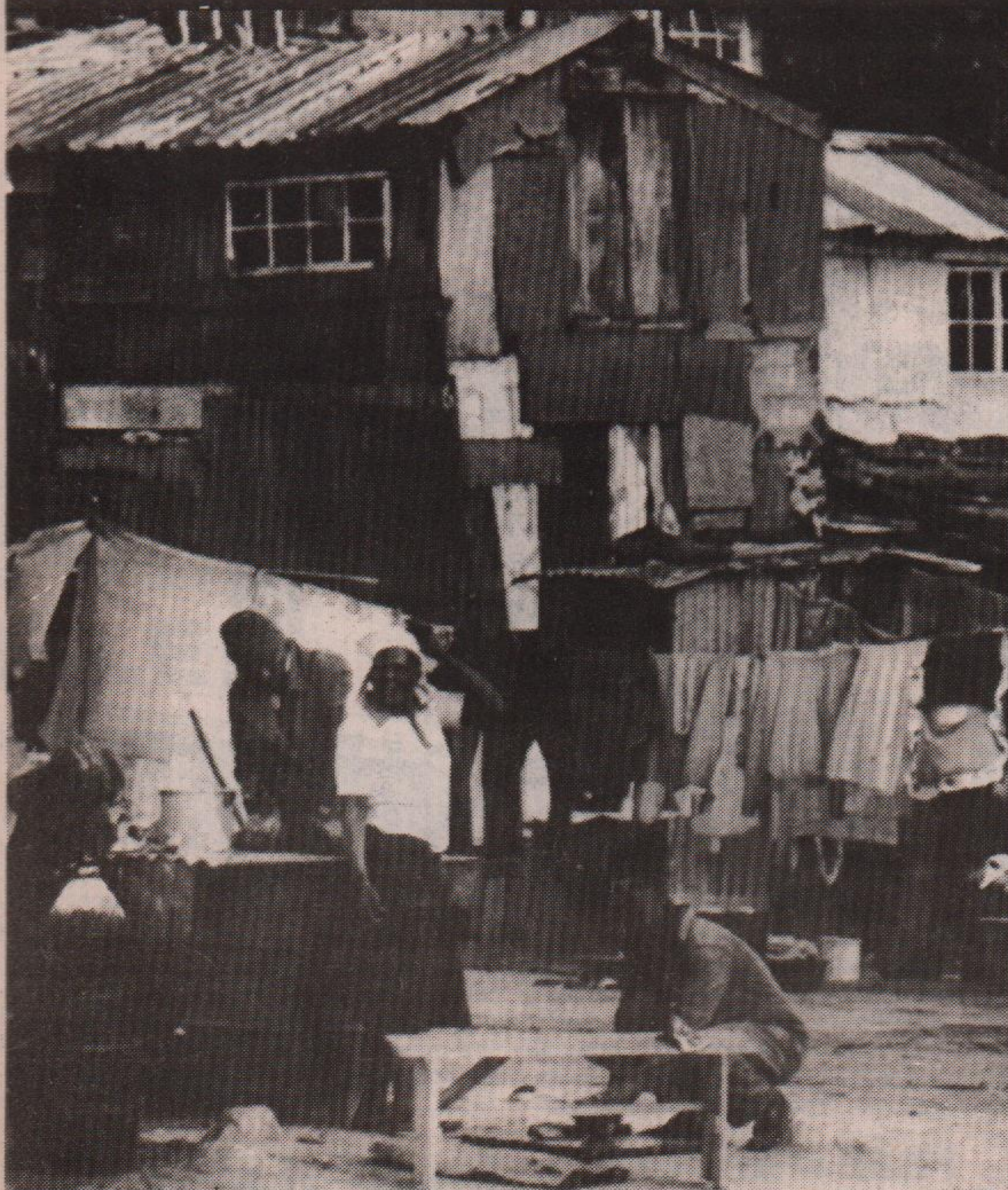
Mobile Picket
Saturday 9 March
11am Barclays Bank, Merrion Centre; 12 noon Thomas Cook, Headrow; 1pm Safeways, Commercial Street; 2pm Lewis's, Dortmund Square
Public Meeting
Thursday 14 March, 7.30pm
Leeds Trades Club, Saville Mount
All organised by Leeds FRFI

EDINBURGH

Public Meeting
Thursday 28 March, 7.30pm
Riddles Court (Top of High Street)
Organised by Edinburgh FRFI

LONDON

City of London Anti-Apartheid Group
Call to Action Conference
Rally, films, workshops, liberation songs by City Group singers
Saturday 9 March, 10.30am-5pm
Adelaide Centre, Adelaide Street, WC2
Creche available. Access for disabled
Picket BP Oil Ltd
Wednesday 13 March, 12.30-2pm
Victoria Street, SW1
Victoria tube
Picket Austin Reed menswear
Saturday 16 March, 11am-1pm
103 Regent Street, W1
25th Anniversary of Sharpeville Massacre
Mass protest phone in of South African Embassy (01) 930 4488
Jam the racists!
Day of Boycott Action in the West End
Saturday 23 March
Boycott Barclays! Picket Barclays HQ
12.30-2pm Lombard Street, EC3
Bank tube
Nationwide day of picketing
City AA will picket 11am-1pm
Safeways, 159 Edgware Road W2
Edgware Road or Marble Arch tube
FRFI will be supporting all events



The people of Crossroads prefer even their own 'squatter camp' to the barren township in the sandy wastelands of Khayelitsha

FREE NELSON MANDELA NOW!

'I cannot and will not give any undertaking at a time when I and you, the people, are not free. Your freedom and mine cannot be separated. I will return.'

On 10 February 10,000 people gathered at a rally in the black township of Soweto to hear these defiant words from Nelson Mandela, imprisoned leader of the African National Congress (ANC), rejecting in uncompromising terms P W Botha's 'offer' of conditional release.

Nelson Mandela's daughter, Zinzi, read out his powerful statement to the jubilant crowd, in which he refused to condemn the revolutionary violence of the oppressed and renounce the armed struggle being waged by the peoples' army, Umkhonto we Sizwe. Instead he challenged Botha to renounce the violence of the oppressor, the apartheid regime. In addition, Mandela exposed the bogus nature of the offer made at a time of increased repression,

'What freedom am I being offered while the organisation of the people remains banned?

Mandela, who has spent the last 21 years in South African gaols, and who is the acknowledged leader of the black people in South Africa, made it clear once again that neither his freedom nor that of his people could ever be bought off,

'I cherish my own freedom dearly, but I care even more for your freedom ... I cannot sell my birthright, nor am I prepared to sell the birthright of the people to be free.'

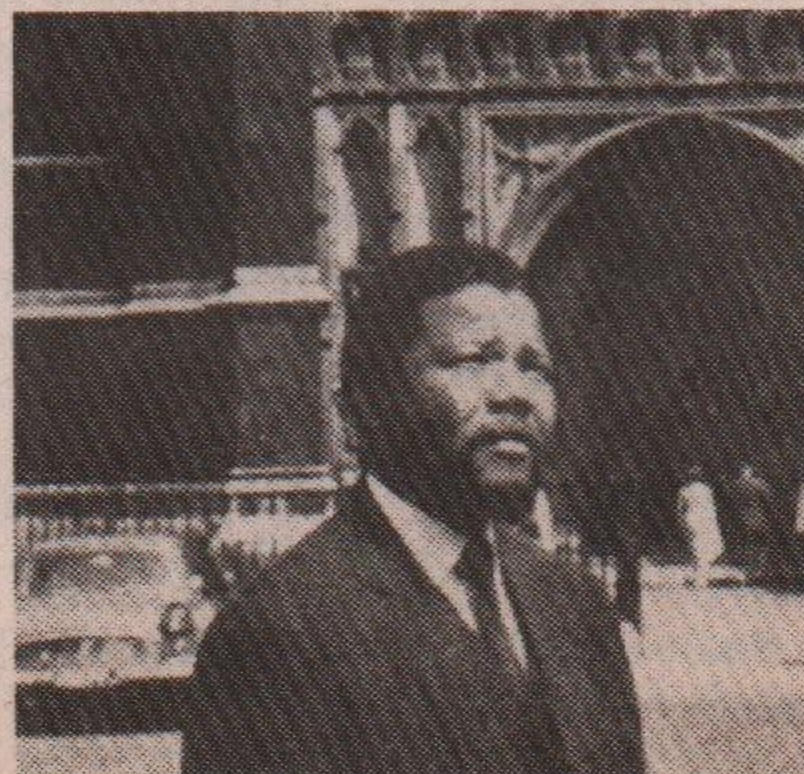
Nelson Mandela's principled stand and his unwavering commitment to carry on the struggle for freedom heralded a fresh wave of resistance in black townships throughout South Africa. On 11 February, over 3,000 black youth battled with the police in Secisoville, burning down around 30 businesses, shops and offices, damaging many others, and destroying the Mayor's car. 30 were arrested and police fired teargas and plastic bullets. In Kroonstad 8,000 black people came out onto the streets, and in Somerset East, the homes of two stooge black councillors were stoned and a policeman fired onto a crowd of 6,000 who were trying to burn his house down. In many other black townships the youth attacked the homes of policemen and councillors as well as school buildings.

We will not be moved – Crossroads fights back

Hearing that their forced removal to the

sandy wasteland of Khayelitsha was to be speeded up, the inhabitants of the 65,000 strong Crossroads squatter camp near Cape Town, came out in force to show the white racist regime that they were not going to be moved. Barricades were erected made up of overturned cars, tyres, trees, concrete blocks, trucks and anything else to hand – many were set ablaze. The black youth hurled petrol bombs and stones at the police, and small children made catapults to pelt the police with.

Corrugated iron shields were used as



**FRFI
PUBLIC MEETING
Boycott Apartheid!
Release Nelson Mandela!
Tuesday 19 March 7.30pm**

YWCA (Hampstead Room), Great Russell Street London WC1 (nearest tube Tottenham Court Road)

Speakers: Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! City of London Anti-Apartheid Group, others invited

Entrance 30p, 20p unwaged

Freedom fighter released

Denis Goldberg, the longest serving white political prisoner in South Africa, was released on 28 February. On his release he called for 'massive economic action' against the apartheid regime and condemned US and Israeli backing of the racist South African government.

Denis Goldberg was gaoled for life in 1963 along with Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and the four other Rivonia trialists. FRFI welcomes the release of a man who gave 21 years of his life in the cause of freedom in Southern Africa. Now is the time to call, with renewed strength for the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners in apartheid gaols.

protection as they advanced on police lines. Crossroads was sealed off, and armoured police units fired round after round of live ammunition, as well as rubber bullets and teargas. Helicopters pumped out clouds of teargas from above. The official death toll after 3 days of fierce fighting was 18, with over 230 reported injured. Many of the dead had been shot in the back, most of the victims were very young.

At the same time as the massive police operation in Crossroads, more key leaders of the United Democratic Front (UDF) were being rounded up in a whole series of pre-dawn raids. Albertina Sisulu (co-President of the UDF), Rev Frank Chikane (UDF National Executive), Cassim Saloojee (UDF National Treasurer), Ismail Mohammed (Transvaal Indian Congress), June Mlangeni (Federation of Transvaal Women), Tom Manthata (South African Council of Churches), and Thozamile Gqweta, President of the South African Allied Workers Union now all join the eight other UDF leaders awaiting trial for high treason, which carries the death penalty. They will all be remanded in custody until their trial comes up. The trial which may run for years is clearly designed to destroy the UDF and cripple its leadership.

Ruby Khan

Koevoet cover-up

Koevoet, the counter-insurgency unit operating in Namibia, was established secretly in 1979 by the apartheid regime, to operate in conjunction with the security forces. Koevoet's basic training is designed with 'only one idea – extermination' (*Windhoek Observer*, 1983). Their salary is boosted by 'koppeld' or head money – £1,000 for every dead SWAPO guerilla and £500 for an AK 47 rifle.

Koevoet's function has always been military. They are described as a 'police force' for one reason only – to dodge the provisions of United Nations resolution 435 which calls for the withdrawal of all South African troops. The 'police force' would be allowed to stay until after the independence elections.

Koevoet's terror tactics are well known. In January this year Mr Thomas Shindobo Kikanor died in detention allegedly by 'hanging himself with blankets'. In the same month an inquest on Jona Hamukwaya who was murdered in police custody in 1982, found that he had died from 'an act or an omission on the part of members of the unit known as Koevoet'. Koevoet had claimed that Hamukwaya died 'falling down a flight of steps' after only a few hours in detention.

Koevoet was in the news again in Feb-

ruary when Archbishop Denis Hurley was due to stand trial for making supposedly false allegations about atrocities committed by Koevoet. At the last minute the apartheid regime withdrew the charges, on the grounds that new evidence revealed that Hurley's statements differed from those reported in the press. The truth is that the regime could not afford to have the truth about Koevoet terror exposed in court under the glare of international press coverage. A statement issued by SWAPO after Hurley's acquittal said:

'The withdrawal of the charges against Archbishop Hurley amounts to an admission by the Pretoria regime that Koevoet, a notorious military unit, is responsible for numerous acts of murder and torture in Namibia.'

Nomsa Langa

CAPENHURST WOMEN SHOW THE WAY

British Nuclear Fuels Ltd (BNFL) are not only responsible for polluting the British countryside, they are also up to their necks in apartheid. Only last year they bought a consignment of South African uranium, and this deal was confirmed by the Foreign Office Minister Malcolm Rifkind. In an inspiring act of solidarity, nine women campaigning against the activities of BNFL have exposed the sanctions busting.

So far, seven women have been fined a total of £1,090 for causing damage during a women's protest at BNFL Capenhurst in Cheshire, others are awaiting trial. Nine of the women have said that they feel unable to pay compensation to BNFL and have instead decided to pay the fines to SWAPO as advance payment on the compensation BNFL will eventually have to pay to the Namibian people. The money raised will be sent via the SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign to buy material aid for Namibian refugees.

Contributions to pay the fines should be sent to: Namibia Support Committee, PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW

Embassy Picket Campaign grows

In Washington, the splendid pickets outside the South African embassy continue. On the first day that the South African police attacked black South Africans at Crossroads shanty town, 74 anti-apartheid demonstrators were arrested. Since the nationwide demonstrations against apartheid began three months ago, almost 1,500 people have been arrested throughout the US. While many prominent personalities have been arrested, the main force behind the pickets is the black community in the United States.

The protests could not have come at a better time. Racist South Africa's 'reform' plan is being exposed by the relentless struggles of black South Africans for their freedom.

US banks and corporations have billions of dollars invested in South Africa, and are pulling out all the stops to protect their capital. In an effort to head off demands for disinvestment and for total sanctions against South Africa, no less than five bills have been introduced into Congress proposing partial sanctions. The opportunist AFL-CIO (the American TUC) has increased its

African-American Labour Centre funding to \$875,000, up from \$27,000 in 1981. The program, 90% funded by the US government, aims 'to seek non-violent solutions to the problems of South Africa' – in other words, solutions acceptable to US imperialism!

In the face of this manoeuvring by US imperialism's stooges it is of the greatest importance to support the wave of anti-apartheid activity sweeping the USA and to demand full support for a total boycott of South Africa, and victory to the ANC and SWAPO.

Steve Palmer

Provost backs Barclays

The Provost of Bradford, the Very Rev Brandon Jackson has recently returned from a visit to South Africa claiming that 'Barclays, along with the oil giants, Shell, BP and Mobil – hate apartheid and have a general concern to help the blacks and dispossessed by providing not only employment, but also company grants towards education, old people's homes and health facilities ...' He said also that 'people who criticise Barclays bank for its role in South Africa have a one sided picture'!

Who paid for the Very Rev's rose-coloured spectacles? You may well ask because it was none other than Barclays Bank! Terrified at the possibility that the Cathedral might withdraw their account – the bank organised the visit and footed the bill. It is unlikely therefore that the Provost will have seen any of the reality of Barclays blood money – used to finance apartheid terror throughout Southern Africa.

Bradford Anti-Apartheid Group were angry at the Provost's naivety, and his contempt for the masses in South Africa who call for the immediate and total isolation of South Africa. Members of Bradford Anti-Apartheid decided to hold a picket of the Cathedral calling on the Provost to retract his statement and to call on the Cathedral Committee to support the Boycott Campaign and immediately withdraw

their account.

The Provost came out to the picket before giving his Sunday sermon condemning apartheid. He said he welcomed our picket because he was against apartheid too. When confronted with the facts about Barclays' role in South Africa, he refused to condemn Barclays or to agree to call for the withdrawal of the Cathedral account. The Cathedral Committee has since decided to leave their account with Barclays for another two years, given an assurance from the bank that they will be disinvesting from South Africa.

We do not believe for one minute that this will be the case – we will continue our campaign calling on all public bodies to Boycott Barclays! To Boycott all South African Products! and To Isolate Apartheid Now!
Sonny/Jenefer

**Deportations
NO WAY!**

Build for 23rd March demonstration

Manchester anti-racist activists are preparing for the mass anti-deportation demonstration on Saturday 23 March under the banner 'Fight Deportations! Unite Families! Fight Racism!'. 11 campaigns are now working together to ensure the success of this national event. Working class areas of Manchester have been divided up between the campaigns and organisations to ensure maximum mobilisation. Nationally, requests for leaflets have poured in from trade unions, student unions, political, community and black organisations. Transport to the day's event has also been organised from different parts of the country. The 23 March demonstration has united the campaigns in action.

Called under principled slogans, the event is being organised by a democratic committee joining together anti-deportation campaigns, the Manchester City Council, and other political organisations including RCG/FRFI supporters. The RCG has worked consistently to

draw in all the forces ready to act against the racist laws. The City Council, controlled by the local Labour Party, has also taken a progressive stand in support of all people affected by the racist immigration controls. As a result of this broad based work, many black people

have been encouraged to form new campaigns to fight the Home Office.

Unity and democracy attacked

As the work for the demonstration started to attract widespread support, attempts have been made to undermine the democratic methods and narrow the campaign's base of support. Representatives of the Manchester Pakistani Workers Association (PWA) proposed that political organisations, which would include the RCG and the Labour Party, be excluded from all decision making processes for the demonstration, and subsequent joint campaigns. They argued that a joint organisation should be established which would ex-

clude all but those directly threatened with deportation or their representatives.

Such a proposal threatened to drive away support not only from the Labour Council, which has helped finance and publicise anti-deportation campaigns in Manchester, but also other organisations, including the RCG, with a long record of anti-racist campaigning. Recognising the dangers presented to the demonstration, RCG representatives and supporters, while agreeing on the need for a permanent organisation to build united campaigns, insisted that it be democratic and open to all those – organisations and individuals – actively opposed to immigration controls. These arguments were put at a meeting of all Manchester campaigns, called by the PWA on 17 February, to which the Labour Council and other organisations had not been officially invited. The PWA attempted to push through its narrow sectarian position, regardless of the damage it would do to those directly threatened with deportation, by arguing that a democratically organised campaign would not guarantee the interests of the individuals under threat. This sham was dismissed, pointing out that those individuals ultimately can decide what may or may not be done in their name. The meeting agreed to maintain the current broad based committee for

Transport to 23 March National Demonstration against deportations

Bristol
Leaving Stokes Croft and Stapleton Road on Saturday morning. For details of time phone 667933
Scotland: Edinburgh/Glasgow/Dundee/Stirling
Leaves Saturday morning. For details contact Box 40, 43 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh.
Bradford
Leaves 11.00am Saturday morning outside Norfolk Garden Hotel, Bradford City Centre.
London
Coaches leaving Saturday 8.00am from Brixton Town Hall, Acre Lane, Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street and Mabledon Place, (NALGO HQ). Return tickets £4.00

the 23 March demonstration and will discuss the issue further after that date.

Unite to build 23 March!

In the remaining few weeks, all efforts and energies must be devoted to getting a mass turnout on 23 March. A successful event will strengthen those who are today fighting against the racist Home Office. It will constitute a notification to the government that black people are here to stay! FRFI urges all readers and supporters to be on the march, with their friends, organisations and banners.

Chris Fraser, Viraj Mendis



**Deportations
NO WAY!**

CRE REPORT

CATALOGUE OF RACISM

A long awaited Commission of Racial Equality (CRE) report on Immigration Control Procedures has finally been published after a 30 month delay. The Home Office first sought a High Court ruling to stop the investigation and then held the report for 12 more months. It was seeking to cover up its very own brutal and callous apparatus for the enforcement of Britain's racist immigration controls.

The report is a detailed catalogue of systematic racist discrimination against black people seeking entry into Britain carried out by Home Office officials totally corrupted and dehumanised by racist poison. One in five wives of black British men are refused entry, over 40% of their children are denied the right to join their parents, delays of 3 to 4 years are normal for applicants seeking to join their families in Britain. While only 1 in 4,100 white visitors are refused entry permits, the figure for black visitors is 1 in 140. Interviews of Africans by immigration officials take 9 times longer than whites.

Compounding the oppression of divided families and dashed hopes, is the humiliation and degradation black people are forced to suffer at the hands of vicious beast-like officials. Entry Clearance Officers frequently interrupt interviews for personal or social phone calls, disdain to conceal their boredom and dislike of black people and unashamedly round on applicants shouting and screaming at them. They have the power of the British state behind them. Applicants' forms are marked with comments such as 'drivel', 'arrant nonsense' or 'just a bloody liar'. The Home Office officially states that 'Both Nigerians and Ghanaians are wont to tamper with their passports' and a guidance document describes Moroccans as 'simple and cunning'.

The report while exposing the racism of immigration controls is essentially a white-wash. It does not oppose immigration controls and indeed openly supports control procedures. Its main complaint is that these are enforced without sympathy! The fact is that the racist im-

migration controls, designed consciously to exclude black people, can only be operated in a racist manner by those willing to prostitute themselves to the British state. An end to the viciousness described in the report can be achieved only by popular organisation and struggle against all immigration controls.

MANCHESTER

Public Meeting
**Here to Stay! Here to Fight!
No Deportations!**

Tuesday 19 March, 7.00pm
The 8411 Centre, Moss Side (next to Moss Side Library)

Speakers include: Viraj Mendis, Val Stevens (Manchester City Council), Aslam Family Defence Campaign, FRFI, Manda Kunda, Hulme-Moss Side Miners Support Group.

Organised by
Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign
c/o Box 38, 434 Corn Exchange Buildings,
Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN

gle against all immigration controls. The multiplying campaigns against deportations, particularly in Manchester, indicate the way forward.

Eddie Abrahams

RACISTS OUT OF CAMDEN

Racist and fascist activity in Camden and Islington is on the increase. In 1982, the police with Camden Council's support 'cleaned up' Kings Cross area of prostitutes. Despite the remaining heavy police presence, the fascists organise freely. In addition to vicious assaults on black and Irish people (one Asian shopkeeper needed 20 stitches after his face was slashed by a broken bottle), fascists have carried out a series of attacks on the Kings Cross Women's Centre, Housemans Bookshop and an Irish pub in Chapel Market.

Faced with no action from the police or the Council, Kings Cross Women's Centre together with local black and anti-racist groups, including FRFI, have launched a campaign to take action against the racists and fascists. It has already organised a 500 strong picket and rally to expose the Ferndale Hotel as both a national and international base for fascists. Attention has been focussed on the Hotel by evidence that it is the address for a number of leading fascists from Britain and Holland. Despite information provided to the Council it has continued to fund the Hotel and to place the homeless at risk by housing them there. One black family

could not use the TV room or kitchen because of harassment from fellow residents. The Council's own racism and its collaboration with the racist police – most dramatically exposed when Councillor Bob Latham called in police on black people occupying the Town Hall – can only serve to give a green light to racist activity in the area.

The campaign has already forced the Hotel owner to protest to the Council and the Women's Centre that he is losing £600 a week. He will lose a lot more until the fascists and racists are thrown out and the Hotel cleaned up. For further information phone: 01-837 7509.

Keinde Olawale

**Deportations
NO WAY!**

ASLAM FAMILY DEFENCE COMMITTEE

ARRESTS

On Wednesday 20 February the police viciously attacked a 70 strong Aslam Family Defence Campaign picket of the Home Office in London. Many of the picketers had travelled from Manchester with their children and parents and were joined by London FRFI and Newham 7 Defence Campaign supporters. They were demanding that the Home Office withdraw deportation orders against Mr and Mrs Aslam. Immediately after the Aslams' MP, Mr Kaufman, left the police tried to disperse the picket on the grounds that it was within a mile of Parliament in session. Three people were arrested and the others were broken into small groups and herded through the streets. At FRFI's initiative a group of comrades went off to lobby MPs in Parliament, obtaining immediate support from Tony Benn and others.

Meanwhile, others went to Rochester Row police station and determined to remain there until the 3 arrested were released. In the course of this, the police arrested another 5 picketers, including an FRFI supporter. Those arrested were held for nearly two hours and illegally photographed. However, the combined pressure of the AFDC presence outside and phone calls and letters from Parliament ensured the release of those arrested.

ed after they had received a caution.

The AFDC, in a press statement, declared 'We will not be intimidated into silence by police brutality'.

The campaign to win the Aslam family's right to remain in Britain continues.

For further information and publicity material contact: Aslam Family Defence Committee, c/o St John's Rectory, St John's Road, Longsight, Manchester 13.

JACKIE BERKLEY

NO COVER-UP

On 19 April last year, Jackie Berkley was arrested with Linneth and Sharon Thomas in Moss Side Manchester. The three black women were taken to Moss Side police station where Jackie suffered a most horrific experience. She said 'I was taken alone into a single cell, stripped naked, racially abused and raped by one policeman and then another, whilst two policewomen held me down and forced my legs apart.' Police efforts to cover up the truth began almost immediately.

In response to a complaint, Jackie received a summons from the Director of Public Prosecutions charging her with wasting police time and making a false complaint. The Jackie Berkley Defence Committee was formed stating that 'the black community knows that Jackie's experience is wholly in keeping with our collective experience at the hands of the British police.'

On 25 February, Jackie's trial began. The police, by charging her with seven minor offences, ensured that the case would be heard before a Magistrate rather than a jury. Nevertheless over 60 picketers from Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Liverpool and Birmingham turned up to support Jackie.

The trial immediately exposed police

inconsistencies and lies. PC Sheridan claimed to have seen Jackie kicking PC Rubens while his back was turned to them. The police claimed that Jackie was extremely violent, so violent that it took five officers to put her into a van when she was being arrested. Yet at the police station she was treated as a 'low risk' prisoner and left unaccompanied in the corridor.

The Jackie Berkley Defence Committee is holding pickets of the court every day. The campaign will continue whatever the outcome of the trial. Donations and further information can be obtained from JBDC, 38 Haydn Avenue, Moss Side, Manchester 14.

Jacqueline Smith

If Brittan had any fears that prisoners would respond unfavourably to his proposals his fears were fully justified as no sooner had he made the proposals public at the conference when two cells were smashed up by protesting prisoners in Albany. In the following weeks there was unrest in different top-security prisons across the country with several so-called 'subversives' moved out of Parkhurst, Albany and Wormwood Scrubs and sent to local prisons for 28 day 'lie-downs'. In Wakefield, three prisoners barricaded their cell and refused to come out for two days; four cells of known informers were set on fire; an estimated 25 men were removed from the wings and either detained in the notorious F-Wing under Rule 43 'Good Order and Discipline', or were transferred to local prisons; and a mini-riot occurred on C-Wing with a television and pool table being smashed, tables, chairs and other furniture overturned and damaged and prison officers made to run off the wing before reinforcements were summoned to regain control. In Gartree apart from the transfers of certain prisoners, Irish POWs amongst others, tension was raised to such a degree that the Prison Officers Association threatened to withdraw its members to the perimeter fencing and have prisoners in control of the wings because it did not want prison officers to be injured in any violent incident which it appeared could break out at any time.

A month before the conference Brittan, probably in anticipation of the response prisoners would make to his proposals, asked the Prison Department to speed up the work it was doing on a report about long-term (dispersal) prisons. The report, *Managing the Long-Term Prison System* (MLTPS) was published in July 1984. It is made quite clear on the first page where the authors, the Control Review Committee (CRC), priorities lie: 'The maintenance of control is plainly one of the prison's most basic concerns and our work has inevitably led us to look at many aspects of the way the prison system is run'.¹ The reason why a heavy emphasis is placed on control is that the authorities feel they do not have enough of it over certain prisoners - there is too much prisoner resistance. This feeling permeates the whole report which is, as Terry O'Halloran rightly describes, 'a recipe for systematic repression aimed at isolating and breaking prisoners who resist the inhuman British prison system'.²

What is the nature of prisoner resistance? The report concentrates on maintaining control over what an ex-governor once described as the rebellious five per cent. It has long been thought by Home Office pundits that there is a tiny minority of rebellious prisoners, estimated at about five per cent of the total prison population who 'present control problems in many different ways and for many different reasons'.³ If this tiny minority can be removed and isolated from other prisoners then, theoretically, control problems if not completely eradicated would at least be greatly reduced. Such thinking has led the CRC to propose the creation of what it euphemistically calls 'long-term prisoner units' but what prisoners themselves believe to be the reintroduction of control units. Yet the rebellious five per cent theory itself is fallacious and because of this proposals stemming from it will turn out to be equally fallacious.

The majority of prisoners see their own imprisonment, prison as an institution and prison conditions as the major problems and they react to them accordingly. Although some prisoners do co-operate with the system, many resist and protest against it. This resistance can take different forms: it can be legal or illegal, peaceful or violent, spontaneous or organised, individualistic or collec-



tive. An act of resistance or protest against prison conditions does not necessarily have to be 'political' or recognised as such by its perpetrator and because of this resistance can have a wide interpretation. So just as, say, a prisoner who smashes up his cell as a deliberate protest against his conviction, or another who throws his food on the floor in protest against its bad quality may be said to be protesting against the system, so can the prisoner who punches an officer who has been verbally and physically abusing him. In each of these cases the prisoner, whether he is aware of it or not, is expressing his contempt for the dehumanising conditions of prison and such protests are every day occurrences despite their being serious contraventions of prison rules. For example, in this prison, Hull, in the last few weeks, two men Mick Murray and Todd Simmons, lost a week's remission each for refusing to have their fingerprints taken as they are due to be released shortly; Stephen Foster has been on hunger-strike for the past eleven days in protest against his conviction and a black prisoner, Clive Cumberbatch, emptied the contents of his pot over the governor in response to the racist harassment he has been subjected to. Apart from the hunger-strike, as illegal as the preceding examples are, in themselves they do not present too great a danger to the authorities as each is an act of protest or expression of discontent by an individual and even though individuals can present a number of difficulties to the authorities they are relatively manageable because they can be removed from the main prison and kept in isolation in the punishment block.



Collective protests

What worries the authorities a great deal more than individual actions are collective protests and it is the prevention of such protests the CRC are really concerned with. Apart from the numerous collective peaceful protests - sit



downs, work strikes, mass refusals to return to cells, food strikes, collective disobeying of orders etc - in the last eighteen years there have been ten serious riots in the dispersal prisons. As far as the Home Office is concerned, there is nothing to be gained from riots: prisons which have been badly damaged by riots cost millions of pounds to repair; whole wings can be put out of use for several months, even two or three years, thereby creating cell shortages; riots bring bad publicity to the authorities as they are obvious manifestations of the failures of prison policy; a riot in one prison immediately raises the tension in others and drastically affects their management as staff are taken from them to attend the mutinous prison; riots give a

The continuing struggle for basic rights in prison

At the Conservative Party conference in October 1983, the Home Secretary, Leon Brittan, announced a number of proposals which seriously affected long-term prisoners and their opportunities for parole. The two most important proposals were: firstly, prisoners serving sentences of more than five years for offences of drug trafficking or violence would no longer be given parole, or they would get it only in the last few months they had left to serve if it was considered appropriate; secondly, certain categories of life-sentence prisoners eg those convicted of murdering policemen or prison officers, or those who killed during the commission of an armed robbery, would have to serve a minimum sentence of 20 years.

political authenticity to prisoners' grievances which the Home Office are always prepared to deny but have much difficulty doing so. There are several reasons - economic, political, practical - why riots and major disturbances are of no benefit to the authorities, and the CRC are well aware of them; what they are not so aware of are their causes, or maybe they deliberately choose to ignore them.

The MLTPS report gives a brief summary on each of the ten major disturbances in the maximum security prisons. Reading the summaries, a prisoner who was involved in any of the disturbances would surely not fail to notice that while they describe what happened they do not give the reasons why, at least not from the prisoners' point of view. So, for example, in describing the Wormwood Scrubs disturbance (popularly known as the Mufti Squad Riot) of 31 August 1979, the report suggests that the cause was a protest over the lack of facilities. In reality this is not even a tenth of the truth. There is no mention of: the deliberate cessation of educational classes which angered many prisoners; the discrimination against Irish political prisoners who were not allowed visits on Sunday though all other prisoners were; the demand for higher wages; staff racism; and the poor relationships between prisoners and staff which for months previous had led to a steady rising of tension on D-Wing where the disturbance took place. In this case omitting the truth has just the same effect as telling lies - a distorted picture of events is given. A similarly distorted version is given of the Albany rooftop protest of May 1983. According to the report, '4 prisoners broke away during outside exercise and climbed onto the workshop roofs: they remained there throughout the night'.⁴ The obvious question is: why? The report gives no answer, but it continues, 'Ten other pri-

soners who had gained access to the roof of the main cell block during the disturbance remained there'.⁵ From the report one gains the information that at one time or another 14 prisoners were wandering around Albany rooftops, but it is not stated why they were up there. Were they astronomers? Did they want to get a better look at the stars? If the report was the only source of information one still would not know why the men went on the roof. Fortunately, even if the CRC are unwilling, or even afraid to tell the truth, other people are not. Eddie



O'Neill, an Irish political prisoner, can shed some light on the matter; he was one of the participants in the protest. There were three months of tension leading up to the protest during which Eddie says, there were 'smash ups/several serious knife attacks/food strikes/food being dumped in protest at its quality/general work strikes over ½ remission etc'.⁶ If further evidence is needed, Jimmy Murphy, another participant,

can be called: 'The reasons for the rooftop protest against the racist prison system were, 1) half remission for all prisoners, 2) parity in conditions with Northern Ireland, 3) radical improvement in the food which at present is filthy and uneatable, 4) the termination of brutality and racism carried out by the regime, 5) enquiries into the misuse of the infamous 10/74 Rule, 6) all prisoners to be allowed to be present at Home Leave Board Meetings'.⁷



The Irish inspiration

It is significant that the demand for half remission was one of the major reasons for the Albany rooftop demonstration as it is only in recent years that it has become an important issue in the struggle for prison rights. Half-remission was first introduced in Northern Ireland in 1976 as part of a political manoeuvre by the British government to criminalise the Irish liberation struggle. In January 1975, a British commission (the Gardiner Commission) made a number of important recommendations. These included the phasing out of political status and the ending of internment... A 50% remission scheme was introduced to accommodate the release of sentenced prisoners... An arbitrary date 1 March (1976) was set and the British declared that anyone arrested after that date would not be treated as political prisoners'.⁸

Although the government found it



politically expedient to introduce half-remission in Northern Ireland they could see no advantage in making it available to prisoners in mainland British jails. For the next four years a small number of individual prisoners made representations to the authorities about it but they lacked the necessary support to make any great impression. But on 27 October 1980 an event occurred in Northern Ireland which was to shake the complacency of many prisoners in England - seven men started a hunger strike in the Maze prison. When the British phased out political status the response of Republican prisoners who came under the new rulings was to engage in a campaign of non-co-operation; they refused to wear prison uniforms, refused to work etc. The 'blanket' protest was started and later came the 'dirty' protest. Conditions in the Maze rapidly deteriorated and became so bad that a leading churchman, Archbishop O'Fiaich was moved to say after one visit, 'having spent the whole of Sunday in the prison I was shocked at the inhuman conditions prevailing in H Blocks 3, 4 and 5 where over 300 prisoners were incarcerated. One would hardly allow an animal to remain in such conditions let alone a human being... The stench and filth in some cells, with the remains of rotten food and human excreta scattered around the walls was almost unbelievable. In two of them I was unable to speak for fear of vomiting'.⁹ After four years of protest, with no progress being made and seemingly no end in sight, the hunger strike was undertaken to pressure the British government into conceding to five demands which in effect would re-constitute political status. These demands were, '1) No prison uniform, 2) no prison work, 3) free association, 4) full remission (ie the return of remission lost in the four year protest) 5) visits, parcels and recreational/educational facilities'.¹⁰



After 53 days the strike ended with the British government presenting two documents to the strikers in which were set out a number of reforms which they accepted. At first it was thought the strike had ended in victory for the strikers. Many people believed the five demands had been won even if the government had not made a formal recognition of political status: Humphrey Atkins, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, publicly stated: 'If they (the hunger-strikers) choose to live, the conditions available to them meet in a practical and human way the kind of things they have been asking for'.¹¹ British prisoners, on hearing this and similar statements, concluded that the Republican prisoners had made tremendous gains and they began to seriously question their own conditions. The fact that within days the government, well away from the public spotlight, reneged on the agreements made with the Republicans to end the strike (it was this reneging by the British which led to the second hunger strike and the eventual deaths of ten other Republican strikers) made little impression on British prisoners. They were led to believe the five demands had been won and it was just a matter of minor details being cleared up. The Republicans' action was an inspiration to British prisoners; the Irish had shown that if prisoners were prepared to struggle collectively basic changes in prison conditions could be successfully negotiated.

Within three months petitions were circulating in the British maximum security prisons which made similar demands to the Republicans: 1) half remission, 2) prisoners to be told reasons for parole refusals, 3) four visits per month, 4) a food and toiletries parcel each week, 5) prisoners right to wear own clothing, 6) earnings to be supplemented by private cash for use in canteen, 7) three hours association every evening. Over 600 men in Long Lartin, Albany and Parkhurst signed the petitions but it was strongly felt petitions alone were not enough; more support and more action was needed. A strike in all the dispersal prisons was proposed.

On 18-20 January 1982, several hundred men in Parkhurst, Albany, Hull, Wakefield, Long Lartin and Gartree came out on strike in support of the seven demands. A year later another strike was held which attracted even more support than the first as more prisons joined. Yet it was still felt not enough was being done. To hold a strike once a year, even if it was a national strike involving hundreds of prisoners, would not perturb the authorities too much providing they thought there would be no follow-ups or further action. But then came the Albany riot and rooftop protest. Of the ten major protests in the dispersal prisons it was this one that pushed the political dimension of the prisoners' struggle for a radical change in conditions to the fore.



No parole

Since Brittan's 'no parole' speech the mood in prison, as serious as it was, has become even more sombre, and two trends have begun to emerge: fewer people are getting parole: more people are becoming involved in the struggle to win the seven demands. It should be made quite clear just how big a blow to the average prisoner's hopes of freedom the 'no-parole' policy is. Although parole was never used as anything but a form of control, 'Parole is not a right for all prisoners but a benefit granted to selected prisoners',¹² before October 1983 the average prisoner could expect to get some parole even if it was only the last few months at the end of his sentence. Despite Brittan's speech, the parole procedure still continues to operate but now the average prisoner considers himself very lucky if he gets those last few months. What difference in real terms, that is in terms of years served, does no parole make? The Great Train Robbery provides a useful example. When they were convicted in 1964 for their part in the robbery, James Hussey, Gordon Goody and Roy Hussey were each sentenced to 30 years imprisonment. All three were given parole; Hussey after eleven years, James and Goody

both served 12 years¹³. If they were in jail today on the same sentences all three would have to serve 20 years.

Four prisoners who came into the categories that Brittan declared should not get parole, challenged his policy in the courts but lost their cases. They went on to appeal to the House of Lords and lost out there as well. Brittan has the legal backing of the highest court in the land to leave prisoners to rot in concrete boxes for years on end. If they have any objections to this treatment a more intense form of sensory deprivation awaits them.



Control Units

It is quite apparent that the Tory government is determined to batter prisoners into submission and there are several indications which verify the new hard-line policies. Besides the 'no-parole' policy another significant measure prisoners are up against is the reintroduction of control units. Although the new units will not have the same regimes as the old ones, their function will be the same, to control dissident prisoners. The units will be 'sparse and highly regulated'¹⁴ just as F Wing Wakefield is now. F Wing used to be a control unit; to all intents and purposes, it still is. One man who had the misfortune of being held in F Wing for several months was Ray MacLochlainn; he says that F Wing 'was designed by an architect in conjunction with a team of psychologists. They designed it for maximum isolation. For instance the windows are about three foot deep. You have six three inch square windows with heavy frosted glass which you cannot see through. It stops natural light coming into your cell... They really work hard to keep you totally isolated. You were allowed out of your cell individually only, so you never saw another prisoner. The only time you may see him is if you went down during exercise but you couldn't communicate with him in any way'.¹⁵ Prisoners are not allowed to talk to each other while on exercise in F Wing, which explains Ray's last sentence. It is in such units 'trouble-makers' will be placed. The prime candidates for the units are the Irish POWs. 'These units... will be set up in prisons throughout England and Wales. To begin with there are plans for six to deal with an estimated 150-250 violent prisoners including IRA men'.¹⁶

It is well known amongst the prison population that the Irish POWs are the Home Office's official scapegoats. Whenever there is any trouble in a top-security prison which reaches the ears of the media, the local Prison Officers Association spokesman will dutifully hold a press conference and if the Irish can be blamed they will be. The press itself is not slow to get in on the act. 'It is known that wherever the IRA and lifers are now serving their time they have become a hard core of unrest', the *Daily Express* once told its readers. To explain the Albany protest and at the same time deny its political implications, the POA at the prison said the cause of the riot was the hold the IRA had over other prisoners through drugs. The POWs sup-

Prisoners on the roof at Wormwood Scrubs, demonstrating against screw brutality, 24 June 1980.

posedly smuggled drugs in on visits and ran a drug racket which caused a lot of aggravation in the prison and finally led to the riot. The POA often tell lies but if ever there was a ridiculous lie, this was it. It is against the principles of the Irish POWs to have any involvement with drugs, but even if they wanted to it is impossible for them to smuggle drugs or anything else into the prison on visits as they are forced to have special visits (very few other prisoners have them) which are so tight as far as security is concerned that if all British prisoners were forced to have them from tomorrow morning there would be riots tomorrow afternoon! Jimmy Murphy, an English prisoner can confirm the POA lies about the cause of the Albany protest: 'I also wish to state that the IRA did not engineer or start the protest as has been claimed by the lying capitalist press. In fact this protest has been building up under provocation for some time'.¹⁷

This is not in any way to deny or decry the POWs' participation in and contribution to the struggle to achieve basic rights for prisoners. They have been at the forefront from the time they first entered prison: in 1974 Michael Gaughan died while on hunger strike demanding the right of repatriation for Irish prisoners; Martin Coughlan, Steve Blake and Roy Walsh held a rooftop protest in Wormwood Scrubs in protest against the poor conditions there, particularly in regard to visiting arrangements; in 1976 six POWs, John McCluskey, Sean Campbell, Con McFadden, Eddie Byrne, Liam McLarnon and Pat Fell were severely beaten up after a demon-



stration against conditions. The same year saw Frank Stagg die on hunger strike for repatriation and POWs played a leading role in the Hull riot; the forcible drugging of a black prisoner, Michael Blake, was the cause of the Gartree riot in 1978 in which again POWs played a leading role; Liam Baker, Tony Cunningham, Tip Guilfoyle and Busty Cunningham spent two years on the blanket in solitary confinement in Albany protesting about general prison conditions and the presence of police on POW visits; Mick Murray spent five years in solitary firstly in support of his comrades in Albany and later in protest against the forcible drugging of inmates; Shane O'Doherty has spent a total of seven years of the ten he has served in solitary in the fight to win the right to repatriation for all POWs; Steve Blake, Eddie O'Neill and Paul Norney each spent a year in solitary as punishment for their part in the Albany rooftop protest of 1983 - these are just a few of the many protests and demonstrations Irish political prisoners have been involved in. They get involved because 'they are the most politically active and always prepared to defend not only their own rights but the rights of others also'.¹⁸ It is this



willingness to defend other prisoners' rights as well as their own that leads to the POWs being constantly harassed and intimidated by the authorities; POWs have been 'subject to many vicious assaults, excessive durations of isolation and much psychological intimidation in the attempt to crush their resistance'.¹⁹



Seeking change

The Home Office has always disliked the truth to be known about prisons; it has a pathological aversion to publicity but particularly so when a controversial incident occurs. For this reason none of the major riots in prisons have ever been adequately explained; neither have the deaths of Richard Campbell, George Wilkinson and Barry Prosser to name but three of many prisoners who have died under highly suspicious circumstances. To retain tight control over prisons and prisoners it is necessary for the Home Office to be as secretive as it can. The need for secrecy also covers up the barbaric conditions within prison which are the root causes of most of its problems and troubles. Conditions are so bad that prison has produced a suicide rate which is *eleven times higher than the national average*.²⁰ Between 1969 and 1980 nearly 700 prisoners died in custody; of these deaths over 250 were due to unnatural causes or suicide.²¹ These figures alone warrant an immediate and very thorough investigation of prison conditions. But prisoners cannot depend on official investigations to bring about changes or reforms in the system; if it was left to the Home Office prison irregularities and abuses would be covered up in the normal way.

What can prisoners do to bring about change? How can they combat the government's latest attacks on their basic rights? How can the previously mentioned seven demands be won? First and foremost there must be resistance (and this does not necessarily mean resistance of a violent or illegal nature!). Prisoners have to start asking questions and demanding answers. The issue of half-remission alone is enough to show up the inconsistency and hypocrisy of the government, and it should be enough for the Tories to be buried under an avalanche of questions from the entire prison populations. If half-remission is available in Northern Ireland why can't it be introduced in the rest of the United Kingdom, particularly now when so many prisoners are no longer entitled to parole? This and related questions should be posed to prison governors and their staff, to solicitors, barristers, judges, MPs, anybody who has a stake in the judicial system; it must be posed in letters and petitions to the Home Office.

A national campaign must be organised from within the prisons to fight for half-remission along with the six other demands. It is only through a nationally organised campaign that enough pressure can be brought to bear to influence and encourage reforms to be made.

Yet even while seeking reforms it must be pointed out that no matter how 'civilised' prisons may become so long as capitalist society exists they will remain part and parcel of the capitalist state's machinery to dominate and suppress the working class. The true role of prison and imprisonment daily becomes more and more exposed as the Tory government stumbles from one crisis to another. The Tories' hard line policies towards prisoners are not just to keep them under strict control, they also reflect Tory attitudes towards the working class in general. The Tories are forcefully resolved, if not completely to defeat militant sections of the working class then at least render them ineffective and unable to resist the implementation of their anti-working class policies. Nearly everybody is under attack: from the courageous miners who have heroically been out on strike for almost a year, to school dinner ladies who are in serious disputes about wage cuts; from council and local authority workers, thousands of whom face the sack due to Tory rate-capping legislation, to the black residents of Brixton, Moss-Side, Toxteth and other deprived inner-city areas who not only already have to cope with high unemployment, bad housing and poor social facilities but also are the victims of an increasing number of violent attacks by racist organisations. The Tory message to the militant sections of the working class, those both inside and outside prison is simple: 'submit or be crushed'. We must shout back again and again, 'We shall resist, we cannot be broken'.

Shujaa Moshesh

Notes

1. *Managing the Long Term Prison System*
2. *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism* 43
3. *MLTPS*
4. *Ibid*
5. *Ibid*
6. *FRFI* 33
7. *FRFI* 33
8. *Iris* Volume 1 no 2 November 1981
9. *Ibid*
10. *Ibid*
11. *Ibid*
12. *The Parole Decision*
13. *Sunday Express* 5.8.84
14. *Daily Mail* 18.7.84
15. *FRFI* 41
16. *Daily Mail* 18.7.84
17. *FRFI* 31
18. *FRFI* 20
19. *FRFI* 20
20. *Guardian* 21.9.82
21. *Guardian* 21.9.82





Sandinista militias prepare to defend the revolution

HARD BLOWS TO NICARAGUAN CONTRAS

In a number of decisive battles in February, Sandinista militias and troops have routed CIA organised counter-revolutionaries in Nicaragua's northern provinces. Sustaining heavy losses, many contras have fled to their Honduran bases having failed significantly to disrupt the coffee harvest. President Daniel Ortega has promised more hard blows against these murderous bandits before the year ends.

The Nicaraguan revolution, however, remains under imperialist siege. Hailing the contras as brothers, and just as news of contras raping 2 West German women filtered through, Reagan is desperately attempting to convince Congress to release \$14m to replenish their battered forces. Salvaging the contras, who have killed 7,000 people, burnt down schools, hospitals and co-operative farms and caused \$1bn loss to the economy, is only

one aspect of imperialism's attempt to undermine and destroy the revolution. Simultaneously, the careful groundwork for direct US military intervention continues. Honduras, which has already been transformed into a US military base, is the scene of the Big Pine 111 military 'exercises' involving 4,500 US troops, M60 tanks, fighter planes and the nuclear armed USS Iowa cruiser. To legitimise – for the benefit of European

imperialist governments – an eventual US invasion, the Reagan administration is encouraging the formation of a 'provisional government' which would unite the contras operating from Honduras and Costa Rica, with the bourgeois counter-revolutionary forces in Nicaragua who last year boycotted the Sandinista organised democratic elections. Reagan is also trying diplomatically and politically to isolate the Sandinistas by sabotaging the Contadora peace talks scheduled for Panama. Using the pretext that the Sandinistas have violated diplomatic immunity by arresting a contra outside the Costa Rican embassy, it has successfully demanded that its puppets in El Salvador, Guatemala and

Honduras withdraw from the talks. Simultaneously, they have been provided with more arms either directly or via Israel, the US's main arms distributor to fascist regimes.

The Thatcher government is acting as a willing assistant to Reagan's plans. In the face of mounting US military preparations, Thatcher last month demanded that Nicaragua begin to disarm – as a condition for improved Anglo-Nicaraguan relations! The Sandinistas are not prepared to sacrifice the interests of the oppressed, of workers and peasants to the avarice of the wealthy imperialists. They are arming the people ready to fight to the death should the US invade. The Sandinistas have already been forced into enormous sacrifices, diverting resources away from food subsidies, health, education and other public services. To save them having to sacrifice their lives, the democratic and communist forces in the US and Britain must oppose all imperialist intervention in Nicaragua.

Eddie Abrahams, Lorna Morgan

IMF LOOTING

Since the uprising of April 1984 (see FRFI 39) there has been no lessening of exploitation of the oppressed in the Dominican Republic. Price increases in basic items announced on January 23 were the signal for resistance by the poor to the demands of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the international banks. Mass demonstrations took place with a general strike in February.

The Dominican Republic with a population of 6 million has a debt of 2.6 billion dollars. Its annual oil bill accounts for 1/3 of the total cost of its imports. Since 1982 the price of sugar, its main export, has fallen sharply and the current inflation rate is about 30%. The government of Jorge Blanco has loaded all these problems onto the poor, for as well as increases in basic items – rice, flour and cooking oil – electricity prices rose 25% and bus fares were increased 50%.

During the demonstrations many trade unionists and socialists were arrested in order to halt the protests. Police and troops raided working class districts, 50 people were wounded. Troops often stole people's food claiming it had been looted from stores.

These uprisings show that from Kingston, Jamaica to Haiti and Santo Domingo the sound of resistance of the oppressed is no longer a hum but a roar.

Dale Evans

TERROR IN PERU

Ayacucho is the centre of a major crisis for the Peruvian bourgeoisie. Since October 1984 a state of emergency has been imposed on four provinces of the department, centres of poverty and destitution. Extensive butchery is being carried out against poor peasants by sections of the army dressed as guerrillas in order to discredit the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path). The Civil Guard (the hated 'sinchis'), and special forces directed by rich peasants are ruthless in their attacks on the poor. The population of Ayacucho has fallen from 77,000 to 40,000 as much of the population flees in the face of fascist militias, the increasing number of disappearances, and mass detentions by official state forces. Half of the population of Huanta (20,000) has fled. Despite the use of the army since December 1982, the last 12 months has seen 2,657 attacks by the guerrillas, with 77 police and 30 politicians killed. The only answer to misery and poverty given by the government has been an increase in terror.

Paul Banks

'BLACK BOLSHEVIK' HARRY HAYWOOD DIES AT 87

Harry Haywood died in New York on 4 January at the age of 87. He was a life-long fighter for communism and the rights of black people which he saw as one and the same.

In *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!*, number 4, we reviewed his autobiography, *Black Bolshevik: The Autobiography of an Afro-American Communist*, written in 1978.

In a long and fascinating life Haywood travelled far and wide. As a member of the CPUSA (Communist Party of the USA) he spent time at the International Schools in Moscow in the 1920s. It was the result of his years there, meeting representatives from India, Indonesia, Korea, the Philippines, Persia (Iran), Egypt, Arabs from North Africa and the Middle East, China, Japan and Africa that Haywood became a thorough internationalist. All his life he supported the growing national liberation struggles of oppressed peoples. 'Genuine communists' he said, 'of course must distinguish between the nationalism of the oppressor nations and that of the oppressed.'

On his return from the 6th Congress of the Comintern in 1929 Harry Haywood went into struggle to swing the CPUSA behind his revolutionary position on race and imperialism.

'The new position grounded the issue of Black liberation firmly in the fight of the American people for full democratic rights and in the struggle of the working class for socialism. The

struggle for equality is in and of itself a revolutionary question, because the special oppression of black people is the main prop of imperialist domination over the entire working class and the masses of exploited American people. Therefore, blacks and the working class as a whole are mutual allies. The fight of blacks for liberation, quite apart from humanitarian considerations, must be supported as it is a special feature of the struggle for the emancipation of the whole American working class.'

The practical effect of this position was the Black Nation thesis in which Haywood and others argued that black people constituted a distinct nation in the USA. For the next 20 years the work of the CPUSA was guided along the following lines. In the North the Party organised its members to build on the question of Civil Rights and industrial struggles. In the South the slogan was for 'Self-Determination' and the creation of a Black Belt, an independent and self-governing number of Southern States where the black population made up about 70% of the entire community.

This programme can be criticised and indeed, by the end of the 1940s the migration of black people from the South was so great that the leadership of the Communist Party changed its view of self-determination. In defence of the Black Nation thesis Haywood wrote

Negro Liberation in 1948.

Harry Haywood believed that abandonment of the Black Nation thesis was responsible for the CPUSA abandoning black liberation as a central question and was part of a general swing towards opportunism and cowardice by the CPUSA in the 1950s. The climate for communist work was bitterly hostile in the Cold War period of post war America, but to compromise on the issue of black liberation at such a time could only lead to defeat in the future.

And so, ten years after he left the Party that he considered had left the black struggle, Haywood was able to point out the full tragic consequences. He had seen the rise and defeat of the Black Power and Black Panther movements and said,

'If the CPUSA hadn't liquidated communist work in the South and in the factories, the sixties would have seen a consolidated proletarian force emerge from the Black Belt and the ghettos. The communist forces would have come out of the Revolt with developed cadres rooted in the factories and communities with credibility among the masses.'

However, to the end Haywood was an optimistic and active supporter of all progressive struggles which he knew with a certainty would and must continue. We urge all readers of this paper to read the autobiography. It presents a history of twentieth century America not to be found elsewhere.

We pay tribute to a great comrade, Harry Haywood, born in 1898, the son of former slaves, died in 1985 a life-long communist.

Susan Davidson

NEW YORK SUBWAY VIGILANTE

On 22 December Bernhard Goetz gunned down four black youths who had approached him and asked for five dollars to play video games with. Two of the youths were shot in the back: one remains in hospital paralysed from the waist down, another faces his third term in prison at the age of nineteen. Although the youths produced no weapons, and the New York City Police Commissioner denies that Goetz could have acted out of self defence the only charge to have been laid against Goetz is ownership of illegal weapons. For his cold-blooded, squalid act of racism, Goetz has been made into a legend: a pioneer fighting on a new frontier, down the subways, in the ghettos, wherever black youth venture.

An industry has sprung up celebrating Goetz's deed: there are T-shirts emblazoned 'Goetz four, Crooks zero', a rock-video called 'The Subway Vigilante', offers of film contracts, television show appearances, magazine articles and instant books. The Reagan government's triumph of force over Grenada, their bombardment of Lebanon, their torrent of abuse against Nicaragua and levelling of gun-sights at the whole of Central America and the Caribbean has combined with the cynical use of racism in the US election campaign to whip up the mood of a lynch mob. The Police Commissioner himself confessed 'I'm

not surprised that you can round up a lynch mob. I think that the same kind of person that comes out and applauds the lynching is the first that comes out and applauds someone that shoots four kids.'

Today there are 626 new prisons being built in the USA, there are a record 1,450 prisoners waiting on death row, forty per cent of whom are black. Since Reagan's 1980 inauguration the rate of executions has multiplied ten fold, and a third of these have been of black people. Gun-law, lynch-law: they are as American as the Cowboy!

Trevor Rayne

Thatcher and Reagan's so-called 'freedom fighters' of Afghanistan are supported by the heroin trade, supplying 80 per cent of the US and British market. In the bazaars of Pakistan towns, arms and ammunition are openly exchanged for quantities of the drug. One of Margaret Thatcher's first acts of foreign policy upon becoming Prime Minister was to don a military costume and aim a rifle from the Pakistani border down the Khyber Pass into revolutionary Afghanistan.

The aim of the Afghan rebel movement backed by US imperialism is to restore the tyranny of the landlords over the Afghan people. This is the same aim as the US backed contra rebels in Nicaragua. As Lenin observed: '...The international connections of the exploiters are enormous... The exploiters will still retain all hope of a restoration, and this hope will eventually express itself in attempts at restoration...'

The progress of the people's revolution in Afghanistan since 1978 has eaten away at the old exploiters' hopes of restoration and they have become more desperate. Their international connections are organised by the USA through Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel (using weapons captured from the PLO), and this is the source of their main support, since their support amongst the people is negligible.

Soviet solidarity

On the question of military support from the Soviet Union to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, all honest people who understand imperialism will recognise that the fraternal assistance given by one socialist country to another cannot be described as an 'invasion', which is as hollow a lie as the claim that the Afghan rebels are 'Freedom Fighters'. The very existence and progress of the revolution in Afghanistan, of the real material progress, such as schools, is threatened by the rebels and their im-

AFGHANISTAN VERSUS IMPERIALISM

As the killer heroin has hit the streets of Britain in the past few years spreading misery and death in small packets amongst the youth and the poor the massive profits from this trade go to spread a little more misery and death around in the form of bullets and burnings in the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA).



High-school teacher murdered by the Mujahedin

perialist backers. Had Afghanistan been left to deal with the dispossessed exploiters' sabotage and murder on its own who can doubt that the imperialists would have marched in, long before they marched into Grenada.

Reactionary Mullahs

Since the April 1978 revolution, which was almost bloodless as the military overthrew the old feudal government, the democratic republic has been under constant attack from former capitalist

landowners and the reactionary mullahs.

The mullahs preach that the country should return to the fourteenth century, as progress for the benefit of the people is a crime to them. Women have no rights in their eyes and are simply the property of the men. These former despots are the real bandits who would steal democracy from the people. They destroy the schools, hospitals and basic health facilities. This in a poor country ravaged by disease from former times: smallpox, rabies etc; they murder doctors, nurses and teachers in cruel medieval ways. For these deeds they have received an estimated \$280 million in military aid from the US alone in this financial year. Other contributors include Britain. The CIA's own estimates claim 20,000 active mercenary fighters. This in a country of 15.5 million inhabitants, with over 250,000 members of trade unions and political parties. The fighters style themselves 'Mujahedin', warriors of the faith, and despite being built up as heroes by the western media prefer to attack undefended villages and power lines in their attempts to undermine the developing economy of Afghanistan. Even bourgeois sources admit the tide is turning, and as in Nicaragua and Angola, the people of Afghanistan will fight on to preserve their gains.

The women of the revolution are the real victors in that they have cast off the old feudal slavery and have become a real political force just as the women in the coalfields of Britain are united in their struggle for progress and equality. The Afghan people will defend the April Revolution; they are assisted by the fraternal socialist countries, they are supported by the anti-imperialist forces of the world. Real communists in this country and anti-imperialists must take sides with the Afghan people and their revolution.

Derrick, Mike, Lynn, Carene

KENYA: 12 SHOT DEAD

Once again Kenyan students at Nairobi's university have taken the initiative in mobilising opposition to Daniel Arap Moi's pro-British, pro-US regime. Students responded to the expulsion of three of their leaders by organising a mass meeting. British trained police stormed the meeting and according to reports killed twelve, injured 150, thirty of them critically.

The pardoning of Charles Njonjo, pin-striped protégé of British designs

in Kenya, has angered Kenyan people already suffering poverty, unemployment and repression under Moi. In 1982 Moi, using British trained troops killed over 2,000 workers when suppressing an attempted coup. While Moi is prepared to butcher students and workers to safeguard multinational plunderers he generously pardons Njonjo, a man proven guilty of smuggling South African whites into Kenya, a conspirator in the attempted coup against the progressive Seychelles; a friend of Israel, and an accomplice in Moi's suppression of the 1982 coup.

Israelis retreat resistance grows

As Israeli troops retreated southwards from liberated Sidon, they instituted a reign of terror in south Lebanese territory remaining under occupation. Most severely affected by 'the iron fist' has been Tyre and its surrounding villages known as the 'resistance fortress'. Zionist troops, guns ablaze, have stormed villages demolishing homes of suspected resistance fighters and blowing up religious and cultural centres. In one raid, 7 Lebanese were shot dead. In another, Israeli troops fought with their fists to get past French UNIFIL forces in order to blow up a villager's house. Hundreds of young men have been rounded up increasing Nabatiyeh's prison population from 112 to 1,062 within the space of 9 days. Over 24 Lebanese have been gunned down or murdered, including an ex-mayor who died of exposure having been left outdoors overnight in mid-winter. Decrees have been issued prohibiting travel by motorcycle or in a car alone and parked vehicles are subject to immediate destruction by Israeli bomb squads.

While reflecting an element of despair, this violence is neither arbitrary nor indiscriminate. Zionists have long coveted the land of south Lebanon and the waters of the Litani river and have no intention of departing unless forced to. With the fiercely mounting resistance, which carried out over 150 operations in January alone, and the collapse of the puppet South Lebanese army - its 'soldiers' deserting, fleeing to Israel or being shot by the resistance - Israel is resorting to unconcealed terror. Such methods it hopes will destroy the organisation of the Lebanese National Resistance Front and terrorise the population into submission.

In liberated Sidon, the people swarmed into the streets to celebrate victory. Their exuberance only temporarily concealed the new political battles ahead. Gemayel visited Sidon while his Lebanese Army soldiers moved into positions vacated by the Israelis. Having vanquished the Zionists, the most consistent sections of the LNRF, led by commun-

ists, will unite with the movement in Beirut in a struggle against the Syrian backed Gemayel regime. Fighting for a democratic and secular Lebanon and for an alliance with the Palestinians, the communist forces are also facing opposition from the petit-bourgeois Islamic Fundamentalists. Exploiting Syria's reactionary pro-Gemayel stand and the left's association with the Assad regime, the Fundamentalists have secured significant support among impoverished Shi'ite Muslims. Opposed to a democratic, secular and non-sectarian Lebanese state, the Fundamentalists' call for an Islamic Lebanese republic represents a serious danger to Lebanon's anti-imperialist movement.

How the struggle will unfold it is not possible to tell. The one certainty is that until the Zionists are expelled and the Gemayel regime overthrown, the revolutionary resistance in Lebanon will continue to steel itself for further battles.

Eddie Abrahams

Sudan Nimeiri's barbarity

Saddled with a 7.8 billion dollars debt Sudan's Nimeiri regime has turned into a puppet government acting for US interests in the region, forming a military alliance with Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti and recently allowing Zionists to mount the 'Falasha airlift'. Such is the price imperialism is forcing Sudan to pay for further credits.

On 24 April 1984, Nimeiri declared a state of emergency, threatened by what he called 'internal and external opponents of the government (who) were planning to disturb the process of Islamisation and benefit from the armed conflict in the south'.

Strikes are now illegal and carry a two year gaol sentence. There is only one official political organ: the Sudanese 'Socialist' Union! The right to freedom of opinion and the right to know the reason for arrest were abolished. Security forces' courts were set up, with no right to legal representation or appeal. These have been suspended since September 1984. There are hundreds of political detainees (exact number unknown).

The death of Taha

In a desperate extension of the brutality, and in an attempt to conceal his role for imperialism Nimeiri replaced the secular penal code with an inhuman version of the Shari'a Islamic code in 1983. Theft of about \$195 receives amputation of the right hand; adultery - stoning to death; etc. These penalties are imposed upon Moslems, Christians and Animists alike. With a sickening bid for popularity the regime has made amputations of hands and feet public events: Amnesty International reports 44 such ceremonies.

Besides fuelling revolt in the south, Nimeiri's barbarity has drawn the dis-

PHILIPPINES

General Fabian Ver, head of the Philippines armed forces and right-hand man of President Marcos, is among 26 people accused in a trial which began in February of involvement in the murder in 1983 of opposition leader Benigno ('Ninoy') Aquino Jr.

Ver is a distant cousin of President Marcos, and his career has been tied to that of the president: serving as his bodyguard and chauffeur, rising to become head of the Presidential Security Command, the intelligence agency and chief-of-staff of the armed forces. His power was second only to that of Marcos himself, and he was widely feared. The Philippines army and police, armed by the US, are renowned for their brutality.

Marcos tried to stop Ver coming to trial, but the evidence against him was overwhelming and demonstrations of over a million had demanded justice. However, all the indications are that the trial will not be a fair one. The members of the panel of prosecutors were appointed by Marcos. Witnesses whose evidence could lead to further charges are clearly being intimidated. The trial has already been delayed because witnesses have vanished. It is common for the Philippines security forces to eliminate troublesome people.

The Philippines is of great importance for the US both economically and militarily, since their two largest overseas bases are there. From the military point of view, Ver is expendable. He achieved his power through loyalty, not ability. Filipinos joke that if Marcos asked him to jump out of a window, Ver would reply: 'From what floor?' Ver has also installed loyal, but not very capable people, in important military positions, with the result that the army has done badly against the growing communist-led New People's Army and the muslim Moro National Liberation Front.

Armed struggle is expanding across the Philippines, and beginning to build an infrastructure of government in the villages, administering defence, health and education. The revolutionaries have taken their operations into towns and cities where they are linking up with the mass anti-Marcos movement.

US imperialism is weighing up the situation. It prefers General Ramos, who is acting as chief of staff of the armed forces while Ver is 'on leave'. However, Ver must be protected, since further charges against him would probably implicate Marcos himself, whom US President Johnson called 'my right arm in Asia'. If the worst comes to the worst, the US are likely to ditch Marcos and install a new ally, such as Ramos, or whatever it takes to try and retain their grip on the Philippines in the face of the growing resistance. Sharon James

gust of the Moslem population. In January Mahmoud Mohammed Taha, leader of the Republican Movement (Brotherhood) an Islamic organisation was arrested with four others. All five were sentenced to death unless they 'repented'. Taha, a frail man of 'repented'. The others 'repented', were reprieved and released, the disavowals of Taha being broadcast on TV.

Fighting against imperialism

The hanging of Taha has outraged the Sudanese people and can only precipitate Nimeiri's downfall, whose country is totally bankrupt, suffering from drought and poverty. There are enormous numbers of refugees. The intensification of the guerrilla war in the south led by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, is showing signs of victory. A few weeks ago, a whole division of Nimeiri's troops were killed. The rebels are winning' reported the *Observer* (17 February). The guerrillas are also preventing prospective Saudi tycoons and the US oil transnational Chevron from exploiting the oilfields in the region. A total victory will come when the people of the north join the revolt to rid Sudan of imperialism.

Colette Levy

MINERS' STRIKE

an adverse shift for the SWP

The miners' strike and the struggle for socialism – Socialist Workers Party, 20p

'Why four and a half million people on the dole? Why old people dying of cold? ... Police treating people rough coming in at six in the morning and frightening the children. Suddenly I said "My God, that's what's been happening to black people for years"'. Kate Whiteside of the newly formed National Co-ordinating Committee of Women's Action Groups. (*Guardian* 19 February 1985)

This new political consciousness, gained by thousands of working class men and women during the twelve months long miners' strike, shows the path of future working class struggle.

It is a dramatic gain for the working class movement. Yet the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) can only see: 'a very real and adverse shift ... in the balance of class forces.' (Hallas, *Socialist Worker* 2 February 1985). This gloom and defeatism can only be explained by the fact that the SWP whilst dreaming of revolution, has actually placed its faith in the rotten structure of the Great British Labour and trade union movement.

In the face of an obvious split in the ranks of the NUM – a split that has been mirrored throughout the trade union

movement – the SWP have retained a blind belief in the organised rank-and-file at the point of production. Their fantasies about the path of future working class struggle have been destroyed by the harsh realities of the miners' strike but they refuse to abandon them. Now their plan for the future advocates an even narrower 'struggle for socialism' – a retreat even from the workplaces of the better-off working class into what they themselves describe as the 'shells' of Trades Councils and trade union branches – in order to rebuild them (Hallas).

For this reason the SWP pamphlet 'The miners' strike and the struggle for socialism' can offer no lessons and no way forward. It is a mixture of general abstract truths about the ABCs of their socialism interspersed with shallow references to the miners' strike.

The author, Harman, patronises his readers with primary school lessons about the terrible power of the state and its organised attack on the mining communities: how the capitalist class exploits the working class, how the state acts in the interests of the ruling class and how only the working class can overthrow the rotten system of capitalism. All well and good – but how is this to be done? Apparently with the aid of an abstract general formula:

gun' on lorries moving coal from collieries to check that they really were delivering to hospitals, pensioners and schools (p153). The blockade was so effective that within only 19 days the CEEGB sought special powers from the government to make selective reductions in the electricity supply (p164). By the fifth week, the pickets had a complete stranglehold on the power stations and the government had to take emergency action (p187).

Equally unlike today, the police were quite unprepared – they admitted privately to an NUM official that '... the miners had them over a barrel, because the widespread nature of the miners' offensive and the numbers of men involved had stretched police resources to their limit' (p144). So by the 7th week of the strike, the miners achieved victory, winning substantial increases in pay. That such a victory has not been achieved this time is a measure of the increasing strength of the state's organisation and the decline of the official labour movement.

Patrick Newman

fifth had suffered police harassment.

While the 'age of consent' for heterosexuals is 16, for homosexual males it is 21. This unjust and discriminatory law, although it is ineffectual in stopping young gays having sex, creates 'a climate of real fear, worry and guilt for many'. As one 17 year old put it, 'The under 21 law is inhumane and should be repealed.'

Why are gay people oppressed in capitalist society? The authors point out that 'Society is geared towards the family, in which everyone is assumed to be heterosexual. The media, the educational system, religion, laws and government policy reflect and endorse this.' However, the nature of the family in capitalist society is not investigated further and so the authors fail to show that the extent to which gay liberation can be achieved under capitalism is necessarily very limited. For instance, the possibility of the Metropolitan Police ridding itself of its anti-gay prejudice is as remote as the possibility of it ridding itself of its racial prejudice.

Nevertheless, the book provides a revealing insight into the dehumanising effects of gay oppression. The cartoons illustrating the book are a welcome antidote to the anti-gay 'humour' which is so endemic in our sexist culture.

David Jackson

'... one of the most important truths about modern capitalist society: a united and militant working class is more powerful than the strongest of states. We can beat the state – if we build that unity and militancy' (p10)

Unfortunately the real class struggle has little time or patience with abstract general truths. Far from being united, there is a fundamental split in the working class movement as the miners' strike has conclusively demonstrated.

The split in the working class movement is the most fundamental political feature of capitalism since the advent of imperialism. The split is not simply between the 'bureaucracy' and the rank-



and-file but goes deep down into the ranks of the working class. Dockers, power and steel workers and sections of miners themselves – on the whole the better paid in more secure jobs – have scabbed on the miners' strike.

The TUC and Labour Party has scabbed on the strike not simply because its leaders are rotten and well-off but because the movement itself represents the interests of the better-off working class. It is their movement. Trade unions have refused to sacrifice their massive funds, buildings, newspapers, status and privilege for the miners' strike. Trade unionists in crucial areas have refused to risk any threat to their jobs and conditions in order to give the most basic solidarity to the miners' strike.

The SWP cannot accept this. Their world of the rotten bureaucracy and the fighting rank-and-file will simply not square with the reality of the miners' strike.

Inevitably in the pamphlet they attack Arthur Scargill:

'He has not spoken openly to the active strikers on the ground about the lethargy, the incompetence and the bureaucratic sabotage of so many of the officials under him. He has been like a general who refuses to appeal over the heads of incompetent officers to the rank-and-file soldiers below to wage the battle in the only way that can assure success' (12)

In the middle of the fiercest class-war battle for decades, the SWP wanted Scargill to launch a purge of NUM officials in a period when the ruling class was intent on isolating him as an unrepresentative extremist. When you lead no troops you can afford the luxury of armchair criticism.

Scargill however has to concern himself with the real balance of forces within the miners' strike. The NUM is not a revolutionary organisation, but a trade union with all the political limitations that that entails. Arthur Scargill cannot change this and neither can the SWP.

The reactionary consequences of the SWP's simplistic division between the bureaucracy and the rank-and-file is highlighted when the SWP occasionally

liberal sentiments and Kampuchea

KILLING FIELDS

Directed by Roland Joffe, Warner Brothers

This film has attempted to portray something of Kampuchean life under the ultra-left Pol Pot regime. It does so by telling the real life odyssey of *New York Times* correspondent Sydney Schanberg and his Kampuchean assistant Dith Pran. The two experience together the rout of the US-backed Lon Nol puppets in 1975, and the forced evacuation of Phnom Penh by its new Khmer Rouge rulers. They were then parted: Schanberg to wrestle with his liberal conscience back in the USA, and Dith Pran to scramble through the chamber of horrors that was Pol Pot's Kampuchea.

The friendship between Schanberg and Dith Pran is used as a vehicle to carry the audience through the ghastly panorama that proclaimed itself 'the most radical revolution ever, without precedent in the history of mankind'. However, the character of that friendship, and the use of this story-telling technique, panders to chauvinism. Dith Pran's literary forebears are Man Friday and Gunga Din, and this narrows the range of experiences that can be explored. An opportunity to unravel an almost unique experience in ultra-left mass social engineering is missed. The entire social and economic structure of Kampuchea had been devastated by US bombing. Phnom Penh, the capital, was inundated with millions of starving refugees. In the task of reconstruction, Marxist, pro-Soviet and pro-Vietnamese forces were defeated, leav-

ing the Khmer Rouge at the mercy of ultra-left, petit-bourgeois factions led by Pol Pot.

Pol Pot attempted an almost instantaneous 'socialism', regardless of the wishes of the people and of what was possible given the level of the productive forces. Phnom Penh was emptied, markets shut down, money abolished, schools and hospitals closed as teachers and doctors were branded 'unreliable elements'. *Killing Fields* shows us the effects: forced labour in the name of 'co-operatives', mass hunger, the growing distrust among the Khmer Rouge of the masses and their resort to violence, producing the eerie crop of corpses that give the film its name, but the film explains nothing. In exasperation Schanberg invites the audience to conclude with him 'Cambodia is the Nixon doctrine in its purest form ... We underestimated the insanity \$17 billion worth of bombs could produce.'

Nixon only continued the policies of the 'liberal' Kennedy, backed by the Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson. Policies which are consistent in their cynical self-interest and barbarity, and which led the US and Britain today to consistently vote for a seat at the United Nations for the Khmer Rouge remnants' representative. The Vietnamese suffered a far longer war and many more bombs than Kampuchea, but they did not go 'insane'. Surely, efficiently, without a blood-bath the Vietnamese communists restored Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, to civilisation. What we witness in *Killing Fields* is the criminal logic of imperialism and its willing hand-servant ultra-leftism. The film should be com-

plimented for indicating the typical fusion of ultra-leftism with, in this case, Khmer chauvinism: the Khmer Rouge's sacking of the Soviet embassy and burning of President Brezhnev's picture, and their intention to attack Vietnam to regain a fourteenth century Khmer empire.

However, the film concludes with two anti-communist messages: the Vietnamese volunteers who helped their Kampuchean comrades lift the Pol Pot nightmare were presented in the same way as the earlier US raiders; and the two central characters are reunited just after Kampuchea's liberation in 1979 at a refugee camp on the Thai border to the caption 'Cambodia's torment has not yet ended'. What unites Nixon, Pol Pot and Harold Wilson is a loathing for socialism wherever it has taken root and grown with the efforts of the masses.

Kampuchea's tormentors today, as they were in 1973 when the film opens, are the US imperialists who fund the reactionary gangs along Kampuchea's Thai border and provoke them to attack the Kampuchean people, their army and Vietnamese comrades. Just as the joint efforts of Vietnamese, Laotian and Kampuchean revolutionaries secured the Ho Chi Minh trail which led to the victory over imperialism, so today's Indo-Chinese solidarity is building socialism, painstakingly, without chaos, in their countries. For this they are attacked.

Killing Fields is guided by privileged liberal sentiments, and pretends that you can sit on the Thai border and wait for sanity and a better world to come. It is nominated for a string of Academy Awards, but confirms the great lesson for art in the twentieth century: it cannot rise above mediocrity without taking the side of freedom and socialism in the struggle for the future.

Trevor Rayne

Maggie Mellon/David Reed

SOMETHING TO TELL YOU

Lorraine Trenchard and Hugh Warren, 1984, £2.95

'Homosexuality is not a problem, other people's reactions to it are. Homosexuality is a positive and valid choice.' (The authors)

Something to tell you is the report of a one year research project by the London Gay Teenage Group and looks at the lives and experiences of young lesbians and gay men, aged mainly 15-20, in London. In our heterosexist capitalist society prejudice and hostility towards homosexuality is widespread. Young gays in particular often find themselves completely isolated, bombarded from all sides with negative and stereotyped images of gay people.

Besides facing persistent subtle pressures to conform, large numbers of those who took part in the survey had been subjected to more direct prejudice and physical abuse. Over half had been verbally abused, a fifth had been beaten up, one in ten had been thrown out of the home and many others sent to a doctor or psychiatrist. One in five had felt under such intolerable pressure that they had attempted suicide. Nearly one

IN BRIEF

● ARMAGH – HOLLOWAY! VICTORY TO THE PRISONERS!

Britain has the most barbaric prison regime in Europe. The systematic strip searching of Irish Republican women political prisoners in Armagh gaol and the inhumane conditions in British gaols are a reality for thousands of working class women. In Armagh Gaol over 2,000 strip searches have taken place since November 1982 in an attempt to break the courage and resistance of the POWs there. In British prisons 15 women have died from medical neglect and suicide. In Holloway in 1983 82,140 doses of psychiatric drugs per woman prisoner, were administered. This in an attempt to control and break their spirit. As an Armagh prisoner said 'the women suffer but that suffering only strengthens our commitment. Their commitment demands our solidarity and support. To mark International Women's Day the London Irish Solidarity Committees have called a picket of Holloway Prison in solidarity with women prisoners in Armagh Gaol and with women prisoners in English gaols. We demand VICTORY TO THE ARMAGH WOMEN! STOP THE STRIP SEARCHES! END THE DRUGGINGS OF WOMEN PRISONERS! FIGHT FOR PRISONERS RIGHTS! Sunday 10 March 1985 1-3pm outside Holloway Prison.

Pauline Sellars

● H-BLOCK! HELL BLOCK!

Chief Prison Officer P J Kerr, acting chief of security in the H-blocks of Long Kesh organised a brutal regime in the H-block before his execution by the IRA. An IRA statement said that: Kerr was responsible for the beatings of POWs, for the setting up of an isolation wing designed to physically and psychologically break POWs for the implementation of forced integration of republican and loyalist prisoners using a riot squad, Kerr meted out and took part in punishments including the forced bathing and scrubbing of prisoners. Kerr, it seems, did all in his power to make the H-blocks a hell-block for POWs held there. In 1981 he was awarded the British Empire Medal for his services to British imperialism. On Sunday 17 February Kerr was executed and the IRA warned prison officials 'to desist in oppressing POWs. The days of torture and repression must end. If not, someone must pay the price'.

Pauline Sellars

● PORTLAOISE HUNGER STRIKE ENDS

On 15 February Pascal Holmes and Edd Gallagher ended their hunger strike in Portlaoise Prison after 33 and 40 days respectively. Pascal Holmes wrote to Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! stating his demands and asking for support.

Pascal was attempting to highlight the inhumane conditions which exist in Portlaoise in the form of four simple demands: 1. 52 open visits a year – Pascal has never had any physical contact with his family whilst in prison, he has never touched his 2 year old daughter and his other children display emotional problems particularly after one of their 4-times-a-year visits. He demanded an end to all strip searching of prison visitors – a humiliating and degrading experience.

2. Parity of sentences with non-political prisoners – some men serving life are released after six years whilst some political prisoners have served twelve years.

3. Parole of at least 3 days for the serious illness or death of a family member.

4. Proper medical treatment facilities for all prisoners.

Portlaoise Prisoners Relatives Action Committee was set up to highlight a campaign about conditions in Portlaoise. The RAC has held pickets of TD's homes, blocked bridges, street meetings and picketed the Department of Justice in Dublin where 3 women chained themselves to the doors in protest.

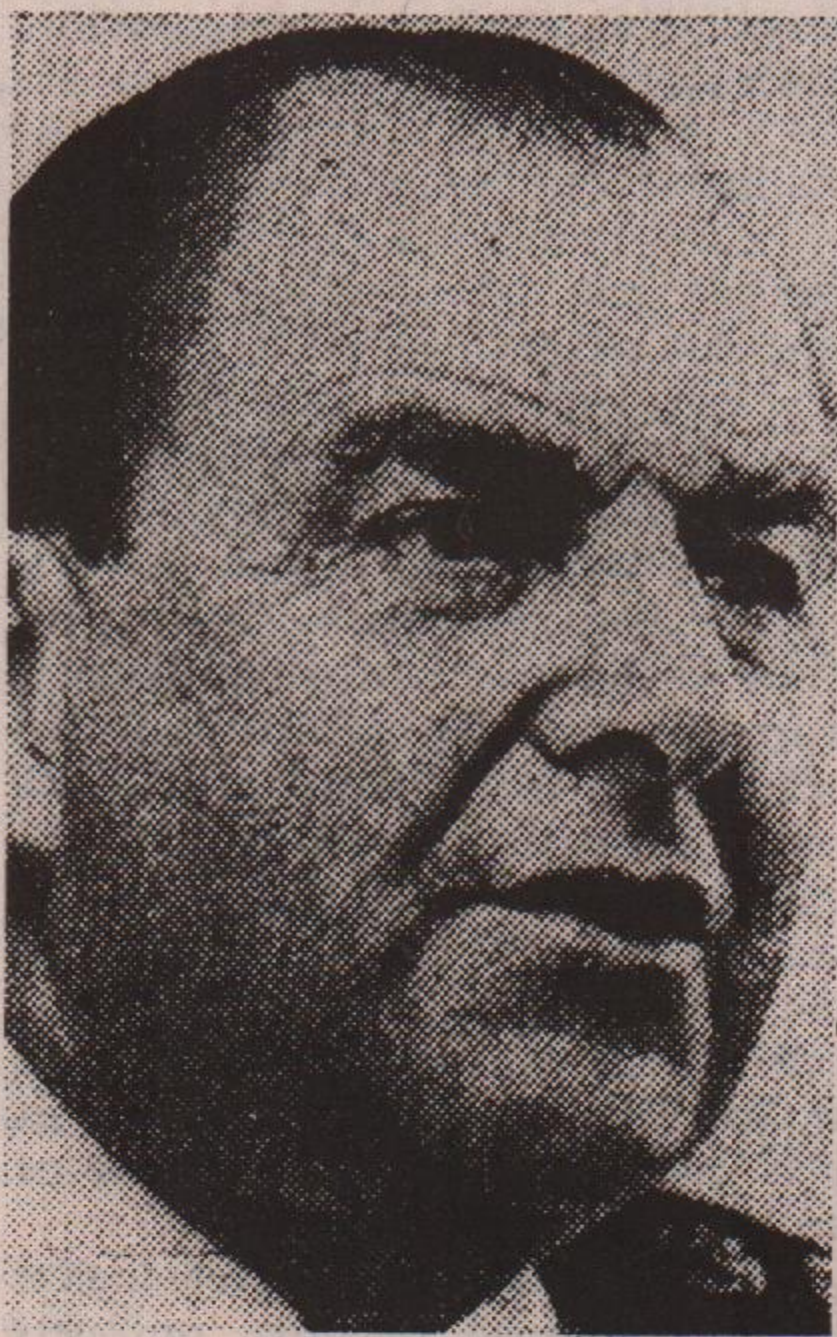
The struggle for humane conditions in Portlaoise continues. FRFI salutes the courage of Pascal Holmes and Edd Gallagher whilst on hunger strike and will continue to support the struggle for basic rights for all prisoners.

Cathal

On February 23 the lie that British imperialism is not operating a 'shoot-to-kill' policy was once again blown wide open. In cold blood, three IRA Volunteers, Charles Breslin, Michael and David Devine (16 years old) were shot dead by the British Army near Strabane. People in the area heard the shout 'Don't shoot, don't shoot me' and then more shots. No attempts have been made to justify the shooting; it has been blatantly stated that no shots were fired at the army. British Army undercover squads are now notorious for their cold-blooded murder of republicans in the Six Counties.

Less well known is the fact that the British Army's sidekick, the RUC, actively pursues the same shoot-to-kill policy – with Headquarter Mobile Support Units. One of these units was responsible in August 1984 for the murder of John Downes in Belfast, by a plastic bullet fired at point blank range.

In 1979 the RUC set up a covert surveillance and long range patrolling squad, modelled on the SAS units with military experience preferred. This was called the Bessbrook Support Unit and its aim was to allow the RUC to enter South Armagh – a no-go area for the RUC for ten years. Undercover was the name of the game, no uniforms or number flashes, some even dressing as IRA men. The unit was directly responsible to Kenneth Newman, then head of the RUC, now head of the Metropolitan Police. They were trained to mount long observation patrols, being dropped in a republican area under cover, staying for



Left, Kenneth Newman. Far left, Jack Hermon: joint architects of the shoot-to-kill policy

INLA Volunteers were shot dead in December 1982 and members of the E4A admitted concocting a completely fabricated story to cover up the fact that surveillance had been carried out in the

Twenty Six Counties. Once again acquittal was the order of the day.

In this period yet another special unit was set up, the Headquarters Mobile Support Units (HMSU). HMSU units were involved in the murder of the 3 unarmed IRA Volunteers and the INLA Volunteers in 1982, working with the E4A. HMSUs supplemented the work of the DMSUs and each had their own covert surveillance squad.

Despite their record of murder, specialist RUC units have blossomed. From the one BSU unit in 1979 there are now at least 24 specialist units operating in the Six Counties. E4A was absorbed into the HMSUs and no longer exists officially. However the murder of John Downes shows that far from curtailing their murderous activities they have been expanded.

British imperialism can say what it likes about 'ordinary' policemen – no such thing exists in the occupied Six Counties or indeed in Britain. Kenneth Newman is now training special units here in Britain and it is no coincidence that following the 1981 uprisings Metropolitan Police chiefs met the RUC to learn their murderous methods – put into practice in the miners' strike. In the Six Counties the nationalist people are facing the grim reality of the shoot-to-kill policy – a policy of cold-blooded murder sanctioned by British imperialism.

Liz Sullivan

BRITAIN'S SECRET ASSASSINS

shooting to kill

long periods to observe. Highly trained, highly paid, often ex-Army, the BSU was frequently accused of ill-treating members of the community, but such 'incidents' were 'smoothed over'. The BSU became the model for all future RUC undercover units.

In 1980 Jack Hermon took over from Kenneth Newman and within 3 months had disbanded the BSU, and 're-organised' the notorious special patrol groups.

In reality Hermon just changed the names – the SPG became the Divisional Mobile Support Units (DMSU) with vastly increased numbers and units divided into covert units and 'Quick Reaction Force' units – both modelled on the BSU. At the same time the E4A unit was set up operating all over occupied Ireland and given specialist training by the BSU!

Within 2 years of its existence the

E4A was involved in the murder of three unarmed Volunteers at point blank range. It caused some controversy but the 3 E4A men who stood trial for murder were acquitted by Lord Justice Gibson who commended them for their courage in bringing the IRA man 'to the final court of justice'. E4A was responsible for the murder of Michael Tighe, 18 years old, whose mistake was to enter a shed under E4A surveillance. Two

● Wakefield Picket

On Sunday 10 February a picket of Wakefield prison took place to commemorate the ninth anniversary of the murder of Irish POW Frank Stagg. The picket was called by the Irish Republican POW Campaign (Birmingham) but unfortunately they were unable to attend. The 20-strong picket had banners and supporters from Manchester Irish Solidarity Committee and Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! and supporters from the Troops Out Movement, IBRG and Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee.

Chas Millington

GREETINGS TO IRISH POWS

The following Irish Republican Prisoners have forthcoming birthdays. FRFI sends our greetings and asks our readers to send birthday cards, preferably recorded delivery, to ensure their arrival.

Patrick Mulryan, 461575, HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 5TZ. 23 March 1985.

Gerry Cunningham, 132016, HM Prison Long Lartin. 24 March.

Patrick Guilfoyle, 507956, HM Prison Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight. 31 March.

Eddie Butler, 338637, HM Prison, Welford Road, Leicester, LE2 7AJ. 17 April.

We would also like to congratulate Irish POWs, Tony Cunningham and Mick Murray who were released in February. Tony served eight of a ten year sentence and Mick nearly ten of twelve years. Neither were liable for deportation under the PTA.

● Guildford frame-up

Thames TV has recently shown programmes on the frame up of the Guildford and Woolwich 4, featuring Alastair Logan (solicitor). They were a powerful argument for the re-opening of the case. Four people (Paul Hill, Paddy Armstrong, Carole Richardson, Gerard Conlon) are serving long sentences for the bombings. Yet there is not a shred of concrete evidence against them, in fact the Balcombe Street IRA Active Service Unit claimed the bombings. In addition to the four the Maguire family suffered long sentences in connection with the case, Annie Maguire being released only this February. The British political and legal establishment have acted ruthlessly to prevent the truth emerging. Truth that would show the lengths to which the police and courts have gone to frame and imprison Irish people. The ISM has the Thames programmes on video and can supply this and a speaker about the case for meetings. We urge you to show the video and write to your MP and the Home Secretary about the case.

Maxine Williams

No More Frame Ups! Free the Guildford Four!

London Public Meeting, Tuesday 2 April, 7.30pm

Camden Centre, Bidborough Street (near Kings Cross tube)

CONDOLENCES

On Saturday 26 January Michael Timothy, editor of An Phoblacht/Republican News and a Sinn Féin Ard Comhairle member, died suddenly at his home in Co Kildare. Michael Timothy wrote under the pen-name of Kevin Burke. We extend condolences to his family and colleagues.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DR MAIRE O'SHEA

Category A

Dr Maire O'Shea is interviewed by FRFI. She was held under the PTA for seven days, charged with 'conspiracy to cause explosions', released on bail on Friday 8 February.

'Risley was horrific. I escaped the worst because of the publicity. They knew there was a spotlight on me from the beginning. But I got petty harassment all the time in Risley. For a start I was in solitary and then there were stupid rules like I was to put my clothes outside the door every night at 7pm. In the beginning I was getting bandied from one to the other. "You've asked the wrong person, you've got to ask somebody else". Then you would wait a day to see the next person. And when I was just thinking that I had got the hang of all the rules and I knew how to work them, like getting the most basic necessities that I needed, suddenly they started coming up with new rules. Couldn't have my slippers or my cardigan in the cell at night. "Why can't I have my cardigan and slippers in the cell?" "You might escape". I said to them, "I can just about walk, I've got disabilities, I wouldn't have a chance of climbing a

wall". The window in my cell was above the level of my head and the panes of glass in it were about three or four inches square in a thick iron frame.

"I was Category A until the day before I got bail. I was in this little unit where there were three cells and they kept moving me from one to the other. Every time I moved the screws went through all my property. The day before I got bail they said "You're moving to the block, you're off Category A now". Before that, every time I complained about anything, if I said that's not in the prison rules for remand prisoners (because I had a copy of prison rules) they said "Oh you're Category A".

"I think all kinds of public activities against the PTA are needed. Mainly getting support from influential bodies like trade unions and the large political organisations and lobbies of Parliament. Any public activity. I think the publicity in the media and the pickets helped me to escape the worst aspects of the PTA."

Dr O'Shea welcomed the setting up of a committee involving all organisations willing to work together against the PTA.

PRISONERS FIGHTBACK

Hunger strike in Barlinnie

On Friday 1 March Mick McCallum ended his hunger strike after 40 days. Mick went on hunger strike to protest against the deaths and injuries in Scottish prisons; the threats and assaults on himself; censorship of prisoners' mail; and harassment of visitors and the inhuman conditions of closed visits. (see FRFI 46).

Dumbarton County Council have voted to support Mick's demands, particularly that for an inquiry into the rate of deaths and injuries in Scottish prisons. The Scottish Council for Civil Liberties and five MPs have also called for an inquiry. The brutal character of Barlinnie prison officers was demonstrated during a picket in support of Mick McCallum. A prison officer's car came out of the prison with a placard in the window reading 'Hang McCallum'. The pickets were organised by the Scottish Prisoners Support Committee which includes FRFI supporters.

Mick McCallum, announcing his decision to end the hunger strike, said: 'The hunger strike has achieved the aim of giving publicity to abuses in the Scottish prison system...'. Mick also said that Scottish prisoner Thomas Kelly has gone on hunger strike in Saughton prison from 1 March.

Terry O'Halloran

Pat Guilfoyle not guilty

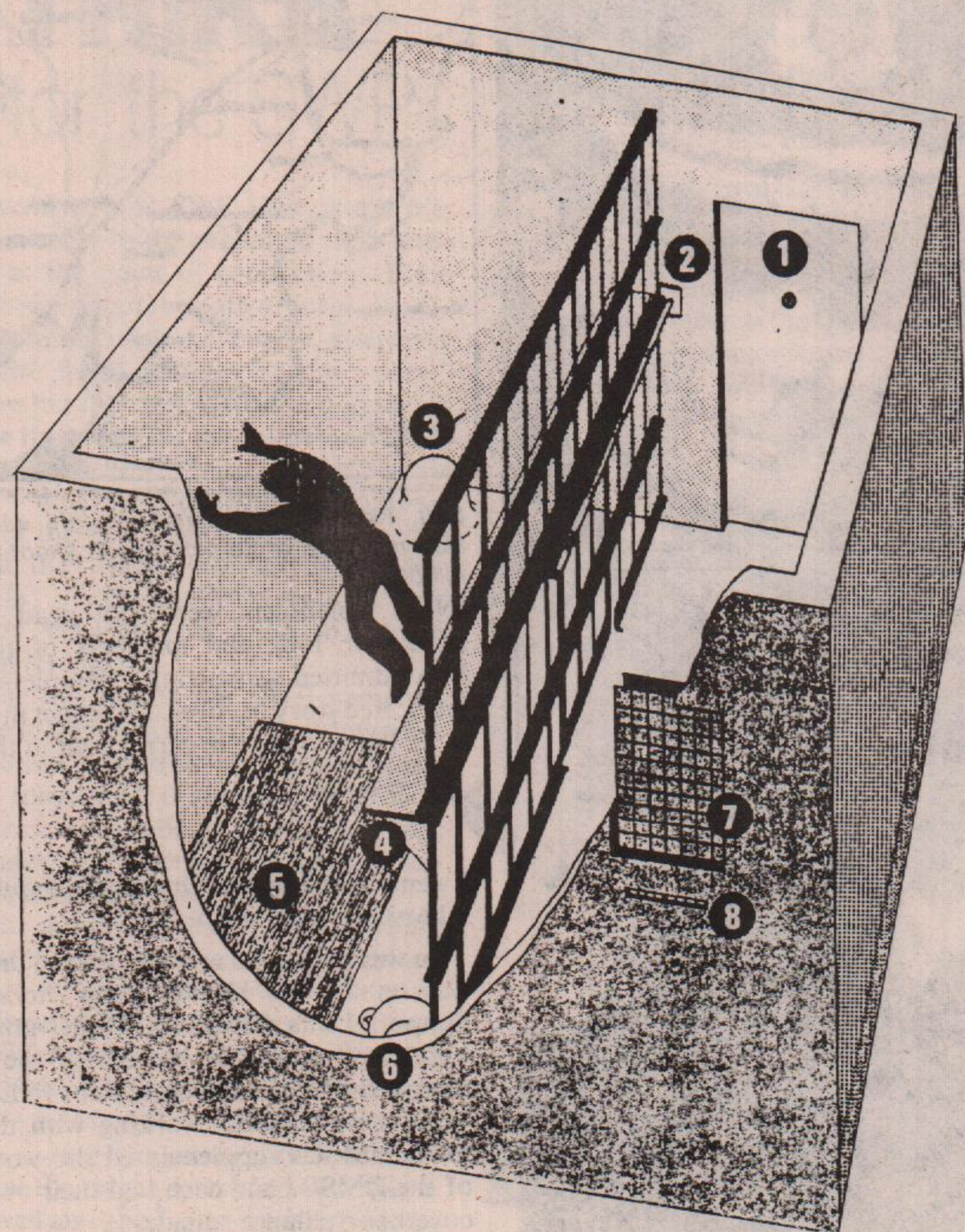
On Friday 1 March, after a four day trial, Irish POW Pat Guilfoyle was found not guilty of assaulting Kenneth Littlejohn, the notorious agent provocateur, who was beaten up in Gartree prison in January 1983. The attack was carried out by Irish POWs Sean Kinsella, Sean Hayes and Liam Baker in response to Littlejohn's attempts to incite attacks on the POWs. The three were found guilty in Leicester Crown Court last June. Pat Guilfoyle had not taken part in the attack but was nonetheless charged. In the June trial the jury voted nine to three to acquit him. Vindictively the DPP insisted on a retrial. The trial was set for November but was postponed for 'security reasons' - the Queen was coming to Leicester! So Pat had his final trial more than two years after the incident. Shujaa Moshesh was one of the prisoners who came forward in Pat's defence. Pat Guilfoyle, due for release later this year, has had to endure two years anguish with this false charge and a possible further sentence hanging over him. FRFI congratulates Pat, the prisoners who defended him and his lawyers for winning this important victory.

FRFI FOR PRISONERS

FRFI is now sent to 120 prisoners in England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, USA, Italy and Holland. The cost of this service is now at least £60 per issue. This cost will rise as the number of prisoners asking for the paper increases. FRFI does not want any prisoner to be prevented from receiving the paper because of lack of funds. Therefore we appeal to all our readers to send money urgently to the FRFI prisoners' fightback fund. You can make a one-off donation, a regular monthly donation or simply pay for one prisoner's subscription. FRFI is providing a unique service to Irish POWs, black prisoners, miners in prison and social prisoners in this country and abroad. You can help to maintain and extend this work. Send cheques/POs (made payable to Larkin Publications) to: Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London, WC1N 3XX.

We have learnt that some prisoners have written in for FRFI and not received it. This is because we have not received the letters or the paper has been stopped by the prison authorities. Prisoners who do not receive their issues of FRFI should write again and, if necessary complain to their lawyers and/or MPs.

AIDS - Some prisoners have asked FRFI about AIDS. The most reliable advice can be got from: Terrence Higgins Trust, BM Aids, London, WC1N 3XX. See also page 4



THE CAGE: 1) Main cell door (steel) with spy hole. 2) Cage door can only be opened by device outside cell. 3) Concrete bollard seat (recent addition). 4) Metal shelf welded to cage front. 5) Wooden dais on floor as bed. 6) Chamber pot. 7) Double-glazed opaque window. Cannot be opened. Difficult to tell whether it's night or day. 8) Ventilation system, eight quarter-inch slats.

confined is only 3 metres by 2½ metres - 4 paces from side to side and 3 paces from the bars to the wall opposite. The so-called service area is 3 metres by 2. The cage bars are an inch thick. The cage door can only be opened from outside the cell. There is no natural light. The window - in the service area - is thick and opaque, making it difficult to know whether it is night or day. The light burns 24 hours a day to complete the disorientating effect. The only things in the cell are a wooden seat for a bed, a plastic chamber pot and a concrete bollard-seat. There is also a punishment cell in the unit - a tiny circular cell-within-a-cell in which prisoners are placed naked without facilities of any kind. Four warders constantly watch every move of each prisoner.

The cage regime is pure psychological torture - designed to drive prisoners mad. Mick McCallum, presently on hunger strike in Barlinnie prison, has described the regime: 'You are subjected to pressure from the moment you arrive there to the moment you leave... At night they put on a special machine which means you cannot shout at each other... It drowns you out. It is like living next to a waterfall.' Of 13 prisoners known to have been in the cages since 1978, one is now in the state mental hospital in Carstairs, 3 have been in the cages twice and one 3 times and are reported to be mentally ill.

The barbarity of the cages is only the most extreme form of the barbarity of the Scottish prison regime. Scottish prisoners are fighting back in the cages, Peterhead and elsewhere. Mick McCallum, who spent 6½ months in one 10 month period in the cages, went on hunger strike for 40 days (see report this page). FRFI sends its support to all Scottish prisoners fighting for their rights.

**No control units
Close the cages now
Graham Johnson**

SCOTTISH CONTROL UNITS ARE CAGES

Scottish prisoners who refuse to submit to the intolerable regime in Scottish prisons face the threat of transfer to the notorious Inverness cages. Peterhead prisoners involved in the major protests there have been sent to the cages. William 'Toe' Elliott whom the jury acquitted in the Peterhead protest showtrial was immediately disposed of to the cages.

The Scottish Office claims that the use of the term cages is 'totally inaccurate and creates a wholly wrong impression.' The description of the Inverness unit as cages is accurate. A *Daily Record* reporter

who spent half an hour in the cages said 'It was enough... it was cold bare and inhuman... ideal for animals but for people an insult to society.'

The caged area where the prisoner is

John McCluskey speaks

In the third and final part of our interview former Irish POW, John McCluskey, discusses the political organisation and role of Irish POWs in British prisons.

The Irish political prisoners get together weekly or every two weeks to discuss all the problems that confront prisoners; how our struggle is going on the outside and how we can help. It is very important that we make contact with other prisoners so we discuss how to make them aware of our struggle and of theirs. Because although they may not be politically conscious they are involved in struggle also.

Each unit of Irish political prisoners elects an Officer in Command (OC); a Public Relations Officer (PRO); and an Education Officer. A lot of our prisoners become more politicised. They see that our movement should be involved more with other revolutionary organisations. We see how they should become more politically aware of a socialist line.

The prisoners who take an interest in anything are very sympathetic to the miners' strike. All prisoners are very hostile towards the police. But unfortunately they don't analyse this much further. We try to tell them that the police are only a reflection of the whole violence. They're the ones you might see in the front line but they're not the administrators of the system.

Solidarity work in Britain is something that we have discussed. We had a lot of literature from the Irish Solidarity

Committees (ISCs) prior to the November '82 conference. It was the first literature that we could really identify with. We decided to come out and make a stand with these ISCs, which is how the Albany letter [April 1983] came about. We were trying to create a line of solidarity between Irish political prisoners in Britain and groups on the outside. We were trying to voice our views, even to our own organisations, on how things should be done.

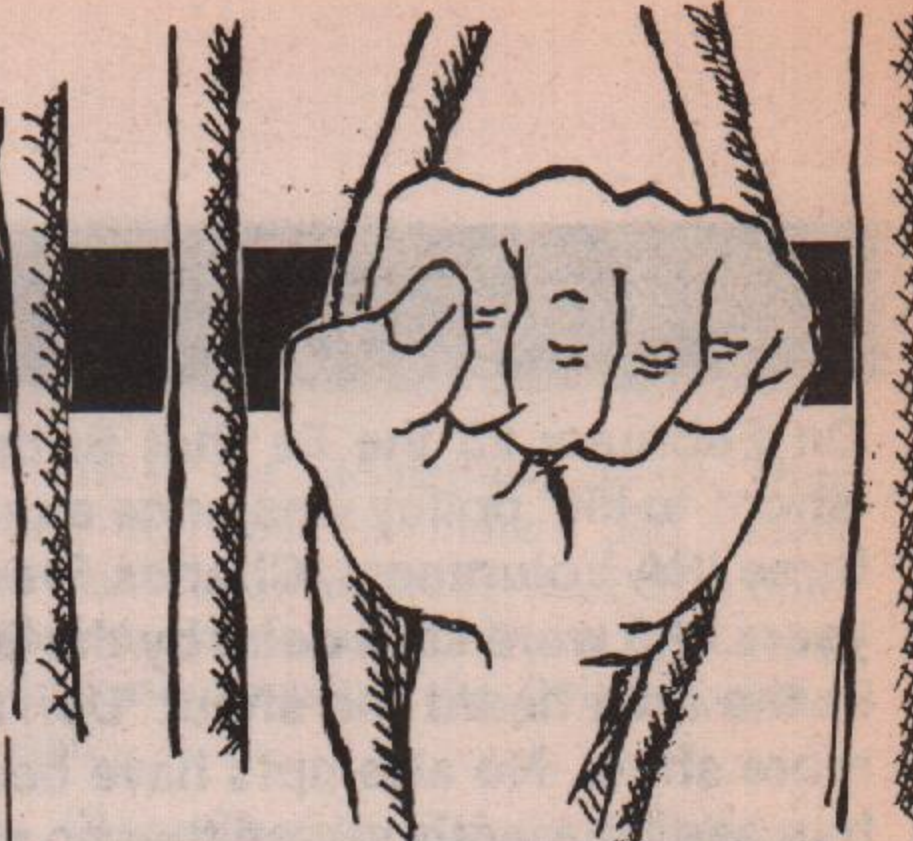
I think it was very significant that Malcolm Pitt of the Kent miners [Malcolm Pitt and John McCluskey shared the platform at the October 1984 ISM Conference] should see the parallel between our struggle and the miners. It is important that prisoners, especially political prisoners, and our own movement should see that as well. We're fighting the one enemy - the British ruling class. I see the imprisoned miners as political prisoners. The miners must fight for political status and the NUM must support them. They're going to have a lot of people in prison if they continue the struggle. They must have a clear policy on how they're going to look after these prisoners. So political status for prisoners is an important thing and not a diversion from the miners' struggle. It's facing the reality of the thing. If they don't have a policy on that, they

really can't expect people to go to prison.

There was one prisoner, a black prisoner that I met in prison, Shujaa Moshesh. I think he was the most politicised black prisoner that I've ever met in prison. He was constantly working to politicise other black prisoners and not only black. He worked with all the white prisoners he possibly could. He constantly had to work against the barrier of racialism in prison. He's a great socialist, a great internationalist, a great realist and he constantly worked. I was glad to have met him. Because of his stand with the Irish prisoners and with other prisoners, he suffered loss of remission and long, long, long times in solitary confinement. He's only just recently been moved out of solitary confinement in F Wing, the torture block at Wakefield which the Home Office denies is in operation. Shujaa spent something like ten months in there. There are a few prisoners like that I've met and I intend to keep in contact with them because it's important not just to walk away from people. People who are released must still work.

I intend to continue working for the Irish Republican Movement. Our movement covers a lot of political work and other types of work. At the moment the issue that I've spent most time on is working for the prisoners. There's the Prisoner of War Department within our movement and I intend to work with them, to try to keep in contact with prisoners and to get something more done for them.

concluded



PRISON NEWS

The inquest on the first victim of Leon Brittan's 20 year minimum sentence parole rules, Tony Taylor, was held in January. Tony Taylor was found hanged in his cell at Wakefield in November, four days after being told that he would have to serve another 17 years of his life sentence before even being considered for parole.

The death toll in Brixton prison - aptly named the House of the Dead by Inquest - continues to rise. Conditions there have caused ten deaths of prisoners by hanging in 1983 and 1984 alone. Verdicts of suicide have covered up the truth. Brixton's new governor is Joy Kinsey who leaves Holloway women's prison following a scandal under her regime about suicide attempts and self-injury in the C1 'psychiatric' unit. The NCCL and MIND have written to the Home Office demanding urgent action to ensure 'some minimal humanity' in the conditions of the women in C1. Holloway has the second highest level of drugging of prisoners in Britain and Kinsey is also notorious for her attack on the education service at Holloway. On 12 February Inquest, who campaign on the issue of deaths in custody, picketed Brixton prison. FRFI comrades supported the picket. One incident marred the event: the *Morning Star* photographer refused to take any pictures of the picket unless FRFI took its banner out of the shot. After censoring the event, he left.

A week after Brittan's announcement that 'short sharp shock' regimes are to be extended for use against prisoners in all 18 Detention Centres in England and Wales, a 17 year old died in Scotland's notorious Glenochil DC. Angus Boyd, founding hanging in his cell, is the sixth youth to die in Glenochil since 1981. The extension of the 'short sharp shock' regime will increase the already horrific death rate among young prisoners, whose numbers continue to grow. Following the death of Arthur Padden in Barlinnie prison, four Scottish Labour MPs have called for an inquiry into the 'death camps'. Such an inquiry was one of the demands of Mick McCallum's hunger strike in Barlinnie.

On 11 March Des Warren's case against the Home Office will finally be heard. Des Warren, imprisoned in 1973 as one of the leaders of the building workers' strike, is suing the Home Office for damages arising from the ruin of his health by forcible drugging whilst in prison. He endured 22 days on hunger strike for political status, but was ignored by the newly-elected Labour government, and forgotten by the trade union movement. A victim of the state's policy of criminalisation against those who fight for their jobs, Des Warren has waited eight years for his case to come to court.

Ever since Thames TV's revelations about brutality to inmates at Rampton high security 'hospital', the Prison Officers' Association has banned visits on the wards. The POA insist on highly supervised visits in the assembly hall. It is now threatening action following the re-introduction of ward visits, claiming that they lead to 'malicious' allegations against the hospital nurses.

Tony Sheridan - Beth Summers

Attacks on the poor

Dear FRFI,
How enraged I was when I heard about the mother and daughter who froze to death in the bedroom of their council flat after being poisoned by carbon monoxide gas, the eleven year old son dying the next day, also of hypothermia. The sight of the fat council official inspecting the property the following day, with a self-satisfied grin on his face made me want to be sick.

The attacks that Thatcher and her government are making on the poor people of this country are of such a barbaric nature that in any sane society she and her henchmen would be tried for murder and put behind bars for life where they could no do more damage. No sooner has she got one anti working class law on the statute books, but she introduces new proposals which promise to make things even worse.

The latest are her plans to cut state benefits even further. Amongst the proposals to be discussed are the ending of 'special payments' to the poor for heating, clothing, special diets etc, and a reduction of Housing Benefits. If these plans go ahead, we can expect more deaths - from the cold, from poor nutrition and health care and from suicide - all caused by poverty. It's time to stand up and protest against these attacks and join with all the oppressed fighting injustice. It's one struggle, one fight!

Fraternally,
Helen Forgan

Message to FRFI from an imprisoned miner

Since I have been in here my eyes have been opened to the human misery and despair that prisoners, whether political or otherwise, are suffering in what is supposed to be a caring society. I believe that most of the prisoners in here, given a fair deal by the powers that be would be useful members of society. But when that society leaves no other alternative but theft to survive then I can understand what drives men to this course of action. I urge you all to do as I am, learn, and we can defeat the system from within. My letters are still being sent back, apart from two a week, and the total is now 30 that I haven't received. To all the other miners in prison I say this. Stand Proud, Stand Tall and remember you are miners with a proud tradition of struggle. Use your time to convince inmates and officers alike of the merits of the struggle we are in. Never Forget you are Miners and continue to conduct yourselves as such.

I never expected anything like your paper in here, it's like a breath of fresh air.

Yours fraternally,

Terry French
Kent Area NUM

Wandsworth Prison

Prisoners Aid Committee Great Significance

Dear FRFI,
I have been following the great stand of the miners with great interest. The article on MacGregor was very good as is your leading article in Issue 46 of FRFI. The formation of a Prisoners Aid Committee is of great significance. Please urge all your comrades to do all they can to help form PACs in all areas. When they have a number of branches they should call a National Conference to formulate policies; form a National Executive that can request aid from people all over the world and can do enormous work for the prisoners. As you state in Issue 46 a PAC movement in your country would be a significant

step forward in the struggle not only for miners or class war prisoners but for the oppressed everywhere.

I also thought that the article 'At the End of the British Road' was very good, very informative and of course I hope that those still in the CPGB will follow your advice - make sure that you educate them into real revolutionaries!

I was also very interested in the activities of the Islington Miners Support Group and the Finsbury Park NUR supporting the miners. I once was a member of Finsbury Park NUR. I fell out with them when I would not pay the political levy to the Labour Party. The level of political consciousness was very low indeed in 1951. The CPGB supported this levy as did the Connolly Association. Le Meas,
Sean Mac Stiofáin

Showtrials Britain or Poland?

Dear FRFI,
The recent trial of four Polish policemen (which ended on 8 February 1985) accused of murdering Father Jerzy Popieluszko was most interesting. Few people will attempt to condone such an act. Not surprisingly BBC2's *Newsnight* referred to the trial as a 'showtrial', despite it being televised for six weeks with dozens of foreign journalists in court throughout the proceedings.

Sentencing the four men found guilty, a Captain, a Colonel and two lieutenants, to 25, 15 and 14 years, the judge said that while he had received thousands of letters urging the death penalty, Polish penal law was designed not for vengeance but to educate and reform. This is in total contrast to British courts. Here television is banned, reporting restrictions are imposed, sub-judice laws are used to prevent public debate and trials are often held in camera, the most recent case being that of civil servant Clive

Ponting over the General Belgrano affair. Some British judges are known to be in favour of the death penalty and show no mercy in sentencing people, especially Irish political prisoners or English 'spies' eg Michael Bettaney.

Needless to say the BBC never refer to the trials in Belfast as 'showtrials', and if secret policemen are charged with murder they are virtually guaranteed to be found not guilty as with the cases of the RUC Special Support Units eg the famous Robinson trial of last June.

If martial law is so bad in Poland, perhaps the BBC can explain why the thousands arrested and 'detained' (a nice English word) were given an amnesty within the year, and the government allow a banned organisation, Solidarity, to openly display itself on the streets, and arrest its policemen for murder? If such tolerance and humanity were shown in Ireland then much suffering could have been saved. But then what we saw in Poland was after all only Socialist Justice.

SM
London

Victory to the Armagh Women

Dear FRFI,
Greetings to you and all comrades at FRFI. I am writing this letter to further highlight the plight of our sisters in the struggle against British repression currently being imprisoned in Armagh jail. First of all I congratulate FRFI for its article in issue number 44 entitled, 'Using our bodies against us,' in which you brought attention to the inhuman practice of strip searching the POWs in Armagh jail.

The treatment of female prisoners at Armagh jail is reminiscent of the treatment received by female Jewish prisoners at the hands of the Nazis during the second world war.

Strip searching is being used by the authorities as a key tool in the torture of prisoners at Armagh. It is our clear duty to take every possible action de-

signed to bring about the ending of strip searches. We are united and our message is clear: STOP THE STRIP SEARCHES NOW!! We give our solidarity, here at Albany, to all our sisters in Armagh and we send our greetings and encouragement. We salute the courage of all POWs in Armagh who, faced with such physical and mental torments as strip searches, filthy living conditions, overcrowding and solitary confinement, lack of all recreational facilities and decent food, are still as determined, now as ever, to fight against the tyrannical British occupation of their homeland.

We must be mindful of these courageous women who suffer so much in the faith of the justice of their cause.

Goodbye for now. Your work is a light of encouragement and strength for all prisoners.

Yours in solidarity

Danny Breaks
HMP Albany

Struggle for Trade Union Rights

Dear FRFI

On Friday 25 January, about 80 people at Braille House (the braille books and magazines publication centre of the Royal National Institute for the Blind) staged a half day strike in protest at the Institute's refusal to grant full union recognition to the SOGAT-NUJ members working there. The management reneged on a commitment to recognise the union if '50% + 1' agreed to join.

An article by Christopher Leake 'Innocent Victims of Sickest Strike' in *The Mail on Sunday* (3.2.85) gives a classic example of the sort of patronising slush against which people who happen to be handicapped in some way, have been fighting for years. He writes 'It is the first time union action has threatened the blind.' He later claims 'By staging a

lightning half-day strike 80 members of the print union SOGAT and the National Union of Journalists at Braille House, have prevented 5,000 blind people receiving copies of the Radio Times and taped newspaper commentaries on time.'

FRFI has already carried an article on the attack by imperialist institutes for the blind on the democratic rights of blind people to organise and fight for improved working conditions and much greater voice in the running of their own affairs. Let us support all those at Braille House who are fighting for full union recognition, and the beginnings of a machinery whereby the urgently needed improvement in the choice of literature available to blind people can be put in motion.

Messages of solidarity to NUJ/SOGAT Federated Chapel Committee, Braille House, 338 Goswell Road, London EC1.

Ken Hughes

Remembering Bloody Sunday

As an Irish woman from a middle-class loyalist background, going to Leicester on Sunday to commemorate the murder of 14 Irish people on Bloody Sunday 1972 was a step forward in a personal struggle to challenge the years of propaganda and lies I have been brought up with. I was 12 years old on that day and remember its events clearly, but it was not until last weekend that I tried to pay tribute to those 14 victims of British imperialism whose murder was so carefully distorted.

Sunday outside Leicester prison, then, was not just a victory for all those who faced fascist attack, police collaboration and banning of our demonstration of solidarity. I felt proud to be part of an organisation which had insisted on such a triumphant picket, and proud that what could easily have been a day of sectarianism and strife was turned instead into a real demonstration of support for those who continue the struggle waged by the 14 civil rights protesters murdered in 1972. I learned too of the dangers of such commitment - not just as the broken glass from our coach windows cascaded round my ears, or as the undisguised camera committed us to the 'subversives' shelf at Special Branch Film Library, but from the incredulous faces of the few passers by, who

Please note our address is, FRFI BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX. SEND US YOUR LETTERS. We welcome letters from readers but please keep them as short as you can.

looked as if they were seeing enemies of the state first hand. (It's too late now, I've put myself firmly on the anti-imperialist side, it feels great.)

Leicester prison is a huge blank walled place, with the typical mock Gothic gate, a nod towards Victorian values. If Margaret Thatcher was building, she'd be Leicester prison. How heartening then, to know that the prisoners could not have failed to hear the chanting and to understand our clear intention not to desert or forget those imprisoned for daring to oppose the forces of oppression.

It's not enough just to remember the dead - real acts of solidarity with the living fighters will be what wins the miners' strike and what will free Ireland from British occupation and oppression. Not to have picketed Leicester prison would have meant ignoring the presence of Irish POWs and would have been a failure to link their demand for political status and repatriation with the demands of the 14 protesters in 1972. Such links are not simply a question of history, but a strategy for victory.

Name and address supplied

Break in at Greenham Common

Dear FRFI

A group of women from Manchester, Leeds, Fitzwilliam and Bradford journeyed down to Greenham Common on Saturday 9 February to brave the wind and snow.

The action at Greenham is spontaneous and is decided around the campfire. This seemed to work well because of the unity between the women. There is no kind of rivalry between them, they seemed more efficient, more assertive and more comradely. They receive massive support from all over the country, in the shape of food, firewood and coal in exchange for food from the striking miners.

At each gate wartime-like search lights are used to keep a constant night watch on the women. We took part in activities to confuse the patrols on duty, such as tearing down the gates and fence around Greenham. The soldiers gave the women the most appalling verbal abuse. One comrade heard a familiar line from a Brit 'Get back to bongo bongo land!'

Pat and I decided we wanted some action and so joined four Greenham women to take part in a break-in at the base, at around 11.40pm. The base is huge, nine miles around and contains church, disco, supermarket, shops, living quarters, school etc. We tried to break into the hangars which are huge steel shelters, large enough to house an aeroplane. At the third hangar we were successful. Before we got there, two women were arrested but four managed to get in. The hangar contained silos and vehicles. The other hangars contained missiles but we couldn't get in, so settled for the silo hanger. As we burst in the first Yankee soldier we saw warned us not to enter. We ignored him and occupied the vehicles. If the keys had been in we would have driven them away, but we had to settle for jumping from truck to truck etc. One of the women jumped on a locker and started to scream at the men. The women gave us confidence - they obviously were unafraid so in turn made Pat and I unafraid. Also four more Yankee soldiers came to harass us. Two of them dragged me out - after one egomaniac tried to crush my shoulder blades. They harassed Pat and intimidated all of us in general. They treated us as a serious threat and a serious invasion to their security system. We were bundled into a van and taken to MOD who called us professionals, much to our delight.

When asked by MOD how we got in we replied we flew, which is an accepted answer. MOD don't really seem interested in preventing the women from doing anything, just to get them out of the base as soon as possible. Sandra

become a Supporter

If you are willing to help the work which FRFI is doing, become an FRFI SUPPORTER.

We need more people to sell FRFI and to involve others in the fightback. We need more people writing for FRFI about their local struggles and campaigns.

Fill in your name and address on the form below, and send £5. You will receive a supporter card, a year's subscription to FRFI and details of all our activities in your area and nationally.

Postal orders and cheques payable to Larkin Publications

Name _____

Address _____

Send this form to Larkin Publications BCM Box 5909 London WC1N 3XX

Subscribe to the best anti-imperialist paper in Britain

Subscription rates:

- Britain, Ireland £2.50 for 6 issues, £4.50 for 12 issues
- Overseas - surface PPR £3.50 for 6 issues, £5.50 for 12 issues
- Overseas - airmail PPR £6 for 6 issues, £11 for 12 issues
- Single issue: 30p + 18p p&p
- Back issues: available 30p + 18p p&p
- FRFI bulk orders: 10 or more copies post free

Make cheques/POs payable to Larkin Publications. Add £1.00 for foreign currency cheques. All overseas rates given are for printed paper reduced rate and are unsealed. If you wish your mail to be sealed please tell us and we will inform you of the cost.

RETURN FORM TO FRFI, BCM BOX 5909 LONDON WC1N 3XX
I wish to subscribe to FRFI beginning with issue _____
I wish to order _____ copies of FRFI issue no. _____

Name _____
Address _____

I enclose payment of _____ for _____ issues/copies at _____ rate.

£ SPECIAL FUND £ HELP US BUY OUR OWN TYPESETTING EQUIPMENT COST £6,000 - £1,226 STILL TO GO!

In February we only raised £702 towards our £6,000 Special Fund to establish our own production unit.

The total raised so far is an excellent £4,774. But it leaves us still over a thousand pounds short of our target. We must raise this by the end of March. As the miners' heroic struggle approaches an end, there are enormous lessons to be learnt. These can only be made accessible by communist publications, books and pamphlets.

We appeal, urgently, to all our readers and supporters to rush in donations during the next month. Without your help it will be very difficult to meet the target. FILL IN THE FORM BELOW! Last month's hard work has increased area collections to: Manchester £2,096; Leeds £134.44; Bradford £79.63; Edinburgh £303; Dundee £208; Glasgow £256.64; Bristol £39.60 and London £1,275.

Make your donation now!

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

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

Name/Organisation _____

Address _____

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

FUND DRIVE: WE NEED £500 A MONTH FEBRUARY: £372.57

Whilst scab lorry drivers profit from the miners' strike to the tune of up to £1,000 per week, City stock brokers made £127 million in commission on British Telecom sales and BT Chairman Sir George Jefferson will reap £94,000 for himself in 1985, FRFI is struggling to raise £500 every month to subsidise the unwaged rate of the paper. FRFI gets no big windfalls because it fights alongside the oppressed on whose backs the City makes its money. We must beat the big capitalists and scabs through organisation and combined effort, that is why your contribution is so important to us.

The collective effort of our supporters and readers over the last issue raised: in London £201.79, Manchester £84.90, Leeds £36, Edinburgh £22.85, Dundee £10.35, Bradford £9.13, Glasgow £2.80 and anonymously £4.75.

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

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

Name/Organisation _____

Address _____

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

HANDS OFF IRELAND

IRA FIGHTS BACK

Just after 6.40pm on Thursday 28 February, the IRA carried out the single most devastating attack on the RUC since the foundation of the sectarian police force in 1921. An IRA unit launched a mortar bomb attack on an RUC barracks in Newry. Nine RUC officers – including a Chief Inspector – were killed and a number of others injured. Later the same evening one UDR soldier was killed and two others injured in a bomb attack in Pomeroy, County Tyrone. Local reactions to the Newry attack were quoted in *The Guardian*: one said 'RUC bastards'; another, in an obvious reference to Bloody Sunday said 'Up the Provos. I hope they got 13 of you'. In contrast Kinnock, as ever on the side of British imperialism, referred to the attack as 'a demonstration of the full bestiality of the IRA'.

The Newry attack shows that the paid perjurer strategy and RUC shoot-to-kill operations have failed to break the military capacity of the IRA. The RUC has increasingly taken the front line in the oppression of the nationalist people. The IRA have shown the RUC what the future has in store for them. Yet again, the 'defeated', 'demoralised' IRA has struck back and demonstrated its unbroken determination to resist British rule.

THATCHER'S 'FREE STATE' LAPDOGS

When Margaret Thatcher lectured the US Congress on the 'evils' of fundraising for the IRA, the Twenty Six County government, backed by the opposition leader Charles Haughey, had already put Thatcher's words into practice by means she would have been proud of. On Tuesday 19 February, using the well-learned lessons of British 'democracy' – emergency legislation, secrecy, rumour and that catch-all phrase 'moral duty in the interests of the common good' – the Minister of Justice, Mr Noonan, interrupted the controversial debate on the Family Planning Bill to propose an amendment to the Offences Against the State Act 1939. This Act makes provision for the suppression of illegal organisations and seizure of their property, without, it seems, giving the state powers to seize money (held in banks) believed to belong to such illegal organisations. The amending Bill rushed through both houses in less than 3 hours gives the state this right.

Noonan claimed that a '7-figure sum' held in a Dublin bank was the proceeds of criminal activity by the IRA to 'fund the IRA in its campaign of murder and destruction' and that this 'necessitated urgent action' – the amendment. Noonan was unable to provide proof because he was 'constrained by security considerations'. However, 'moral duty in the interests of the common good' prevailed, proof was a minor matter and less than 12 hours after the Bill became law the Bank of Ireland handed over IR£1.75 million to the government. According to Noonan some of the money was obtained through 'kidnap and murder' in the Twenty Six Counties yet there have always been total denials by police and government that the IRA ever received any ransom money for their well-publicised kidnappings. The facts, as always, are cloaked in mystery and Noonan has no need to prove anything – the onus is on the owners of the money to prove that it is theirs, within six months. The IRA have denied that the money is theirs and a week later a Mr Clancy came forward to claim it. Far from it being money 'to fund the IRA' Clancy says the money was intended to fund a pork exporting business! And he is going to court to prove it. The outcome remains to be seen – but for a short time the government will bask in the approval of Margaret Thatcher – like lapdogs at the feet of their mistress.

Pauline Sellars



PTA -BREAKING THE SILENCE

On Tuesday 26 February 200 people packed the Irish Centre in London's Camden Town and listened to a wide range of speakers opposed to the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) – Dr Maire O'Shea (held under the PTA and charged with 'conspiracy'), Margaret Power (mother of Thomas Power, a victim of the paid perjurer trials in the Six Counties), the Namibia Support Committee, Tony Jennings (barrister), Jeremy Corbyn MP, an ex-detainee held under the PTA, Narendra Makarji (Haringey Councillor), a Liberal Parliamentary candidate and the IBRG. The success of the meeting was the result of unity in action of the ISM, TOM, LCI, IBRG, IRSP, Peace through Democracy, Young Liberals and the Information on Ireland group.

The meeting showed the potential that exists for a campaign on the PTA not only amongst the Irish community but in the black community, amongst opponents of apartheid and people in Britain opposed to British rule in Ireland. Speaker after speaker emphasised the need for a campaign and the meeting heard chilling accounts of the reality of being held under the PTA.

Dr Maire O'Shea spoke of her experience under the PTA and stressed the importance of publicity and pickets. Pickets 'gave the confidence that I wasn't abandoned'. Publicity, she believes, was the only reason she was not subjected to violence – she said that one man had been threatened with a noose round his neck and others were beaten. She said that 'it's important that the people should see the charges as part of the same game, not as something separate' because the authorities need to demonstrate that the PTA is still necessary. Maire finished by saying, 'the only crime that I have committed is that I have always supported the people who are fighting in Ireland for a united Ireland and an end to British repression'.

The Namibia Support Committee speaker spoke of the extension of the PTA to 'international terrorism' threatening those in Britain who support the liberation movements in Southern Africa and of her experience of the PTA,

'Our fears were realised in September last year when I accompanied a SWAPO cultural group invited to tour Britain and Ireland by the Namibia Support Committee. Upon our return from Dublin we were stopped at Holyhead docks, questioned by police officers and asked to wait on our coach whilst enquiries were made under the PTA. When the officers returned they took me aside, searched my bags and asked why as a white British woman, I was involved in the Namibian struggle. After this more enquiries were made and finally five officers took our coach into a large shed and all fifteen of us had our baggage and equipment searched. During this I was taken into an office and subjected to a strip search by a police woman. Needless to say they found nothing to alarm them except a couple of Sinn Fein

badges in the possession of a SWAPO comrade who when questioned replied that he supported the struggles of freedom-loving peoples everywhere.

I can only assume that we were victims of intimidation tactics because thirteen members of our group were black and because of my links with the Irish struggle. A third reason could be that the abuse of the powers under the PTA have extended to an increased co-operation between the British and South African security forces.

The implications of the PTA for the struggle against apartheid and the South African occupation of Namibia are very serious. Those of us who are active in fighting imperialism and racism in South Africa, in Northern Ireland and throughout the world are seeing the criminalisation of our political beliefs. We are accused of terrorism, because we believe in peoples' rights to self-determination and the necessity for armed struggle and we face harassment when we try to make the links between struggles in different countries in the knowledge that this will make us stronger.'

As we said in FRFI 46 'organised political campaigning can break the silence and defeat the attacks'. This meeting should only be the start of a campaign – one that will join with others such as that set up in Birmingham on Saturday 23 February. It is the duty and responsibility of all progressive organisations to campaign for the abolition of this racist act and to defend all those arrested, detained and subsequently charged.

Malcolm Ellis, Pauline Sellars

GANGSTERS IN UNIFORM

The Ulster Defence Regiment have been exposed as gangsters in uniform by a series of trials involving members of the regiment. The UDR's latest catalogue of crimes includes murder, attempted murder, bombings, shootings, kidnappings, extortion, armed robbery and membership of Loyalist paramilitary organisations. On 25 January Private Geoffrey Edwards was convicted of the murder of Peter Corrigan, a Sinn Fein election worker. He also admitted 6 attempted murders and a car bombing. Edwards was also a member of the banned sectarian Protestant Action Force, responsible for a number of sectarian murders, showing the close links between the official and unofficial murder squads.

Another UDR man has been charged with kidnapping and demanding £100,000 ransom and five Ballymena UDR soldiers face charges including armed robbery and membership of the sectarian Ulster Volunteer Force.

The UDR were responsible for the murder of Paul Kelly, a young joy-rider, on 16 January – one of nine joy-riders murdered by British Army/RUC/UDR forces since 1979. The Twenty-Six County Foreign Minister, Peter Barry,

called for the UDR to be withdrawn from nationalist areas after Kelly's murder, yet he was silent three weeks later when the UDR shot Gerard Logue on 8 February whilst he was joy-riding. SDLP leader, John Hume, has also called for the withdrawal of the UDR, the unacceptable face of British rule in Ireland, yet he condones the campaign of violence perpetrated by the RUC and British Army and condemns the nationalist people for defending themselves against these terrorists.

Douglas Hurd, Minister for Northern Ireland, and his bevy of unionist politicians have little to fear from these false friends of the Irish people, and their token response to UDR atrocities. The IRA has responded to the latest killings by showing that it will defend the nation-

alist people from Loyalist murder gangs. IRA Active Service Units have carried out a series of attacks on UDR personnel including the execution of James Graham, the third brother of an UDR family to be killed by the IRA. The controversy surrounding the UDR and the success of IRA attacks has led to speculation that the UDR will be phased out of the border areas of the Six Counties. Yet Hurd still claims that he has 'full confidence' in the UDR as a 'disciplined force'. For these gangsters in uniform are part of the whole terror machine used to maintain British imperialist rule in Ireland and deny the nationalist people their right to freedom and justice.

James O'Rourke

BLOODY SUNDAY BEATS BAN

Despite the combined attempts of police, fascists and the local Labour Council to sabotage the 13th anniversary commemoration of Bloody Sunday 1972, 1,500 people attended a rally in Leicester on Sunday 3 February.

Threatened counter-marches by fascists gave the Leicester Labour Council the pretext to ban the planned march. It was in a spirit of defiance that the audience which packed the Highfields Community Centre listened to speakers from black groups, Sinn Fein, IRSP, a striking miner, Fitzwilliam Prisoners Aid Committee, Jeremy Corbyn MP, ex-Irish POW, ISM, TOM and other solidarity groups and many others. All those organisations involved in organising the march had the right to speak and put forward their views.

The speaker from the Irish Solidarity Movement outlined the necessity for building a united solidarity movement against British rule in Ireland and pointed to the role it could play in building support amongst the working class in Britain and in support of Irish POWs in English gaols. Along with other speakers he stressed the necessity for a united campaign against the PTA.

The Sinn Fein speaker, Sean McKnight (Belfast Sinn Fein councillor) also spoke of the importance of building a solidarity movement in Britain and said 'with the support of anti-imperialist groups we can gain self-determination'. He stressed that black people were amongst those who identified with the struggle of the Irish people because of their experience of British state repression and his message was 'The harder they hit you, the harder you must hit back'. McKnight's speech concluded with a call for unity between all 'under the banner of anti-imperialism'.

McKnight's recognition of the centrality of black people in building a solidarity movement was echoed by the many black speakers at the rally.

After the rally, despite the ban, a short but militant march led the way from the coaches to Leicester prison where an 800 strong picket in solidarity with Irish POWs in English gaols took place. The success of the day's event represented a victory for democracy and a blow against the fascists, police and council.

Malcolm Ellis