

# FIGHT RACISMS

# FIGHT IMPERIALISMS

Revolutionary Communist Group

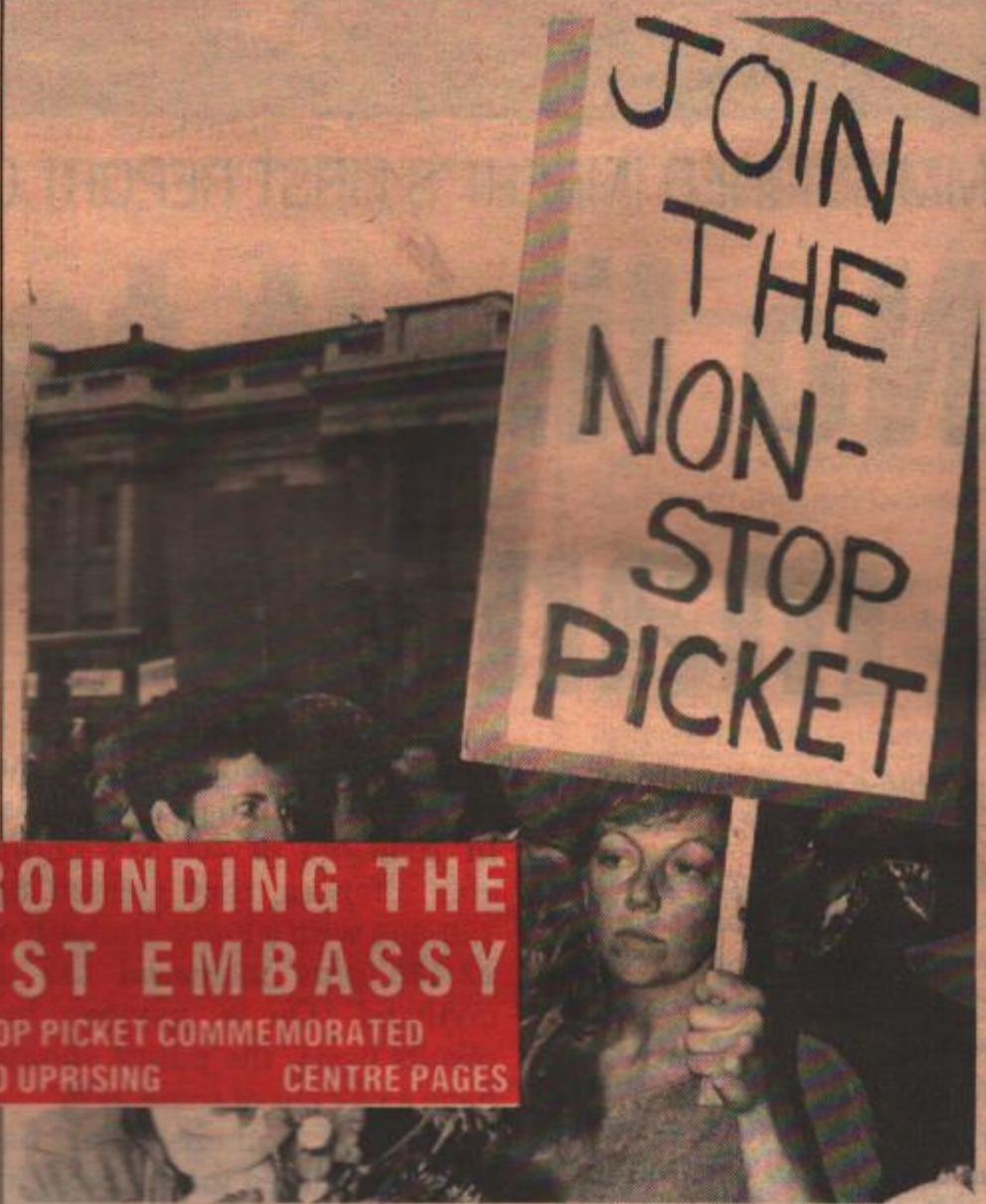
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P H I L I P P I N E S  
I N T E R V I E W  
**NDF CONFIDENT OF VICTORY**  
P A G E E L E V E E

**S R I L A N K A**  
I N T E R V I E W  
**GUERRILLA WAR AND  
MASS STRUGGLE**  
P A G E T E E



**SURROUNDING THE  
RACIST EMBASSY**  
THE NON STOP PICKET COMMEMORATED  
THE SOWETO UPRISING CENTRE PAGES

**VIRAJ MENDIS**  
A P P E A L V E R D I C T  
**the fight goes on**  
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CENTRE PAGES

WHY UNITING TO FIGHT  
**THE POLL TAX**  
IS THE WAY FORWARD FOR BRITISH SOCIALISTS  
REPORT ON THE SOCIALIST CONFERENCE  
P A G E F I V E

## THE SHARPEVILLE SIX MUST NOT HANG

THE ARGUMENT FOR A RE-TRIAL HAS BEEN TURNED DOWN. THE SIX YOUNG BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS WILL HANG IN JULY IF AN APPEAL FOR CLEMENCY IS REJECTED.  
FIGHT TO SAVE THEIR LIVES

**RON BROWN INTERVIEWED - THE COMMONS IS A RITUAL DANCE • P14**

## Housing benefit changes 'illegal'

DAVE BURTON

When the Tories' sweeping social security cuts came into force at the beginning of April, the abolition of housing benefit supplement was overshadowed by other major changes.

Yet the abolition of housing benefit supplement (HBS) left over 400,000 claimants even poorer. HBS was paid to those whose income, including housing benefit, fell below supplementary benefit level after rent

and rates had been paid. Importantly, HBS was defined as a supplementary benefit payment, so those receiving it were entitled to the same health benefits as supplementary benefit claimants.

Now a Merseyside appeals tribunal has ruled that Social Services Secretary John Moore exceeded his powers in abolishing HBS. Moore scrapped HBS without parliamentary debate or vote by the simple expedient of moving it from supplementary benefit regulations to housing bene-

fit rules - and then including it in April's massive housing benefit cuts. Thus a safety net intended to protect nearly half a million of the very poor, who fell even below the subsistence level of supplementary benefit, was quietly removed.

The tribunal's ruling, on the case of a Birkenhead pensioner who lost £13.31 a week, could mean the government has to repay some £80m a year, though the Tories are bound to appeal against the judgement.

This case shows clearly the appalling cynicism of Thatcherism. While the filthy rich, still counting their budget gains, pack the House of Lords to force through the Poll Tax, benefits for the very poor are taken away without even the pretence of a democratic process. ■

## Fighting the Poll Tax in Glasgow

GRAHAM JOHNSON

There are over 40 anti-Poll Tax groups in Glasgow in most of the working class areas, including Drumchapel, Castlemilk, Maryhill, Govan, Govanhill and Pollok. The Pollok group in particular is big. Hundreds attend the meetings and it has mass support in the community. All these groups are outside the Labour Party's 'Stop It' campaign which has done nothing

apart from produce a leaflet, make a record and get publicity on TV.

The local groups are an alliance of left groups, the Labour left, tenants' groups, community groups and ordinary people who form the majority. A conference is being held on 10 July.

The conference will be a forum for activists to get together and hammer out strategies for the future. It is open to everyone. There will be workshops on forcing Labour councils not to implement the tax; civil liberties; building resistance in the trade unions; building community resistance; and the lessons of history.

In most areas the Poll Tax snoopers have been round with their forms. In some areas suc-

cessful campaigns of non-registration are under way. In Govan the local campaign is getting one person in every street not to register to provide a focus for community solidarity and strength.

Labour-controlled Strathclyde Regional Council has begun to send out letters informing people that they are being fined. Along with this letter, they are sending another letter saying that they are 'opposed' to the Poll Tax and do not like what they are doing. Hypocrisy is hardly the word for this.

It is clear that the resistance to the Poll Tax will have to fight the Labour councils who put Kinno's political career and their own necks before the needs of working class people in Scotland. ■



COMMISSIONER IMBERT'S FIRST REPORT ON THE MET

# 'No limit to what a man can do'

CAROL BRICKLEY

Peter Imbert, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police has issued his first annual report (1987). Entitled 'we can improve the quality of life', the report is rather more pedestrian than those of his predecessor Sir Kenneth Newman who built his reputation as a political strategist. Imbert is a 'Force' man and despite a somewhat flowery foreword bespattered with quotes ('there is no limit to what a man can do or where he can go as long as he doesn't mind who gets the credit' etc), at the centre of his report is the argument that the Met policeman's job is not a happy one and therefore he shouldn't lose his London allowances or the favoured status (bottomless purse) extended to him by the Tories over the last five years.

The argument was lost before the 120 page report (with a full colour cover more grotesque than any previous) was plonked on the desk. The Thatcher government had already concluded that it would not be wise to openly lavish cash on the Met whilst slashing the NHS and education budgets on the eve of the poll tax. This is especially so since the Met clearly does not meet Londoners' expectations and requirements of a police force. Despite burgeoning Neighbourhood Watch, Cab Watch, Pub Watch, Ad Nauseam Watch Schemes, the crimes which affect ordinary Londoners continue to rise (street crimes, robbery, burglary, 'racial incidents') or remain at the same level (sexual offences).

In 1977 with a Force strength of 22,239 officers, the Met

cleared up about 120,000 out of 568,952 notifiable offences. In 1988 out of 768,514 notifiable offences, they cleared up 120,354 with a Force strength of 27,438 plus increased use of civilians. On a payment-by-results basis, the police should have a pay cut of some 24%.

No Met Commissioner has ever been noted for his capacity for self-criticism, and Imbert is no exception. Attempts to stamp out corruption and malpractice have brought some of his predecessors to their knees. Far better to ignore it. The record of the outcome of police complaints remains absurd. Out of 5,236 complaints in 1987 (an increase of 3%) 1,171 were referred to the Police Complaints Authority and 105 were upheld. Out of 1,049 referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions, 5 (for Assault) were proceeded with. This is the nearest we get to any reference to the Holloway assault case which took years to uncover because Holloway police were unwilling to identify the officers involved.

Over the year the Met devoted 45% fewer resources to public order policing with the end of the News International dispute and a decline in the number and size of demonstrations following the introduction of the Public Order Act. The pattern of protest, according to Imbert, has shifted from mass marches to 'vociferous protest groups', from international topics to local issues.

During the Wapping dispute, however, officers 'were subjected to both physical and psychological attack from which they were not protected by their uniforms (!)'. 'An examination

of their response to those attacks', says Imbert, 'must recognise that beneath the outer clothing, policemen and policewomen have exactly the same human frailties as the rest of society from which we are drawn'. The behaviour of the Met at Wapping is currently being 'investigated' by Northamptonshire Constabulary. Imbert's comment is clearly aimed at this. Sub judice rules don't apply apparently to the Met.

Football, of course, was a loser. The much vaunted special operations against hooliganism collapsed days before Imbert's report appeared because police officers, as usual, decided to exercise their creativity on the evidence. Full marks, however, have to go to the wit at Scotland Yard who named one of the operations 'Own Goal'. We hope he will be featured in next year's report in the 'special commendations' section.

Four alleged armed robbers were shot dead and two were seriously injured by armed police, yet Imbert admits that 'an offence of violence against the person is now less likely, than at any time in the last five years, to involve a weapon of any kind'.

The last words must go to the new man at the Met:

'We should be courteous and patient with everyone, whatever their appearance, or place in society. We must be professional, calm and restrained in the face of violence and apply only that force which is necessary to accomplish our legitimate duties... Be fair, be friendly, but be firm.'

Pigs might fly. ■



## Students fight for education

GRACE LIVINGSTONE

In May over a thousand students walked out of their schools and marched to the Department of Education to hand in a petition against Kenneth Baker's Education 'Reform' Bill and the abolition of ILEA. The march was organised by Student Action For Education (SAFE), formed by students from schools all over north London to fight the Bill.

Most teachers' action has now been stamped out by the NUT and ILEA. Neil Fletcher, leader of Labour-controlled ILEA, is implementing cuts on behalf of the Thatcher government and cooperating with the Tories' abolition of ILEA, to make it 'as smooth as possible'. Teachers at my school have had letters

threatening them with immediate dismissal if they take any further strike action.

It became obvious that independent student action was necessary to fight the Bill effectively. SAFE is not affiliated to any one party or confined by what the NUT or ILEA are prepared to accept. We are fighting for our education.

There are members of the RCG, LPYS, Militant and SWP though the majority are previously non-political young people who have been spurred into action by the attacks on their education. We are now planning for a London-wide strike next October and organising a student conference with ILEA councillors.

SAFE has already shown that it is possible to organise a fight back in the schools. SAFE now has to spread its organisation to every school and FE college in London and gain wider support through pickets, street petitioning and leafleting. We are determined to defend our right to education. ■

## Loyalists halted

NICK LEWIS

On Saturday 18 June, hundreds of socialists, anti-fascists and republicans prevented the Orange Order and their National Front allies from getting into Chesterfield town centre. Organised by the local Labour Committee on Ireland, the demonstration was supported by the RCG, VMDC, Anti-Fascist Action, Red Action, SWP, TOM and others.

To their shame, Labour controlled Chesterfield Labour Council had encouraged the Orange Order demonstration by donating £46,000 to their sectarian third centenary celebrations.

At the rally ending the anti-fascist demonstration Gerald McGuigan, North Belfast Sinn Fein councillor, spoke about the havoc and intimidation of Orange marches in the Six Counties. Calling for a fightback against repression in Britain and support for Irish self-determination he concluded that 'you have to recognise that Ireland is the key to the British revolution.' The VMDC also spoke and a message of solidarity was delivered from the RCG. ■

Meanwhile in London less than one hundred fascists marched against 'terrorism', with particular focus on the liberation struggle in South Africa and Nelson Mandela. The Non Stop Picket was well protected by hundreds of supporters.

NOTES

*What was the reaction to the calling off of secondary action?*

**Susan Haynes:** The majority accepted the reasons given for calling it off: that it was crumbling and if it wasn't called off you'd have the situation all over the country that you have in Dover. NUS members stood outside while scab labour works the ships.

We lobbied the BGM (Biennial General Meeting) in Hull. There were seamen there from Aberdeen, Liverpool, Harwich, Manchester who were very angry bearing in mind that people from Aberdeen had been sacked. Liverpool put a motion calling for the resignation of executive council members involved with calling off the secondary action which was thrown out.

**Andre Bradford:** They always hide behind the rules and they said that the motion was against the rules. It was a split vote. Their delegates are hand-picked men. That's what you're fighting.

**SH:** The crack in the secondary action was nowhere near as great as they implied. A branch secretary openly admitted that there was a conspiracy in the union. It was an excuse to wind down the action and a lot of people saw it that way.

*Do you think the secondary action should have been called off?*

**SH & AB:** No, no, no way.

**AB:** Even at the beginning we couldn't get everybody out. It was constantly fluctuating. If P&O find it very difficult to get a ship on the run even now how is it that Sealink was supposedly crumbling. It was only one ship.

**SH:** McCluskie said that the secondary action would be lifted from 1pm on Friday. Now that Sealink ship was ready to sail, round about midnight on Thursday. It was stage-managed.

*McCluskie's negotiations with Sealink could only increase the pressure on Sealink workers. Why risk their jobs if P&O strikers were being offered jobs?*

**AB:** There's been no direction. They leave it to the individual to make the decision. They are the leadership and the majority of people look to them. They've caused the indecision.

**SH:** A lot of people have left the dispute to join Sealink because they've had no guidance from the leadership. One day an official says "No, you shouldn't join Sealink". The next day another says "Yes, go and get a job on Sealink".

*What do you think of the 'commercial war' tactic?*

**SH:** It's a cop out. If people didn't stop sailing when the *Herald* went down they're certainly not going to stop sailing now.

*You would only have the same fight with Sealink later.*

**SH:** That's right. It's a backdoor job really.

*If P&O get away with it Sealink will follow suit.*

**AB:** That's the logic of profit-making. You're not going to have two sets of ferries, one running at a loss and the other making lasting profits.

**SH:** What was Sam McCluskie doing anyway negotiating with another greedy shipping baron? Sherwood is probably more ruthless than Stirling. He decimated Sealink when he first took it over.

*Has there been any pressure to call off the mass pickets?*

**SH:** We've had three warnings



The P&O strike is now in its twentieth week. Deserted by McCluskie and co, the TUC and the Labour Party, the strikers fight on.

We argued in *FRFI 78* that the P&O strike could not be reduced, as the SWP would have it, to a simple confrontation between the leadership and the rank and file. The rank and file itself is split. The leadership represents a layer which has gained under Thatcherism and which prefers to protect what it has rather than risk all in defence of the working class. The strikers themselves confirm this from their own experience.

McCluskie's actions have encouraged those who put their own jobs first to go back to work while isolating those who want to fight. The official funds, for example, are taking control away from the strikers and their support groups and, as Susan Haynes points out, isolating the strikers as individuals.

**TERRY O'HALLORAN and JENNY SUTTON** spoke to Susan Haynes, sacked stewardess, and Andre Bradford, sacked steward, on Thursday 9 June. *FRFI* urges all readers to continue giving support to the P&O strikers and to make sure that all donations are directed to the support groups.

# 'a conspiracy in the union'

## P&O STRIKERS SPEAK OUT

from the union solicitor. Sam McCluskie told us not to go on the picket line.

*What effect are the official funds having on the support groups?*

**SH:** Revenue lost has been enormous. If we don't get our money in we can't keep the kitchens going. The money in the funds is coming to individuals not to the kitchens. Two are on the point of collapsing. We were very well able to keep going on our own. These people have muscled in. I think it's just another way to squeeze us and to control us.

**AB:** The effect will be at the higher level. Trade union branches, Labour Party wards will do it through the official channels.

**SH:** These funds are paid to individuals. It isolates everybody

as individuals rather than acting as a collective group. They're just isolating us all once again. The support groups have become a very important part of our dispute as they were in the miners' strike. It's what holds people together. I think if they destroy our support groups then the strike is over. This appears to be the aim.

*Are you still campaigning for a national strike?*

**AB:** Oh yes. There's not just us sacked. Belfast freight, Aberdeen, Hull and a few others have got sacked members. Whether the leaders call it or not it's what we've got to work towards.

*What do you think of the TUC's response?*

**AB:** Have they had a response?

Gin and tonic wasn't it? Didn't even know we still had a TUC. I thought that was defunct in 1926.

**SH:** We were saying the other night. What is their function? What are they there for? They've done nothing. Just giving us conscience money. The trade union leaders are so weak.

*What about the Labour Party?*

**AB:** Kinrock has shown no real support. He hasn't been down here. We've invited him to the rally and so on but he doesn't come.

*When we came before there was a lot of suspicion of the left.*

**SH:** We've been branded militant.

**AB:** People are changing very gradually. They do now stop

and think and question which is something to build on. Dover's been a very weak area but now there's been a certain swing. Just because you speak out and say what you believe in you're termed a militant.

*You've come up against the anti-union laws haven't you?*

**SH:** At the end of the day you've got to defy these laws.

**AB:** The trade union movement was built on fighting against the law so what's changed?

**SH:** Once you're out on strike you're so tied up and every road you go down takes you to nowhere. So what is the answer then? We all have to accept whatever work conditions, pay scales that management wants to throw at us? If you're not going to change things by breaking the laws and you can't change them by staying within them, what are you going to do? There's no choice anymore. You've got to break the law.

**AB:** The way we're doing it now is allowing them to pick us off one by one. But we're fighting our own as well. The higher level of the union, the TUC and our own labour movement. We're fighting them as well.

*But isn't it also the case that there are workers in reasonably paid work who've benefited from the last nine years and who have something to lose and so don't want to take illegal action?*

**AB:** The government have made that haven't they? They've created it for that reason. Like the selling off of council houses to have that layer there so they've got a hold on them. We've done well to keep 60% out on strike. This is a well paid area and a lot that have gone back have gone back for that reason. We've had a comfortable living.

**SH:** With our two combined wages we were earning decent money. But we were not prepared to work those new conditions. Whatever we've got to lose we've got to stand there and lose it. When you get into these levels of politics though it gets a bit frightening. People shy away from it. The media tells them "You have this choice. You can vote for the Tories or you can vote for Labour". That's the two guidelines.

*Anything to the left of Kinnock is "loony left". Anybody who resists gets attacked. Ron Brown gets the Labour whip taken off him for damaging a parliamentary bauble.*

**SH:** I think they're frightened. The people who now want a change are on the increase. That threatens their status.

**AB:** But they are manoeuvrable with grass roots pressure. Our local official was a JP. He's now resigned as a JP. He's also said that he will resign from the union rather than be forced to tell us to call off the pickets. If P&O win it's the same thing as happened with the miners. Each time it's a further erosion of the trade union movement. I think there will come a day, I thought it might have been with us, perhaps it will be the NHS, when we will get a general strike. Maybe it's too late for us in our strike but in another way it isn't really. What we're doing will be of benefit to others certainly to the youth of tomorrow. We're just one part of it.

*Donations should be sent to: Deal Women's Support Group, Magness House, Mill Hill, Deal, Kent (tel: 0304 367840). Cheques/POs should be made payable to Deal Women's Support Group.*

Thursday 16 June saw the government slipping yet another clause into the ever-growing Criminal Justice Bill. The new clause will give the RUC the power to take mouth swabs by force, for genetic fingerprinting tests. The Labour 'Opposition' (for want of a better word) welcomed the move. The clause will give the RUC further excuse to brutalise any nationalist unfortunate enough to fall into their hands. These tests, the government claims, are foolproof (an important consideration when the RUC's concerned). Isn't it odd though that over at the Home Office, deportations Minister Timothy Renton refuses to provide these tests to people seeking to prove their right to stay in or enter Britain? Tim has 'doubts' about the tests' accuracy. The tests are good enough to put you behind bars but not good enough to get you a passport.

This, the best of all possible worlds, spends \$2 million per minute on weapons while every three days 120,000 children in the Third World die of hunger and lack of medical care. It's important to get one's priorities right after all.

Talking of priorities the GMB has launched a new campaign. Against unemployment? the Poll Tax? homelessness? you ask. Well, no. It's a campaign provide the first UK union credit card, discounted mortgages, personal loans at lower interest rates, insurance and car breakdown services. Good to see they have the best interests of the working class heart.

The government, of course, is not intervening in the P&O strike. It comes as a surprise, therefore, to discover who is being watered and fed at government expense in Deal Royal Marines Barracks. Why it's scab crews being trained to work P&O ships. And who is being paid a rumoured £80 a head a night to clean said scab ships? Why it's the Deal Royal Marines. Who'd have thought it?

You too can be a Poll Tax snooper. Under the heading 'Can you implement the Community Charge' the London Borough of Enfield offers £26,000 pa, a car, up to £50,000 for a home ownership equity share (whatever that might be), an interest-free bridging loan, full relocation costs and assistance with temporary housing. Selling off doesn't come cheap these days. Hats off then to those public spirited Scottish Labour councillors who are doing it for nothing.

And finally... where would we be without the RCP, I ask myself? Hard on the heels of their revelation that all employers are exploiters they made another Amazing Discovery. Ace reporter Linda Ryan investigated the Met and concluded 'Never trust the police' (*tns*, 20 May 1988). That's told 'em Linda. Next week: 'Capitalism: is it based on profit?'

# Thousands join Turkish strike wave

LIZ PALM

Since 1985 students and workers in Turkey have started mobilising once more. Significantly they are organising themselves independently of the trade unions, loyal to and masterminded by the Turkish fascist state, and the state-controlled student organisations. The turning point was 1985. The Turkish fascist rulers had introduced a 'return to democracy' policy. Under this policy, the higher education laws were to be 'liberalised'. After the 1980 putsch, the universities and colleges' right to independent administration had been withdrawn, the fascists alone were to select the lecturers and professors, the curriculum, text books, areas of academic research etc. The possibility that places of higher education might once again become breeding grounds of revolutionaries and communists was to be removed. But this new generation of students organised themselves. The high point of their protests

came in Spring 1987 when the first illegal mass demonstration of thousands of students at Istanbul university took place since the putsch. Baton wielding, armed police stormed the demonstrators. There were over 200 arrests.

The students inspired many of the exploited and oppressed of Turkey's factories and commercial sectors. Within the last 18 months, strikes have been held in the electronic and chemical industry, the textile and leather-processing sectors which employ principally women at extortionately low wages, in supermarket chains and food suppliers, the glass, steel and aluminium industry. Also transport workers and printers have joined in strikes.

In the case of the leather industry centred around Istanbul, in particular the industrial estate called Kazlicesme, a strike was called in April 1987 in 33 concerns. This resulted in a mass lock out of the striking workers. By June, strikes were being held in over 120 leather-processing companies. Pickets

were held in the streets and in the housing estates, culminating in demonstrations, some official, others spontaneous, attracting numbers of up to 5,000.

The financial losses, hardships for the families of the strikers, the risks and dangers involved, do not deter workers from making their demands: 8 hour working day (in most factories, workers slave away for up to 12 hours a day), pay increases, longer holidays etc.

Where the demands of the workers are at least in part fulfilled, the benefits obtained can only be of short duration. Prices have risen by over 70% since last Spring, inflation for this year is calculated to reach between 80% and 90%. Electricity prices have increased by 50% and water by 40%. The prices of sugar, cigarettes and Raki (the favourite alcoholic drink of the Turks), consumer goods more typical of the working classes, have also increased drastically. The imperialist economic stranglehold imposed on Turkey ensures the continuation of this crisis. Although May Day celebra-



Troops on the streets of Ankara following the 1980 putsch

tions are forbidden in Turkey, this did not prevent several thousand workers and students from gathering in Istanbul and Izmir in a show of strength. There were bloody clashes between armed police thugs and students protesting in Istanbul university. The students were severely beaten up and arrested in large numbers. One student likened the scene to a battlefield and described how the halls of the university were lined with the bodies of beaten up, bleeding demonstrators. Clashes bet-

ween police and workers were reported from other demonstrators also.

Situations such as these have never prevented Turkey's fascist generals from making the usual threats. Kenan Evren, the 1980 putsch General and now president of the Turkish state, made a speech on 30 April, prior to the May Day celebrations. He warned those people who 'want to return to the conditions as they were before 12 September 1980' that the military will once again intervene. ■

## Thatcher embraces Turkish fascist

TREVOR RAYNE

Turkey's fascist President General Evren is visiting Britain in July. Thatcher is keen to polish up the image of this barbarian responsible for the arrest of half a million people and execution of 50 after the 1980 military coup.

Over 100,000 people have been tortured since then: the torture continues to this day. On 8 June the trial began of two communist leaders arrested upon their recent return to Turkey. In court they shouted to journalists that they had been tortured: electric shocks to the genitals, hosing with freezing water, hanging from the ceiling. Evren praised the vicious beating up of May Day demonstrators and journalists in Istanbul by his police.

This thug is appreciated by Thatcher. His visit must be vigorously opposed - join the Demonstration against General Evren's Visit, Saturday 2 July. Assemble Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park, 2pm. Called by the Organising Committee to Prevent General Evren's Visit. ■

## MOSCOW SUMMIT

BOB SHEPHERD

The fourth meeting in three years took place in Moscow between Reagan and Gorbachev from 29 May to 1 June. Amongst all the media non-news of Ron and Nancy meeting the people in Red Square and Reagan's rhetoric about human rights the only concrete result of the summit was the signing of the INF treaty. The treaty had been drawn up at the Washington summit and is the result of Gorbachev's diplomatic offensive against the US.

The pre-summit goal of Gorbachev was to get a 50% reduction in strategic arms, this was blocked by the insistence of the US that no further reductions in nuclear weapons were possible until conventional arms were reduced in Europe. When, in response to this, the Soviet Union proposed the exchange of data on arms and forces in Europe, and their verification through on-site inspection the US refused to agree. As Gorbachev put it,

'As soon as we come close to real proposals in order to advance that process (reduction of conventional arms), there begins incomprehensible manoeuvring and departure.'

This incomprehensible position was cleared up by the US secretary of state Frank Carlucci

speaking in Tokyo after the summit. He said,

'better relations must be built on strong foundations, our ability to defend ourselves and our interests... summitry is no substitute for security'

This position of US imperialism was seen throughout the conference, the refusal to stop the development of Star Wars and abide by the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and the refusal to allow sea-based cruise missiles to come under any agreement.

The initiatives taken by the Soviet Union at this summit to push ahead with the process of nuclear disarmament, started at the last summit in Washington, have clearly been blocked by the intransigence of US imperialism ■

## KINNOCK LEARNS TO LOVE THE BOMB

TERRY O'HALLORAN

Commenting on Kinnock's success in getting his 'policy review' procedure accepted by the 1987 Labour Party Conference, I wrote: 'Kinnock now has a free hand to construct a set of policies fit for the labour aristocracy [including] scrapping of non-nuclear defence policy...' (FREI 72) Kinnock said then that Labour needed to 'review' the 'time-table' and 'negotiating strategy' of its non-nuclear policy. His recent television statement about moving away from 'something for nothing' disarmament was hardly new. Nor indeed, was it anything new in the history of the Labour Party. It was, after all, the 1945 Labour government that secretly

launched Britain's post war nuclear weapons development programme.

The resignation of Labour defence spokesperson Denzil Davies, on Tuesday 14 June, has little to do with an alleged change on Kinnock's part. It arose from Kinnock's increasingly obvious contempt for any semblance of democratic decision making. In making his television statement Kinnock not only ignored what is formally Labour Party policy, he also pre-empted his own 'policy review' procedure. Labour may 'listen' but Kinnock intends to do all the talking.

Let us not forget either that at the 1987 Labour Party Conference it was Joan Ruddock MP, erstwhile CND leader, who said that Trident should be used 'politically' to demand a Soviet response. All those in the leadership of CND who have sought to confine CND to what is acceptable to the Labour and trade union leadership have aided and abetted Kinnock's treachery.

Those who want to fight British nuclear warmongering cannot either place any reliance on the trade unions. The Transport and General Workers Union Executive's decision, on Thursday 9 June, to defer a decision on the Labour leadership contest was followed by Ron Todd, general secretary, declaring his personal commitment both to non-nuclear defence policy and to Kinnock's leadership. Todd cannot have it both ways: either you support unilateralism or you support Kinnock. You cannot do both.

Of course, the trade union block vote will thud into place behind Kinnock. Like Kinnock they represent the narrow political prejudices of that section of the working class which has gained under Thatcher. Those who genuinely support the scrapping of British nuclear weapons have to build an effective political campaign which will not allow the lust for power of Kinnock and Co to stand in the way. ■

## Britain booms at expense of the poor

DAVID REED

'Everyone in the nation has benefited from the increased prosperity - everyone' (Thatcher, House of Commons, 17 May 1988)

The British economy appears to be booming. Average earnings increases, at 8.75 per cent per year to April 1988, were more than double the rate of inflation. Unemployment continues to fall. Manufacturing output has been growing at a yearly rate of 5.1 per cent and manufacturing productivity at 5.5 per cent over the first quarter of 1988. Prosperity there certainly is but it is not for everybody. And there are signs that this boom will shortly be coming to an end. The acceleration in economic growth is being fuelled by a credit boom which is threatening to get out of control. Consumer credit is growing at 18.6 per cent per year. Personal bank loans and mortgage lending are growing even faster at nearly 22 per cent. Prices are beginning to rise. In May the inflation rate rose to 4.2 per cent, up from 3.9 per cent on the previous month, and will almost certainly go up higher.

The government would like to put up interest rates to dampen this boom. The problem is that higher interest rates push up sterling and threaten the com-



petitiveness of British exports. Already the trade gap is rapidly deteriorating. Latest figures point to a record balance of payments deficit of £11bn in 1988, nearly three times that forecast by the government. Further deterioration could lead to a run on the pound forcing the government to rapidly raise interest rates to defend sterling. This in turn would quickly end the present mini-boom and unemployment would rise again as investment slowed down and profits began to fall. Whatever the government does problems lie ahead.

Behind the present, if temporary, economic prosperity lie three main sources of government funds. The first comes from North Sea oil, not only increasing government revenues, but also, by contributing massively to the balance of payments, removing previous constraints on economic expansion. Despite this, manufacturing output has only just reached the 1979 peak and is still below the peak of August 1974. And now North Sea oil is starting to run down. Secondly come funds in the region of £5bn a year from

one off privatisation proceeds - selling off national assets. And finally there has been the massive transfer of wealth from the poor to the government, and from the poor to the rich.

From vicious attacks on social benefits through government taxation policies, increased health service charges to a massive rise in the charge for electricity, the attack on the poor has been relentless. When the government, soon after it came to office in 1979, dropped the earnings link for pensions, increasing them in line with inflation only, the savings were enormous. This year alone they have been estimated at £4bn. There has been prosperity for some, but certainly not for everybody.

In fact, as recent figures from the Low Pay Unit show, the numbers of poor have been growing rapidly as the gap between rich and poor has increased. In 1985 9.38 million people (17 per cent of the population) were on or below the poverty line (supplementary benefit level), a rise of 55 per cent on 1979. 15.42 million (29 per cent) were living in poverty or on its margins (up to 140 per cent of supplementary benefit), a rise of 33 per cent on 1979. Between 1981 and 1985 the real disposable income of the lowest decile - an average of the poorest fifth of households - fell by 5.1 per cent. And recent figures show that the living standards of most low income households are falling still further behind those on average and high incomes.

Kinnock in defending Labour's present policy shift to the right argued that the party had to accept that the electorate had changed. 'Although by 1991 one in three people would be living on or below the poverty line, many others would have higher incomes than ever before.' While Thatcher denies that the poor exist, Kinnock is determined that they will have no influence on Labour policy. ■

**The second Socialist Conference took place in Chesterfield on 11/12 June. Nine months after the first conference, with several regional meetings and other sponsored conferences in between, the Socialist Conference reassembled in Chesterfield to continue the discussion and to see if their kind of socialism offered a way forward. Around 2,000 delegates attended.**

DAVID REED & LORNA REID

In our report of last year's conference we argued that 'it was more important to find the issues which would allow us to *unite in action*, in particular in defence of those facing the onslaught of Thatcherism, than to talk past each other about our ideological differences.' Future meetings, we argued, 'had to be more representative of the forces fighting back' and had 'to aim at creating unity in action.'

#### UNITY IN ACTION AGAINST THE POLL TAX

In an attempt to achieve this the RCG argued for this year's socialist conference to organise an Action Against the Poll Tax conference.

To this end six of our eleven delegates at the conference attended policy groups where the issue of the Poll Tax could be raised. Our argument that a) the Poll Tax, in affecting all working class families, was the issue around which we could all unite and b) that the Socialist Conference to be relevant, had to support action against the Poll Tax on the principle of non-compliance and non-payment, found general support from the vast majority of delegates at the conference. From the beginning we found allies in a number of comrades from the Independent Labour Party (ILP) who are active in organising local campaigning groups around the country. Like us they were concerned that the campaign be built from below from the people who 'can't pay', not placing reliance on the official Labour and trade union movement. Only massive pressure from below will force Labour councils and local authority trade unions to take action

#### RESOLUTION FROM POLL TAX POLICY GROUP

1. To support proposed conference on action against the Poll Tax in the Autumn to be open to all groups and individuals opposed to the Poll Tax. The purpose of the conference is to help create, with other organisations, a national network of Poll Tax resistance and to unify and coordinate tactics of civil disobedience and direct action against the register, occupations and mass non-payments.
2. We call on the TUC, the PLP and the NEC of the Labour Party to more effectively promote awareness of the danger of the Poll Tax. To support a national demonstration and coordinate support for local councils and trade unions engaged in non-compliance with the Poll Tax. We believe that a united trade union and council stand on non-cooperation is vital.
3. We further suggest to the Campaign Group that civil disobedience against the Poll Tax be made a more prominent part of their campaign for the leadership.

*There was also support for forcing the STUC to turn its proposed ten minute stoppage in September into a 24 hour strike.*

## SOCIALIST CONFERENCE 1988

# Poll Tax: RCG calls for unity in action

in refusing to implement the Poll Tax. That is why what is now needed is a grass roots campaign to build on the real anger and opposition to the Poll Tax that exists amongst ordinary people.

Gary Kent (ILP) reporting from the Poll Tax policy group to the plenary said, in arguing for an action conference against the Poll Tax in the Autumn, that the intention,

'is to bring together all Poll Tax campaigns and individuals, in alliance in action, in order to create a national network of resistance and to unify the tactics of civil disobedience that are going to be needed - non registration, non payment, occupation of Poll Tax offices.'

While he also argued on the need to support and encourage non-cooperation by local authorities and trade unions, with demands on the main institutions of the Labour movement to back them (see motion), his emphasis was on grass roots campaigns.

'My experience [is] and that of other comrades around the country involved in local groups which are broad based, involving tenants, churches and many individuals who have never been involved in any political activity, all who come to meeting after meeting and say "Can't pay, won't pay. They can't jail us all or is that why they are building all these new prisons?" There's an anger, there's an enthusiasm and there's a militancy in these campaigns which we need to channel into a determined, coherent and united resistance. We can defeat the Poll Tax if we unite around civil disobedience.'

The success of our intervention was shown when, in the final plenary session, Kevin Davey, chair of the Socialist Society, speaking for the steering committee from the platform said, 'The one thing the Socialist Conference can genuinely contribute to in each locality is a campaign against the Poll Tax. And this is something that we are going to urge on the incoming group of this [steering] committee as a priority.'

A steering committee to organise an action conference in the Autumn, the provisional date is 22 October, has been set up. RCG delegates from around the country have joined that committee.

#### LITTLE EVIDENCE OF THE FORCES FIGHTING BACK

For a body intent on 'creating a movement for our times' the Socialist Conference represents a very narrow stratum from the socialist and working class movement. The predominant force present was from the left of the Labour Party. Nearly all the British left which directs its political work to the official labour movement were there buzzing around them, some inside and some outside of the Labour Party. The rest were independent, anti-party radicals and socialists - many of them ex-members of



Tony Benn speaking at the Socialist Conference

British left groups - a true reunion of all those not sure where to go.

Missing from Chesterfield were the forces that are already fighting back. Gestures were made in the direction of some of them - limited to those involved in trade union struggles. Although women from the NUS support groups were invited to speak to the conference no effort seems to have been made to ensure the presence of the seafarers and their communities. There was much talk about the attack on the NHS and the social services but again little evidence of nurses, ancillary workers and working class families dependent on welfare benefits.

Speaker after speaker from the organising committee referred to the need for the Socialist Conference to represent women, black people, the Irish people and oppressed minorities. Policy groups were held around these themes but appeared only to advance the credentials and narrow horizons of the well known 'professionals' promoting these issues. The Socialist Conference, if it is to have any real impact, has to ensure that the forces engaged in day to day struggles against the onslaught of Thatcherism have a real presence and influence at its future meetings and campaigns.

POLL TAX  
CAN'T PAY  
WON'T PAY

The SWP were the main opponents of the RCG's argument for a broad based anti-Poll Tax action conference centred on the working class communities that 'can't pay, won't pay', wanting instead to concentrate the campaign on demands on the Labour and trade union leadership. For the SWP *anyone* outside the trade union movement is neither reliable nor part of the working class. Chris Harman, leading member of the SWP, argued that it is not possible to build a community based campaign because,

'On council estates are drug peddlers, junkies and people claiming houses under false names. These people will complete the registration forms to avoid attention from the council.'

They have dealt out similar abuse to young black people in the past, dismissing them as lumpen proletariat. We were asked to concentrate our demands on the very Labour councils and trade unions that are now actively implementing the Poll Tax. By restricting all political work to the official labour movement the SWP is rapidly becoming a right wing block on the development of an independent working class movement.

#### THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE SOCIALIST CONFERENCE

A lot of rhetoric at the conference, especially from platform speakers, was directed at the new realism of the Labour Party. Much of the discursive and abstract papers presented to the conference were concerned with promoting alternative policies to be implemented by a future government of the left. Implicit in all of this, although never said, given the predominance of Labour Party members at the Socialist Conference, is the possibility of creating socialism through the Labour Party. As Heffer said in promoting his and Benn's campaign for the leadership of the Labour Party,

'We are fighting for the Labour Party to become a fully fledged socialist party, as it had been when it was founded.'

Others, faced with the overwhelming reality of Kinnock's Labour Party, are less dogmatic. Hilary Wainwright, one of the main organisers of the Socialist Conference, said,

'A movement should reach parts of society that the political parties rarely reach. It's got to be rooted in people's daily experience... Of course we need a socialist party, that might be a transformed Labour Party, it might not.'

The truth is it won't be a transformed Labour Party, as time and again history has demonstrated that efforts of the left to transform the Labour Party have only transformed the left into hardline supporters of the capitalist regime. The Labour Party has never been a socialist party, it has a long history of promoting the interests of British imperialism and British racism at home and abroad. The Socialist Conference must not tie itself to the interests of the British Labour Party.

New realism is not just a set of wrong policies. It represents the interests of a section of the working class - skilled, employed, better off workers. This layer wants to replace Thatcher whilst preserving its own privileges: Thatcherism without Thatcher. On the other hand an ever growing section of the working class has been thrown into unemployment and poverty. The working class is divided and that division grows day by day. The Socialist Conference has to decide which side of the divide it is on - there is no middle ground. It must take the side of those facing Thatcher's onslaught and who have no choice but to resist. That is why the anti-Poll Tax campaign is an important step in the right direction.

**'The SWP seems to have more illusions in Labour councils than the councillors themselves.'**

Lambeth councillor, Joan Wells

#### SWP SWINGS TO THE RIGHT

A new movement of socialists will only advance if it breaks away from the narrow confines and interests of the official Labour and trade union movement. Some forces within the Socialist Conference already recognise this, eg those supporting the broad based action conference against the Poll Tax. Others are clearly resisting this. Prominent amongst them is the SWP. Their main concern at the Socialist Conference was to insist on the centrality of the Benn/Heffer campaign, a campaign which for all its fine pronouncements and intentions has no troops to fight its battles and no possible chance of making real progress. In their report of the conference in *Socialist Worker* (18 June 1988) they even go so far as to attack the organisers for their reluctance to acknowledge the central importance of the Benn/Heffer campaign.

LEOVE BONGAY FIGHTING DEPORTATION

# I'll fight to the end

**LEOVE BONGAY** is a Filipino woman who came to Britain in December 1985 as the fiancée of a British man whom she had met through a 'marriage agency'. Weeks after her arrival she was thrown out of her fiancé's house. As a result, the Home Office is now trying to deport her and her two year old daughter born from this union. Leove is fighting back with the Right to Stay Campaign. Her case exposes the vicious and vile role of 'marriage agencies' which exploit and use women from the oppressed nations for the benefit of rich white men in the imperialist countries. Leove spoke to **VIRMAN MAN**.

"The marriage bureau kept telling us about going abroad, 'You must take up this opportunity, it's your only opportunity... it's like a bed of roses... life is better, it's just like the fulfilment of your dreams'. They kept saying that British men are loving, responsible and they're the men of their dreams."

In Leove's case the 'dream' was shattered immediately: 'My ex-fiancé woke up one day and told me he didn't like me any more and told me to go. He didn't want to face the responsibility and commitment.' Leove was lucky in that she found a family who took her in until her child was born. If she is forced to return to the Philippines she will have nowhere to go: 'My family have disowned me, there's no social security system. I gave up my job to come here... I'd probably have to leave

my daughter in Britain if I didn't want her to eat less than a bowl of rice a day.

"I am lucky, but not much. I mean others are worse, I have met lots of Filipino women who are mentally and physically abused and shamed. When the men find out that they don't like us they torture us and abuse us. In this country when you treat a dog like that you're in trouble, you go to court. They treat animals better than humans. British men can bring women into this country, but we have no rights under the immigration laws... Eight out of ten 'marriages' fail. Some of the women are deported as a result, others are in hiding and are afraid to come out and fight. They are suffering the consequences. They tell me to carry on: 'We'll support you. If you win then we will follow you.'"



Having attended the 28 May VMDC demonstration, Leove said 'It was the best demonstration I have ever attended. Viraj Mendis has such strong supporters on his side. I wish we could get them on our side. I talked to Viraj and when I said I was always giving up he kept telling me "don't you give up, we've got lots of support on our side. In the end we can make them give up."' Leove is determined to continue her fight. At the moment she is

preparing for her appeal against the Home Office deportation order. 'I have started something, now I'm halfway so I have to carry on. Whatever it takes, day or night, I will carry on. You've got to be tough... because I understand that the new Immigration Bill is coming in July and will be very strict. I've heard that there are some Filipino women who have overstayed and are now in prison. I'll fight to the end.'

# NOTES

## IMMIGRATION RAIDS

In early May, in a series of immigration raids, immigration officials and police arrested 61 students from the Advanced College of Business and Cultural Studies. The Home Office has claimed that 26 had entered Britain illegally and would be deported. Another 20 are also to be served with deportation orders for breach of conditions and overstaying. These raids followed an investigation of 200 students in February at the London School of International Business Studies. The investigation was aided by the Home Office Large Major Enquiry System which compares thousands of foreign students' names and addresses with those registered for residence permits

## NIGERIAN UNDER THREAT

The Home Office has been forced to reconsider the case of Nigerian Adedodja Adedimeji who is threatened with deportation along with his 11 month old son. He took sanctuary in a Birmingham church to fight against the deportation. If they are deported, Adedodja's son, who suffers from sickle-cell anaemia, could die from lack of treatment in Nigeria

## KURDS DEPORTED

In May the Home Office deported 19 Kurds to Turkey after the Home Office claimed they were lying about their nationality and that they were not Kurds and therefore in no danger of persecution in Turkey

## ATTEMPTED MURDER BY RACISTS

Jacob Motopeng, a South African activist who came to Britain after the 1976 Soweto uprising, was attacked by two racist skinheads last month who pushed him onto the path of a London underground train. Luckily, the train managed to stop in time

## 'PLAIN STUPID' JUDGE

Mohammed Sarwar was sentenced to two years' probation with compulsory English lessons by a Birmingham judge who said he was 'plain stupid' as he had been in Britain for 20 years and still needed an interpreter

## POLICE MURDER

An independent post-mortem is being carried out on Oakley Ramsey, a 25 year old black man. He was arrested after a complaint of alleged assault on a female acquaintance and was being sat on and forcibly restrained by another man when the first Walsall police arrived on the scene. The other man walked away free while Ramsey was arrested and handcuffed. By the time more police officers arrived he was unconscious. After 15 minutes he was conveyed directly to the mortuary without even a doctor to pronounce him officially dead.

Seven hours elapsed after Oakley Ramsey's death before his family and girlfriend were notified and they were then told he had died in a street fight. Gold jewellery he was wearing was impounded for 'tests' along with his keys and cashpoint cards.

## MANCHESTER: THE BURNAGE REPORT

# The murder of Ahmed Ullah

SUSAN DAVIDSON

In Manchester on 17 September 1986, 13 year old Ahmed Iqbal Ullah was stabbed to death in the playground of Burnage High School by a white schoolboy, Darren Coulburn. After the killing Coulburn ran around shouting 'I've killed a Paki'. The previous day Ahmed had intervened to stop Coulburn bullying another Asian pupil. Coulburn returned armed with a knife to get his revenge.

Hoping to defuse black community anger, Labour controlled Manchester City Council set up an Independent Inquiry which was completed in February this year. The Council has refused to publish the full report. The panel, headed by Ian MacDonald, a barrister specialising in immigration law, describes the bureaucratic and paternalistic anti-racist policies implemented at Burnage as 'an unmitigated disaster'.

From available sections of the report a picture emerges of a very average British institution with an elitist and authoritarian senior and middle management. The school has proportionately few black employees, some of whom are favoured and most of whom are left to get on with the job as best they may. There are some close friendships between black and white pupils, but by and large there is a constant flow of racist conflict and Asian boys generally move together to avoid racist harassment. Burnage was a school with an official anti-racist line, but where overtly racist playground fights were watched by hundreds of pupils and raised no response unless they went on after the bell or until this one ended in murder.

Despite their formal commitment to anti-racist policies, neither the council nor the school management

were able to actually combat the racism prevalent in Burnage. In a commentary on the report, A Sivanandan, Director of the Institute of Race Relations correctly describes the real reason for this. It is the refusal to confront state and institutional racism. This battle has been substituted by the personal moralism of Racism Awareness Training.

Indeed, in one of its most significant sections - 'The politics of the murder' - the report reveals just how the City Council and opportunist leaders of the Bangladeshi community collaborated to prevent the black youth from actually organising to fight racism. It states that: '... the push for an inquiry by the established community leaders was an attempt to channel the response of the youth away from demonstrations and marches into more established legal channels.'

The organisation supported by the youth, the Ahmed Iqbal Memorial Committee, was treated 'with open hostility or ignored'. The City Council refused to answer letters or give information and later withdrew all council facilities on the flimsy grounds that the case was sub judice. Burnage head Dr Gough was also hostile and expressed particular displeasure over a leaflet they produced just before Coulburn's trial. The Greater Manchester Bangladeshi Association described the Memorial Committee as communist agitators.

The best prospect for conducting a real fight against racism in schools was the initiative of the youth of the Memorial Committee. This was destroyed by the local community leaders and the City Council who opposed the self-organisation of the youth and satisfied themselves with an inquiry which the public is not even being permitted to see in its complete form.



## FIRE-BOMBED BOOKSHOP

On 12 May, the Third World Centre in Old Street, Islington was firebombed and its ground floor burnt out. Swastikas had been daubed on the building in previous weeks. Police have no 'suspects' despite many known fascist strongholds in the area

# Stop racist evictions

NICKI RENSTEN

The Bishop of Stepney responded to the racist eviction of Asian families from Bed and Breakfast (B and B) accommodation by providing 'sanctuary' in local church halls. Tower Hamlets 'Liberal' Council is attempting to evict 56 families claiming they made themselves 'intentionally homeless' when they left Bangladesh.

To try and stem the tide of adverse publicity and exhaust the families and their supporters, the council is implementing a divide-and-rule policy of evicting the families in small

groups rather than all at once. Five families who were evicted on 7 June and took refuge in church halls have now been relocated in B and Bs together with a further 5 who refused to move when served with eviction notices. Local sympathisers, and not the racist council, are paying their bill.

Another 10 families are due for eviction this week and Bishop Jim Thompson says he will continue to open his churches to provide shelter for the homeless. But he stresses that charity is no solution to the problem and is actively involved in the campaign to force the council to rescind its racist and heartless policies.

# 3m black workers stay-away

CAT WIENER

White South African business was shaken for three days in June as millions of black workers responded to the call from the two largest trade union federations, COSATU and NACTU, to protest against anti-trade union government legislation. On 6 June, the first day of the action, 3 million workers were reported as having stayed away from work. In South Africa's industrial heartland, the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) triangle around Johannesburg, which accounts for some 70 per cent of South Africa's population, 78 per cent of black industrial workers joined the strike, along with 50 per cent of commercial workers and 39 per cent of those in the formal transport sector.

Throughout the country, whites struggled unsuccessfully to keep shops and businesses open: all car-plants and thousands of white-owned businesses had to be shut down for the duration of the strike. In spite of a limited response from the National Union of Mineworkers - who faced the brutal repression of the regime during their magnificent strike last summer - at least six coal mines and two diamond mines were affected by the stayaway.

It was the trade unions' first real show of strength since the government attempted to curtail political activities in its clampdown on anti-

apartheid organisations earlier this year. It also represents a closer and more effective working relationship between COSATU and NACTU. The strike was called by COSATU as part of its 'concerted programme of action against the restrictions of the Labour Relations Amendment Bill' agreed at its conference in May this year.

The Bill has already sparked off widespread anger and demonstrations in factories throughout South Africa, and unions are producing education programmes and pamphlets explaining the implications of the Bill and requesting management to condemn it unequivocally. However, there is little chance of the latter; white business - including so-called 'liberal' employers - is fully behind the Bill, which is designed to strengthen the hands of employers by forcing down wages and increasing profits, while making protest action illegal. As COSATU puts it, '... the brutal repression of anti-apartheid forces [is] being pursued in the interests of capital [which wants] political stability and high profits, even if it means a total attack on human rights.'

The Labour Relations Amendment Act will:

- make sympathy strikes illegal and prevent strikes on the same issue within 15 months
- prevent unions from calling con-

sumer boycotts and make them give 21 days notice of any dispute to the regime - which can then declare the union's action illegal

- allow the bosses to sack workers without redress, and confiscate union assets to compensate for company losses caused by strike action

- strengthen the hand of racist whites-only unions and minority stooge unions by refusing to allow majority unions the right to negotiate for the whole workplace

The attack on consumer boycotts - the kind of community action that was so successful in the BTR Sarmcol workers strike - reveals the apartheid government's fear of the trade union movement.

Surveys carried out during the strike by the Labour Monitoring Group show virtually no difference in response to the strike call between unionised and non-unionised black labour in the PWV triangle. The strike has its base in the townships and communities, in the grass-roots of the anti-apartheid struggle, as much as in the organised trade union movement. It is this combination of trade union and community resistance which terrifies the regime: that is why leaders like Moses Mayekiso, who represent that unity, face treason charges and possible life imprisonment.

In the wake of the stayaway, Botha

had no choice but to renew the State of Emergency for another 2 years, with increased powers for the military and judiciary and further censorship, in a desperate attempt to achieve what the last two years of savage repression, detentions and hangings have been unable to - to crush the resistance of the black working class. The Labour Relations Amendment Bill is only one weapon in that over-all attack. Any statements by any member of the ANC are now banned and so are any calls for a boycott of the Autumn Municipal Elections. According to COSATU 'the government is manoeuvring out of weakness, as it battles against the deep economic problems and the general lack of political support from the people'.

The apartheid regime has started this third year of Emergency as it means to go on - with the declaration that the Sharpeville Six are to hang in a month's time. 1988 is clearly intended to be a year of lynchings, with the doctrine of 'common purpose' serving as a ready-made death sentence in hundreds more cases throughout South Africa. But the black masses have also shown their hand: following the success of the stayaway, COSATU will be convening a conference open to all progressive anti-apartheid forces. This promises to be a year of renewed and heroic resistance by the oppressed masses of Azania. ■

## SOUTH AFRICA NOTES

### CASHING IN ON APARTHEID

**B**ritain's trade surplus with Pretoria rose from £4.7 million in 1976 to £291 million in 1987. The Thatcher government is covertly pushing for further increase in trade with the apartheid regime despite an agreement at the 1985 Commonwealth Summit to curtail trade.

In February this year the chief executive of the British Overseas Trade Board secretly toured South Africa holding meetings with South African businessmen. Alan Clarke, the Trade Minister, spoke at the annual dinner of the United Kingdom-South African Trade Association, announcing that there were 'new and exciting opportunities' for trade with South Africa.

On 26 April a statement was issued from the Engineering Industries Association announcing a trade mission to South Africa in November. The mission will be briefed by the British Consulate-General on arrival in Johannesburg. The statement claims that the South African economy is recovering well and that the balance of payments recorded a surplus of £6.2 billion in 1987, assisted by the rise in the price of gold. UK exports in 1987 were worth £950 million (an 11.5% rise) and there are major opportunities for British business. Thatcher's argument that Britain can exert maximum influence on the regime through maintaining trading and diplomatic links translates into pounds sterling - profits from apartheid.

### HIS MASTER'S VOICE

**J**ohn Carlisle, MP for Luton North (and Pretoria South), has been working hard for his South African masters in the last month. Not only was he whipping up opposition to the Mandela Concert at Wembley, he also devoted some considerable time during the adjournment debate in the House of Commons on 25 May to attack the Non Stop Picket outside the Embassy.

Describing the picket as 'a terrible scourge', 'paid of course by Camden Council, the World Council of Churches and other organisations', receiving 'funds from eastern European countries', and encouraged by 'the British Communist Party and Labour lesbian group', Carlisle hoped that this recitation of the right-wing's favourite hate-figures would produce a suitably pavlovian response from backbench Tories. Apart from the insults ('rent a mob', 'especially violent') and the lies, all protected by Parliamentary Privilege, Carlisle's purpose was more subtle - to call for more powers for the police and for more legislation to deal with protests outside embassies. Carlisle has made several trips to South Africa at the expense of the regime and his campaign reflects a growing frustration at the Embassy that even their manipulation of the British government and the police has failed to remove the thorn from their side. Viva the non-stop picket.

### NO RIGHTS NO FLIGHTS

**C**ity AA members have now occupied the South African Airways offices in Oxford Circus eight times since March in a continuing campaign. The first case came to court in May, when the demonstrators were tried for highway obstruction. The case was dismissed after the prosecution evidence. On 8 June the latest protest took place. This time the demonstrators were arrested for Highway Obstruction *inside* the Airways Offices.

# Angolan victory

ANDY HIGGINBOTTOM

The battle for Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola which raged for 8 months to April this year, and which ended in a decisive victory for the defending Angolan forces, has proved a strategic turning point in the war to defeat South Africa's invasion.

The People's Republic of Angola had called for emergency assistance from its socialist allies. Cuba immediately despatched motorised infantry units, tanks, artillery and anti-aircraft batteries to the front line. For the first time since 1975 the South African invaders met the Cubans in direct combat, and they were roundly defeated.

Control of the air is critical for the South African occupying forces because they have no support from the civilian population on the ground. But at Cuito Cuanavale South African air superiority was smashed by Angolan and Cuban piloted MIG-23 jets. The enemy lost 50 planes in all. Although the South African Defence Force continues to bombard Cuito Cuanavale with long range 155mm artillery, and its ally UNITA is equipped with US supplied Stinger missiles, South Africa desperately needs to restock on aircraft. French built Mirages have been brought from Argentina to augment new supplies of the Israeli Kfir jet, which although renamed the Cheetah by South Africa, is also based on the Mirage design.

The most damaging blow has been to the morale of the racists. SA Defence Minister Malan admits to 31 SADF dead (his own department's press releases total 53 white troops killed). The real figure is very much higher. The Angolan government est-

imates 342 SADF and SWATF troops were killed between September and December alone. There has been a cover up by the South African military, but Malan cannot hide from white families that their sons will never return.

The combined Angolan and Cuban forces, accompanied by SWAPO freedom fighters, have driven the SADF 200km south to within 20km of the Angola-Namibia border. The Cubans are constructing an airbase behind this new defensive line. Incredibly, this counteroffensive within Angolan territory has been treated by South Africa and the USA as a threat to negotiations over independence for Namibia.

The USA has opened up a second front of aggression against the Angolan people. 200 US military personnel have been sent to neighbouring Zaire with instructions to set up 6 new bases, from which the UNITA contras working with Israeli agents plan to escalate operations in northern Angola and airlift support to the increasingly isolated UNITA units in the south east.

The war in Angola and Namibian independence were on the agenda for Reagan and Gorbachev at the Moscow summit. They set the target date of 29 September for an end to hostilities. 29 September is the tenth anniversary of United Nations resolution 435 which offered UN supervision for free and fair elections in Namibia. South Africa knows that any such elections would reject its colonial occupation. Pretoria has accordingly blocked any implementation of resolution 435, and is now desperately trying to use US leverage to claw back at the negotiating table some of its battlefield losses. Angola will not barter its own right to independence, and for its part Cuba has



Standing firm: a Kalashnikov-armed Angolan soldier guards missiles at Cuito Cuanavale

made clear that if a UN team should arrive in Namibia by September then Cuban forces will withdraw to the 13th parallel, well away from the border with Namibia.

FRFI salutes the gallant heroes of Angola, Namibia and Cuba who have

fought and died to destroy racism and imperialism. We give this reminder. The last strategic defeat for the South African invaders of Angola triggered the Soweto revolt in 1976. Malan beware, you are sitting on a powder keg. Please join him Mr Reagan. ■

### SHARPEVILLE SIX:

## In Botha's hands

ANDY HIGGINBOTTOM

'Frivolous and absurd' was Mr Justice Human's view of the application for retrial of the Sharpeville Six. The South African courts have handed back to PW Botha, with his presidential power to grant clemency, the final decision over the lives of Theresa Ramashamola, Francis Mokhesi, Reid Mokoena, Mojafela Sefatsa, Oupa Diniso and Duma Khumalo.

A storm of international protest forced the racists in March to consider a retrial. But the British government is now trying to stop such protests. At a

meeting of EEC Foreign Ministers, Geoffrey Howe objected to any statement of astonishment at the court's decision, and forced the removal of a direct request to Botha for clemency. Unless Botha is forced to concede, the six could hang at any time from 19 July.

It is imperative that the AAM restarts its pickets of the South African Embassy. In any event FRFI fully supports City AA's decision to urgently escalate protest action. ■

Picket 6pm every Wednesday, South African Embassy, Trafalgar Square, London.



R E M E M B E R S O W E T O 1 9 7 6

## SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY SURROUNDED 1988

1500 people gathered on the Non-Stop Picket outside the South African Embassy on 16 June 1988 to commemorate the Soweto uprising in 1976. Sparked off by the forced introduction of teaching in Afrikaans, the rebellion in Soweto in 1976, which spread to townships throughout South Africa, lasted fifteen months, left almost 1,000 young black people dead and thousands injured. Many more young people secretly left South Africa to join the liberation armies in the months that followed. The Soweto generation are at the forefront of the struggle for liberation today.

The 1500 predominantly young people who gathered outside the South African Embassy in 1988 were determined to show their anger at the worsening repression of black people and the decision to hang the Sharpeville 6. The crowd was addressed by Comrade Keke (Central Committee PAC), John Mitchell from the Irish union IDATU, Mike Mansfield (barrister), Cde Rodwell Mzotane, (UK Chief Rep. PAC), a central committee member of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Richard Roques (RCG), the VMDC, the Humanist Party, OLGA and many others, including young people who keep the Non-Stop Picket going day and night. Music was provided by the Horns of Jericho and Batucada Mandela, both of which have supported the picket since it began in April 1986.

At 8pm hundreds of people marched round the Embassy twice, led by the Horns of Jericho, totally surrounding the block, laid flowers at the gates and released hundreds of black balloons over London. Then they lined up around the Embassy walls, singing songs and listening to a message from Thami Mazwai, *Sowetan* Editor, supporting the picket.

Without provocation the police, in their usual fashion, angry because demonstrators had surrounded the Embassy, then attacked the demonstrators, hurling some over barriers, punching and kicking. One police-woman attempted to strangle a young woman demonstrator causing actual bodily harm. Four demonstrators, Dominic, Patrick, Gary and Tim were arrested and charged with assault. Norma Kitson spoke to the picket after the attack: 'I have been detained and tortured by the South African

police. Today I have been assaulted by the Metropolitan Police'. John Mitchell from IDATU said: 'the savagery of the police attack on the peaceful picket was the worst I have witnessed since I saw Marcos' troops batter workers in the Philippines'.

Despite the determined police attack, the protest continued into the night. Soviet television, Radio Moscow, Radio Montreal, LBC and Radio London all broadcast news of the picket, which was part of an international day of action against apartheid. Adam Bowles, City AA Youth and Students organiser, closed the rally urging support for the picket and non-stop action against apartheid. ■

RICHARD ROQUES

● In the week before 16 June City AA held a benefit organised by Dominic and Mackerel, featuring the Wedding Present and the Gargoyles, which raised £4152. City AA has donated £1000 each to the ANC and PAC with no restrictions on how it is to be used.

Future events on the Non Stop Picket:

- 25 June Rally for Mayekiso and the Alex Five 6pm
- 26 June Freedom Day and 800th day of the Non-Stop Picket 12 noon onwards
- 7 August Women's Day



JON KEMPTON

**'I realised that those were not warning shots; they were shooting at the demonstrators. Other children fell dead or wounded. What most terrified me was the attitude of the children; they continued to advance, ducking to try to avoid the bullets. I took photos of a small wounded child. Other children, kneeling beside him, tried to contain the blood that was coming from his mouth.'**

**Soweto 1976**

Nelson Mandela was born in the rural Transkei on 18 July 1918. As a young man he attended Fort Hare University, from which he was expelled after 2 years for engaging in student protests. After short spells as a mine security guard and working in an estate agent's office, Mandela took articles in a firm of attorneys - he was studying to be a lawyer.

Along with Oliver Tambo and Walter Sisulu, his friends from the Transkei, Mandela joined the Youth League of the African National Congress in 1944. In 1948 the whites elected a vicious right-wing government dedicated to entrenching white supremacy and racial segregation - apartheid.

The Youth League's militant proposals for resistance were incorporated into the Programme of Action, adopted by the ANC in 1949. The ANC committed itself to fighting for political rights, especially one adult-one vote, and decided:

'to undertake a campaign to educate our people on this issue and, in addition, to employ the following weapons: immediate and active boycott, strike, civil disobedience, non-cooperation and such other means as may bring about the accomplishment and realisation of our aspirations.'

The plans to implement a civil disobedience strategy were laid out by Walter Sisulu, who with Mandela and Tambo had been elected onto the leadership of the ANC. The new ANC led a stay-away strike on 26 June 1950 and in 1952 launched the Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws. Mandela was the Volunteer-in-Chief.

His qualities as an inspirational leader, combining dignity with a fiery determination to end all racism, encouraged 8,500 volunteers working in disciplined, non-violent groups to deliberately break apartheid laws.

The ANC's membership shot up from 7,000 to 100,000 in one year. In some areas of the Eastern Cape, rioting broke out. Mandela and a hundred other ANC, Indian and trade union leaders were banned.

By 1953 the divisions were made crystal clear by Mandela:

'In South Africa, where the entire population is almost split into two hostile camps in consequence of the policy of racial discrimination, and where recent political events have made the struggle between oppressor and oppressed more acute, there can be no middle course. The fault of the Liberals - and this spells their doom - is to attempt to strike just such a course. They believe in criticising and condemning the government for its reactionary policies, but they are afraid to identify themselves with the people and the task of mobilising that social force capable of lifting the struggle to higher levels'.

Mandela argued that the repression had made it impossible to wage the struggle mainly through the old methods of public meetings and printed circulars. The ANC must adopt new methods:

'If you are not allowed to have your meetings publicly, then you must hold them over your machines in the factories, on the trains and buses as you travel home. You must have them in your villages and shanty towns. You must make every home, every shack and every mud structure where our people live, a branch of the trade union movement and you must never surrender.'

The ANC entered alliance with other groups which brought together a congress of over 3,000 people (the police kept many thousands away) in Klipfontein in 1955 to adopt the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter became the guiding document of the Congress Alliance, and is to this day

For forty years Nelson Mandela was in the forefront of the struggle in South Africa. His life spans the years of the anti-apartheid campaigns, the struggle and the years of resistance. FRFI pays tribute on his 70th birthday.

# FRFI TRIBUTE TO NELSON MANDELA



widely debated in the trade union and liberation movements.

The police conducted mass raids on 5 December 1956. Mandela and 155 other political leaders were charged with High Treason, for conspiring to overthrow the state by violent means. The trial lasted until 1961 when the last accused was finally acquitted.

Towards the end of the 1950s mass protests against the pass laws escalated. The PAC organised the Sharpeville and Langa demonstrations which were put down with the utmost brutality. It was the end of the era of civil disobedience. Mandela wrote:

'In March 1960 after the murder of about seventy Africans in the Sharpeville state of emergency was declared and close on 20,000 people were detained without trial...'

In April 1960 the Government went further and completely outlawed



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th birthday

# NELSON MANDELA



The black majority in South Africa had by now exhausted every channel of peaceful protest, and had been met by bloody murder. In this their experience was no different to colonised and oppressed peoples throughout Africa and the world over. The people started arming themselves. In rural areas and the townships uprisings erupted. The PAC formed POQO and the ANC formed Umkhonto we Sizwe, with Mandela as Commander-in-Chief, to conduct sabotage operations against economic targets. The armed struggle was a reality, the only question was now its degree of organisation and direction to meet political objectives.

Early in 1962 Mandela left South Africa and visited various African states and Britain before returning to the underground. He was captured in August 1962 and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment for incitement to strike and 2 years for leaving the country without valid travel documents.

Then in July 1963 the security police raided a farmstead at Rivonia, near Johannesburg, and captured many of the ANC leaders. Mandela was the first accused in the Rivonia Treason Trial - he along with Sisulu and six others were sentenced to life imprisonment with no prospect of remission.

The black political prisoners were sent to Robben Island. In prison, as he had been outside, Mandela became a symbol of resistance to white racist rule. Hundreds of ANC and PAC freedom fighters were imprisoned.

Robert Sobukwe, the leader of the PAC, was kept in isolation from the

rest of the political prisoners. The political prisoners were in turn separated from those convicted of 'criminal' offences. The back-breaking prison labour was crushing rocks in the yard, then digging in the lime quarry and collecting seaweed. These rigours, the sadistic and cruel bullying of the warders required a constant struggle for basic improvements.

These were hard years. Many released prisoners acknowledge that it was their political convictions and the fortitude of their leaders which kept them going. The prisoners gleaned what news they could from new arrivals - the Namibian freedom fighters and the generation of Soweto 1976, and from the infrequent prison visits. Mandela's connection with the ANC and the mass movement, particularly through his wife Winnie, has never been broken.

South Africa's Minister of Justice, Jimmy Kruger, offered Mandela his release in 1973 if he recognised the independence of the Transkei bantustan and agreed to settle there. The price of release would have been a propaganda victory for apartheid's policy of 'separate development'. Mandela refused the condition.

The regime tried another tactic. In 1982 Mandela and Sisulu together with fellow Rivonia trialists Ahmed Kathrada, Raymond Mhlaba and Andrew Mlangeni were moved to Pollsmoor Maximum Security Prison in Capetown. They were joined by Patrick Maqubela. The six were put in a common dormitory cell. With the move came moderate improvement in material conditions - the right to receive newspapers, body contact on family visits - but it has meant complete isolation from all other prisoners. The six exercise on their own in a small L-shaped yard - their only view is of a patch of sky.

Under tremendous domestic and international pressure PW Botha offered Mandela (along with other leading ANC and PAC prisoners) his release in January 1985 - with a condition:

'All that is required of him now is that he should unconditionally reject violence as a political instrument.'

Most of the prisoners refused to accept the condition. Mandela's reply was forthright. His daughter Zinzi read it out to a mass gathering in Soweto. It is the measure of his leadership that when offered his freedom, he recognised that there would be no freedom if he separated himself from the mass struggle for liberation:

'I cherish my own freedom dearly but care even more for your freedom. Too many have died since I went to prison... I cannot sell my birthright nor am I prepared to sell the birthright of the people to be free.

'I am in prison as the representative of the people and of your organisation, the African National Congress, which is banned. What freedom am I being offered while the organisation of the people remains banned?

'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'. ■

**LONDON RCG  
COMMUNIST FORUM ON  
SOUTH AFRICA  
THE SOWETO UPRISING**  
Introduced by  
Carol Brickley and  
Cat Wiener  
Sunday 26 June 6 - 9pm  
Marchmont Community Centre  
Marchmont Street, London WC1

**'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'**

## APARTHEID TYRANNY

Thanks for your continued support of progressive forces within South Africa. While we try and work towards freedom, non-racialism and democracy we are continually harassed and our leaders are detained. Everytime something happens in South Africa (like the recent bannings) we think 'How much further can this state go?' - each time they find a new way to oppress all South Africans.

What I am saying to you is that you must not let the horrific monotony of apartheid tyranny lead to your not exposing it on a steady basis. I like to think that this would never happen but sometimes circumstances are just overwhelming. How in contact are you with student movements in South Africa? I hope it's quite a large extent - we are the future! Sorry but I must withhold my name and address.

GT SOUTH AFRICA

## MANDELA CONCERT

# THE MAN OR THE MOVEMENT?

Was it a concert? Or was it a political event? The controversy surrounding the Wembley concert to celebrate the 70th birthday of imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela raged in the British press in the week that led up to 11 June. CAROL BRICKLEY assesses the impact of the concert.

The first question mark over the concert arose when the BBC killed a political profile to appear in the *Radio Times* before BBC2's 12-hour live coverage of the event. Deputy Director of BBC programmes, Peter Ibbotsen was in no doubt that 'What we are covering at Wembley is a concert and not a political event'. Arrangements were made to substitute interviews with the 'stars' every time political messages were scheduled at the concert.

The BBC's lack of moral courage was a result, in part, of the wearisome publicity given to South Africa's wrath at media bias against South Africa, voiced by the official representatives at the South African Embassy and the unofficial hirelings in the House of Commons. What was surprising was not South Africa's yelps of protest, which surely must have been anticipated, nor the BBC's lack of backbone, but the extraordinary antics of the organisers attempting to dodge the flak.

'Of course, not a penny will go to the ANC', they insisted. Most of us would have been delighted if the opposite were true. Performers were discouraged from making political statements, and worst of all, a video message from Winnie Mandela and a smuggled message from Nelson Mandela were not included in the programme due to 'lack of time'. Extensive efforts were made to separate Nelson Mandela from the movement he represents. By some miracle the efforts of the organisers were thwarted.

The event was organised by Artists Against Apartheid. 80,000 people attended and the proceeds estimated at more than £2million will be divided between the AAM and children's charities. The concert represented the pursuit of a trend in AAM strategy away from the overtly political. Even the AAM advert which appeared in *The Guardian* on the day of the concert was self-censored: no mention of apartheid, South Africa or the ANC. The last pop concert held by the AAM followed a massive demonstration to Clapham Common. It was free, attended by many black people and not financially very lucrative. The Wembley concert cost £25 a head, the audience was mainly white pop-followers and it made a mint. Its saving grace was that many of the performers, unlike the organisers, resisted attempts to remove politics from the agenda and insisted on making statements about Mandela and apartheid.

Outside the concert, reality ruled. National Security - the security gang of thugs hired for the day systematically harassed sellers of political books, newspapers, T-shirts and badges. The commercial operators went unhindered. One FRFI seller was 'arrested' and another assaulted. Beyond the environs of the stadium, 'left-wing' Brent Council employed its own gang of highway robbers who seized bookstalls from the RCG and other political groups, threatened children and then demanded £182 for the return of property. Meanwhile hundreds of ticket touts openly reaped £50 a ticket and thousands of booklets, purporting to be official programmes but in reality South African propaganda, were handed to concert goers.

In 1982 when City AA started campaigning for Nelson Mandela's release, his name was barely known by the British public. Today his name is a household word. Despite every attempt to avoid it, despite the commercialism, the message about Mandela came across loud and clear to the Wembley audience and the one billion who watched on television worldwide. The AAM, however, is ill placed to take advantage of the political gains of the concert and the ensuing publicity. It has raised £1 million for its funds and to pay its considerable debts, but unless the AAM devotes its resources to active campaigning in Britain, the real rewards will be lost. Outside the South African Embassy, inside South African Airways, on the street corners of Britain, the real gains are being made by campaigning openly in support of the liberation struggle in South Africa. ■



## ... AND IN GLASGOW

On Sunday 12 June 30,000 people marched through Glasgow to launch the AAM's Glasgow to London march for Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday. The demonstration was addressed by Oliver Tambo and Reverend Alan Boesak.

The Rising Phoenix Republican flute band from Edinburgh joined the march, having made a new drum skin with 'ANC, Nelson Mandela, Rising Phoenix' and a picture of the shield and spear. This display of working class solidarity with the revolutionary struggle in South Africa was considered criminal by the AAM stewards who called the police to remove the band from the march. After the police asserted that the band members were not doing anything illegal by participating in the demonstration the stewards agreed to compromise with the police and let the band march - at the back of the demonstration. Appalled at this attack on the band, other demonstrators marched behind them to form a lively contingent.

The stewards then focussed their attention on the FRFI contingent. We were told to stop chanting 'Sanctions now!' because 'This is a march for Nelson Mandela'.

LORNA REID

## INTERVIEW WITH LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM



# Guerrilla war and mass struggle



Above: Prabhakaran: leader of the LTTE

Below: captured Indian soldiers being handed back



and we had to withdraw. Now we are re-grouping in Jaffna Peninsula, and everyday we are launching attacks. But, neither foreign nor local journalists from Colombo are allowed into the area. The Indian forces suppress news of what is happening.

From the start the Indian troops were demoralised, because they don't know where the attacks, the bullets are coming from, and we know the terrain. They underestimated the LTTE's strength... and they were confused as to what they were doing. They thought they were coming to protect the Tamils, and now they attack us... The Tamil people are for peace, but the feeling is that after so much suffering for so long, they will not accept peace without any justice. They see the LTTE as their protector. For justice we have to protect ourselves against the Indian Army; 130,000 maybe 150,000 soldiers, but for more than seven months we can hold out against the fourth largest army in the world because of the support of the people.

The future of our struggle will be more people's struggle. For example, what is happening on the West Bank and Gaza; it has created a lot of sympathy all over the world. We Tamils also struggle like that. People's power, that is more powerful than anything. Mobilisation of the people in full strength... If the oppression continues, the mass struggle will also continue.

Indian Troops ceasefire now!  
Victory to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam!

Our commander told them, 'If anyone wants to sneeze or cough, don't do that, you take cyanide', because if anyone did sneeze or cough they're all finished. Twelve girl fighters and three boys were there from five o'clock in the morning until one o'clock.

'In one incident we were going on cycles. Four of us and only two cycles. We were going to get a memorandum from the Chairman of the Citizens Committee. In front of us were three trucks coming fast, so we got off. Firing some shots we withdrew. Unfortunately my legs were frozen because for a long distance I was on the front of this bicycle. I could not run. Three or four times I fell down. The Indian Army started shooting. I wanted to take cyanide. I looked back and could see some Indian army personnel firing at me. I thought I could walk a little more. I could feel the bullets passing very close to me. Then there was a fence, about fifty yards away. I was walking, running, falling. About five kilometers away was our camp, a hiding place. Then again I heard the trucks coming. I hid in small shrubs. It passed by and I got

*Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* is honoured to be given an interview with Lawrence Thilakar, member of the Central Committee of the **LIBERATION TIGERS OF TAMIL EELAM**. Comrade Thilakar served his people in defence against the massive Indian Army assault begun last October and which continues to this day. The British press, abiding by Indian and Sri Lankan government censorship, has failed to record the horror inflicted upon the Tamil people, and their heroic resistance, led by their vanguard the Liberation Tigers. Comrade Thilakar, who was on the island until April, gives a first hand account to **TREVOR RAYNE** and **TERRY O'HALLORAN** of a war that is being hidden from the world. *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* takes this opportunity to salute Comrade Thilakar and all his comrades who have fallen in battle.

'First they attacked two newspapers. One was supportive of the LTTE, the other independent. That was the early morning of 10 October. They simply entered into the offices of the two newspapers, and blew them up. Then they went to our TV station and blasted it. Later, in the night, they wanted to enter Jaffna town to disarm the LTTE. They came firing and the war started. Their plan was to launch a commando attack on Prabhakaran's headquarters and capture or liquidate him. So a commando unit of some seventy Sikhs was airlifted to Jaffna campus. They proceeded to Prabhakaran's place. There was a big clash. It was a failure. On the first night about half the commandos were killed. They retreated to a house. We surrounded it, attacked again and ten more were killed. Later on the remainder were rescued by oncoming forces.

'They started coming out of their military camps, but they were stopped. We inflicted many casualties. They used tanks and the Sri Lankan airforce dropping bombs, and Soviet-made helicopters firing rocket mortars, small kinds of missiles. They tried to immobilise the hospitals. They attacked Jaffna hospital on 21 October. Three doctors, four nurses and seventeen other employees were

killed. A lot of patients were killed. The hospitals were shelled. The Indian Army used helicopters to fire missiles on the hospitals to force them to close down. Manipay hospital was closed down. Moolai Hospital was shelled and closed. They wanted to prevent LTTE members getting treatment.

'All together 5,680 people have

**'There are people among the Sinhalese who support our right to self-determination. I don't like to name those groups... If these progressive groups support our right to self-determination on the basis of equality then they can't work in the open. They would be killed!'**

been killed by the Indian troops. In October alone 1,000 civilians were killed. The killing continues today. And a lot of rapings. They terrorise the people. The Gurkha and Sikh regiments are very brutal. Many houses were destroyed for no reason. Residential areas were shelled indiscriminately. They shelled the refugee camps, schools and temples. The Indian Army told people to go to the schools and temples. Because of indiscriminate shelling people were often killed there.

### GUERRILLA WAR ON THE RUN

'I was working in the rear of the battle front, taking cadres to hospitals. I have seen a lot of death, even our relations. In one case, shelling wounded civilians and two older people took them in a car towards the hospital. The Indian Army attacked and burned the car and its occupants.

'In another case a relative attempted to escape in a tractor. There was a cry "Indian troops are coming" and all ran away. But there were two elderly women and two girls, one about fourteen, they were helping the older women to get out. The Indian Army shot all four without any provocation.

'There were a lot of victims of shells. Their bodies everywhere.

'In February it was very difficult to move. Every 1,000 yards there were Indian camps, and every day we stayed in one place, and every night we changed places. We walked long distances. I survived, but a lot of cadres were killed in round-ups in villages. Normally about two thousand troops in three circles would round up a village. Sometimes we hid in bushes and escaped. In one case I can remember there was a round-up in a village near Kokuvil and our fighters could not run away. They hid in the shrubs. The army didn't suspect the shrubs, but we could see their legs walking, all around, searching the houses.

up. Some people came by on bicycles and they took me to the camp.

'Then I went to Vanni and stayed for sometime with our leader Prabhakaran and Yogi. When I got to India I heard that the camp had been attacked, and about twelve, five girls and seven boys, were killed... I hear that three or four times Prabhakaran's bases have been attacked. So, anything can happen to him.

### MASS STRUGGLE

'All the time the LTTE have had the full support of the people. Giving us food and shelter. At the beginning of January the Indian Army could overrun the LTTE stronghold in Jaffna,

Tamil refugees hiding in church during an Indian bombardment



## This is Sri Lanka!

Much of the following information was gathered by the *British Refugee Council*. Their representatives, unlike those of the British journalistic profession, are able to find their way out of hotel bars and can talk to people other than government press officers.

● Some '323 known JVP members' were arrested during March. Hundreds of 'sympathisers' were also taken into custody.

● Ruhunu University lecturer and political activist Sathyapala Wanigagama arrested by police on 13 November is still missing. Authorities have no record of his arrest.

● Two Sinhalese students, Wasantha Weerasinghe and Prasanna Wanigasinghe, were brutally murdered in March, after having been taken by men dressed in military uniforms. A Sri Lankan Attorney-at-Law estimated 250 to 300 youths are missing after having been recently detained by paramilitary groups.

● Human rights groups presented Jayewardene with a list of 183 missing persons.

● In addition to its army, airforce, navy and police, the Sri Lankan state maintains the Home Guards, the National Auxilliary Force, the National Task Force and the Special Task Force. The latter being trained by British and Israeli advisers. Despite pleas by human rights groups and opposition political parties for its dissolution, the Special Task Force is reported to be being doubled in size to 5,000 men over the next two years.

● During the last week of May Indian forces saturated the Vanni area of the northern province in their search for Prabhakaran. Large tankers of petrol were moved into the area in an Indian threat to burn the forests down.

● The Reverend Father Chandra Fernando, President of the Citizens' Committee of Batticaloa-Ampara districts, was shot dead on 6 June. Father Chandra was sympathetic to the LTTE and critical of Tri-Star terrorising of Tamil communities. Tri-Star youth, trained and equipped by the Indian Army, are blamed for the murder. Ten thousand people representing many faiths attended the priest's funeral.

TREVOR RAYNE



JON KEMPSTER

## TAMILS ON THE MARCH

On Sunday 5 June hundreds of Tamils marched through central London in solidarity with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and against recent Indian army manoeuvres. It was both angry and defiant - 'India - stop the war!', 'Rajiv murderer!'

The British left was virtually absent, apart from a very lively contingent made up of London RCG and Manchester VMDC comrades, only WRP *Newsline* brought a banner. A message of solidarity was read out from Viraj Mendis, and Virman Man of the RCG called on all socialist and progressive peoples to support the Tamil Eelam national liberation struggle.



# PHILIPPINES

# NDF: confident of victory

Byron Bocar is the National Democratic Front (Philippines) representative for Western Europe. He was a lawyer in the Philippines during the Marcos dictatorship, helping the workers' movement by defending their cases, helping in education work and assisting organisation. He was unable to continue that work after the offices and his house were raided in September 1980. After that he went into hiding and joined the underground until he and his family were able to leave the Philippines in June 1982. They went to Holland, asked for, and received, political asylum.

Byron Bocar spoke to **EDDIE ABRAHAMS, TREVOR RAYNE and DAVID REED.**

This is the second interview with a representative of the NDF carried in FRFI. The first was in FRFI 72 in October 1987.

## ON AQUINO'S VISIT TO EUROPE

Her main purpose is to sell the line that the Philippines is now a respectable democracy... Aquino wants economic support from Western European countries for the so-called mini 'Marshall' plan being promoted by the United States. This consists of supplying 9 billion dollars over 5 years, which the US is not going to be able to hand out by itself because of its own economic crisis. Geoffrey Howe while he was in Manila in May promised that Britain would support this effort. West Germany has also been approached, as well as Italy, France, Japan and Australia, but this effort still has to come together.

While in Manila, Geoffrey Howe made a statement not only that Britain supported the mini-Marshall plan, but also that Britain supported the retention of US bases in the Philippines, which, according to him, would protect British economic interests in the Philippines.

## ON LAND REFORM

The Congress finally approved the Bill after almost a year of debate and deliberation. It proved that Congress is dominated by the landlords. It contains a number of loopholes, and is very generous to the landlords. For instance, on the land retention limit, it provides for 5 hectares\* retention limit per landlord, plus an addition of 3 hectares per child of 15 years and above, cultivating the land or managing the land. Under calculations in the Philippines that each landlord would have an average of two children 15 years and above, that would mean the landlord family has an effective retention limit of 11 hectares. This would probably exclude more than 75% of the total farm area from the Land Reform Bill. The landlord has several years to redistribute his land holdings to different members of his family, which would entitle each member of his family to become a landlord in his own right, entitled eventually to 5 hectares of his own.

Then just compensation is supposed to be on the basis of current value which would be determined by the landlord in negotiation with the Department of Agrarian Reform, without any say from the peasants. So the landlord can overvalue his land holdings to get more than enough compensation for the land from the peasants. They are required to pay amortisation over 30 years at 6 per cent interest per annum. This would result in a reduction of their income by 30.4 per cent in the case of rice tenants, 29.6 per cent in the case of corn tenants, and 19.4 per cent in the case of sugar tenants from the average waged income level of 1987.

Corporate farms, like the Aquino family farm of 6,000 hectares, can practically pass through the land reform untouched and intact. Corporate farms can be considered in compliance with the law by putting up for sale to farm workers that portion of the capital stock equivalent to

the value of the land assets of the corporate farm. But this would mean that the farm workers would not even be assured of getting effective majority control of the corporation. The land-owning family could easily undervalue the land assets and overvalue the other capital assets of the corporation and thereby ensure effective control by the family of the majority stockholding.

The government's land reform programme in the first years of its implementation needs eight billion pesos. What is available now is less than one half of this amount. There is little prospect of getting funding from abroad, from the World Bank or Asian Development Bank.

## NDF AND LAND REFORM

We characterised the land reform bill of the government as a counter-revolutionary ploy to try to pull the rug from under the revolutionary movement. Whenever peasant unrest was strong in the Philippines, there would always be an attempt to try to come up with so-called land reform measures, in order to pacify the peasants. Genuine land reform has been a main vehicle for the NDF's organising effort among the peasants in the countryside and it has been the main factor in the NDF winning support.

The NDF's revolutionary agrarian program has been implemented all over the areas where the NDF is, and that's in 63 out of the 73 provinces in the Philippines. The minimum programme means reduction of land rent, reduction or abolition of usury, the raising of the wages of farm workers, and the increasing of their productivity as well as increasing the price of their farm produce.

An example of the successful implementation of the minimum programme is the reversal of the 75:25 sharing by tenants of his harvest. Where before he would have to give 75 per cent of his harvest to the landlord, and he would retain 25 per cent, this has been reversed.

In other stronger areas of the NDF, the maximum programme of confiscation of land and free distribution to the peasants has also been successful: more than 60,000 hectares of land have already been successfully redistributed to the peasants in this way.

## ON RECENT ARREST OF COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES LEADERS IN MANILA

While these arrests will inevitably lead to some distortion the revolution has developed the capacity, with second and third lines of leadership, for people to quickly fill in whatever gap is suffered through arrests. In addition the principle of collective leadership ensures that not only is the movement not leader oriented, but also that the collective experience is shared by all. While individual skills and qualities will be missed, the collective leadership remains to carry out the plans. This is manifested in the increased



New People's Army fighters

tempo of guerrilla offensives since the arrests.

The arrests were more the result of luck on the part of the counter-revolutionary intelligence forces, but also due to some laxity on the part of the revolutionary forces which allowed the intelligence forces to trace some members of the revolutionary movement and identify some of the cars and the houses they were using. It is something that has happened before in our struggle and it belies the claim that there is some division in our movement. In fact, the revolutionary movement remains firmly united.

Those arrested are now in detention. A number have complained that they have been tortured. The government has filed charges against them.

## ON THE 'VIGILANTES'

This is another part of the low intensity conflict strategy. This is the terror component: death squads like those that operate in Central America. There are more than 200 of them organised and encouraged, funded and armed by the government, supported by the CIA. President Aquino herself endorsed two of these organisations: Alsa Masa (Masses Arise) and the Nakasaka. They kill civilians who do not join them, considering them as communists. They have extended their activities right into Metro Manila as evidenced on 10 June by the discovery of a mass grave at Makati, of 22 activists previously reported disappeared. Human rights organisations point to the police and military units operating in the Metro Manila area.

## ON COLONEL GREGORIO HONASAN'S ESCAPE FROM CUSTODY ON 2 APRIL

His escape highlights the continuing fractiousness of the military establishment. It was assisted by 14 prison guards consisting of elite units of the military, and it came after a series of visits by US officials to the ship where he was being detained. His escape is connected to ongoing US bases talks in Manila. It is a means for the US of exerting pressure on the Philippines government in these talks.



Cory Aquino

There are different factions in the military, which reflect factions within the ruling classes themselves. There is the Aquino faction, there is also the Marcos loyalist faction, and the Enrile and Honasan faction in the military. The US, while it supports the Aquino faction, because it holds state power and is dominant in the military, has its own links to all the other factions - in case it becomes necessary to replace Aquino if she can no longer control the situation in the Philippines. The preservation of the ruling elite is the best guarantee of US strategic interests in the Philippines.

## AQUINO AND THE US BASES

She maintains a position of allowing the bases to stay until 1991, and thereafter to keep her options open. This is a departure from her original position in December 1984 when she signed a declaration of principles, along with other opposition leaders categorically calling for dismantling the bases. There are indications that she might be disposed towards retention of the bases beyond 1991. The US has recently approved \$35 million worth of new construction on the bases, including an extension of the runway, and permanent housing for additional personnel. These are not the actions of someone who intends to leave the bases in 1991. Base commanders have been saying they will be able to stay. US officials who visited Aquino have also come out with the impression that Aquino will allow the bases to stay beyond 1991.

## NDF FORGES INTERNATIONAL LINKS

Our struggle is directed against US imperialism, which is also victimising many other peoples. On this basis we relate to other anti-imperialist and democratic forces throughout the world, to generate support for our struggle, and, on our part, to extend whatever support we can to other struggles. We think the anti-imperialist struggles that we can relate to are the national liberation movements, the newly independent countries liberated from colonialism or imperialist domination, the socialist countries, and the workers' and progressive movements in the capitalist countries. We seek to fight on a common front against a common enemy.

On 12 April a significant achievement was the signing of a formal accord between the NDF and the FMLN of El Salvador for closer cooperation in the fight against US imperialism and US intervention. We also consider it significant that on 10 June there was a joint communique signed in Geneva between the KMU (May 1st Movement - trade unions) of the Philippines and COSATU of South Africa denouncing both the Botha and Aquino regimes for their anti-worker, anti-democratic positions, and calling for closer cooperation.

## CONFIDENT OF VICTORY

We remain confident of our eventual victory. We regard our struggle as a continuation of the Filipino people's struggles against Spanish colonialism, US colonialism, Japanese occupation and now against US imperialism. There is a continuing thread to these struggles. Time is on our side. We consider the semi-colonial, semi-feudal order in the Philippines is at the terminal stage of its crisis. On the one hand the ruling classes are in a state of division as they have never been before, and on the other hand the revolutionary and progressive forces are stronger than they ever have been before. With US imperialism in a process of decline with its own internal crisis, as well as its crisis with its own clients and struggling peoples throughout the world. These are favourable factors which will help in our victory.

When martial law was declared in 1972, it was in response to the critical state of the semi-colonial, semi-feudal order in the Philippines in a bid to arrest this. It only served to intensify this crisis so that in 1986 it was necessary to change the form of rule to the current one which is of a regime with a liberal facade. Even that is not succeeding in arresting the crisis. The US is throwing in the low-intensity conflict and the mini-Marshall plan but the revolutionary movement continues to grow and we are now at the level of approaching strategic parity. After reaching that we hope to be able to tilt the balance of forces in our favour. We think that in the coming decade there will be major developments in the Philippines and they will be in favour of the Filipino people. ■

\* 1 hectare = 10,000 sq metres



INSIDE NEWS

# Avi Naftel

NICKI RENSTEN

Avi Naftel, a British citizen serving 25 years in the Arizona State Penitentiary, is campaigning for transfer to Britain, his right under the Council of Europe Convention for the Transfer of Sentenced Persons.

In 1982 Avi, an anarchist, was stopped by a police woman whilst hitching with his wife. She demanded to see their ID. They refused. She pulled out a gun. Avi knocked it from her hand. More police arrived. Avi and his wife escaped. An hour later they were caught. No shots were fired. Nobody was hurt.

Avi got fifteen years for aggravated assault and ten for kidnapping. He had no previous convictions. He is held in solitary in sensory deprivation conditions.

If transferred Avi could get visits from his family and stands a chance of parole or shortening of his sentence. Arizona prison officials are blocking transfer citing invented charges of 'attempted escape'. These charges have been quashed thanks to public pressure. More pressure can win Avi transfer. ■

Write to: Philip T. White, Director, Office of International Affairs, Criminal Division, PO Box 7413, Ben Franklin Station, Washington DC, USA 20044 and Sam Lewis, Director, Arizona Dept of Corrections, 1601 West Jefferson, Phoenix, Arizona, USA 85007  
Messages of support to: Avi Naftel, PO Box B45287, Florence, Arizona, USA 85232

# Scottish show trial

GRAHAM JOHNSON

On Friday 27 May four prisoners, Sammy Ralston, Graham Mathewson, Malcolm Leggat and John Devine, were found guilty of 'mobbing and rioting'. The trial followed the rooftop protest at Peterhead last year which was ended by an SAS attack on the prison.

Sammy Ralston protested his innocence throughout the trial. As he left the dock he shouted to his mother, 'I have been wrongfully convicted again, Ma. There's nothing in that. There are a lot of innocent men in jail.'

During the trial, the prisoners had called witnesses who testified to the brutality against prisoners in Peterhead. John Gallagher described Peterhead as a 'torture factory'.

This latest trial, like all those before, showed that prisoners can expect no justice from the courts. Inevitably there will be more protests because the source of discontent has not been dealt with. FRFI sends solidarity to Sammy Ralston and the other prisoners. We demand that Sammy is now moved from the Inverness cages.

## ONE IN SEVEN:

# Black prisoners in Britain

TERRY O'HALLORAN

A report issued by NACRO on 13 June once again confirmed the racist character of the British courts and prison system. On 30 June 1987 there were, according to Home Office figures, 7,050 prisoners from ethnic minorities out of 50,270 (14%). There were 6,000 (12.5%) in 1985. The number of black people in British prisons has risen by 1,040 (17%) in two years. More black people, both absolutely and relatively, are being sent to prison each year.

In 1987 there were 6,640 (13.7%) ethnic minority prisoners in the male prison population and 400 (22.7%) among women: more than one in every five. West Indian/Guyanese/African prisoners alone account for 4,720 (9.4% or one in ten) of the prison population.

A breakdown of individual prisons shows even higher proportions in certain prisons: Blantyre House 20%; Coldingley 20%; Lincoln 21%; Brockhill 20-30%; Holloway 26%; Oxford 28-30%; and East Sutton Park 39%.

The overrepresentation of black people in prison has little or nothing to do with the level of black people's involvement in crime, it has to do with racism in the criminal justice system.

A survey of juvenile offenders by Hackney Council found that black people were less likely to be cautioned than white people. More black offenders are sent to court.

Over 50% of white youths sent to court who pleaded not guilty were ac-



quitted. The figure for black youths was 30%. Black offenders are more likely to be found guilty.

Once convicted, the same survey found, black offenders were nearly twice as likely to be sent to prison as white offenders. In 1979 29% of youth custody prisoners were Afro-Caribbean.

A survey of cases over a two week period in March 1986 in Birmingham courts found that 35.2% of black defendants were sent to prison compared with 21.4% of white defendants. 13% of black defendants were given suspended sentences compared with 8.9% of white defendants.

Non-custodial recommendations were made in 90% of the Social Enquiry Reports on black defendants yet 57% of these were not accepted. 86%

of SERs on white defendants recommended non-custodial sentences. Only 42% of these were ignored.

In every case concerning a black defendant where no recommendation was made the defendant was sent to prison. In cases concerning white defendants where no recommendation was made only 57% were sent to prison.

The same survey found that the white defendants had a higher proportion of more serious offences compared with the black defendants.

In 1985 7.4% of West Indian/Guyanese/African and 6.3% of Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi defendants remanded in custody were subsequently acquitted compared with 3.6% of white prisoners. These figures indicate that black people are

more likely to be remanded in custody wrongly.

Home Office figures also show that black people sent to prison from July 1984 to March 1985 consistently had fewer convictions than their white counterparts. For burglary, for example, 46% of white prisoners had 11 or more previous convictions compared with 22% of West Indian or African prisoners and 7% of Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi prisoners.

At every level of the criminal justice system black people suffer racist discrimination. The NACRO report is a timely reminder of this reality. ■

## PRISONERS FUND

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! is the only newspaper which consistently covers the brutality and the fightback within the prisons. FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! goes into nearly 40 prisons in Britain, Ireland and throughout the world. Every month new prisoners write in to ask for the paper to be sent to them.

Each month it costs £66 to send our newspaper into prisoners. A subscription for a prisoner costs £7.50 and prisoners cannot afford to pay this. We are appealing to our readers to take out a subscription for a prisoner, or better still make a regular monthly contribution to our Prisoners Fund (please send for a standing order form)

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

# Revolutionary history

In a review of *Questions of History* (An Phoblacht/Republican News, 3 March 1988) Tom O'Dwyer wrote that production under prison conditions had 'seriously affected some of the book's conclusions'. In particular, he wrote, 'the curious theories of these political sects ["Stalinist and Trotskyist mini-groups"] figure all too often in the pages of *Questions of History*'. One of the major sources drawn on by the POWs was David Reed's *Ireland: the key to the British revolution*. Below, LAURENCE MCKEOWN, one of the POWs involved in producing the book, explains how and why *Questions of History* was written.

The best way to 'describe' or 'explain' *Questions of History* is to examine its origins and objectives. Those origins are to be found amongst the Republican POWs in the H-Blocks during the year 1985.

At this time the POWs were involved in constructing a comprehensive education programme. Such a programme would have to cover many different aspects of politics, economics and revolutionary struggle, but it was the general consensus amongst the POWs that what was of immediate necessity was an analysis of Irish history over the past two centuries - in essence, an analysis of the Republican struggle.

Three main themes were to be focused on in the main analysis: (1) the role of economic forces, (2) constitutional nationalism versus Revolutionary nationalism/Republicanism, and (3) the role of the Church. Each of these would assume greater or lesser importance depending on the specific historical period or topic in question.

Other factors which contributed to the 'format' of *Questions of History*

was the developing political consciousness of the POWs and the 'effect' this had on their organisational structures. The old-style lecture approach was regarded as being counter-productive, more inclined to dis-

courage people from educating themselves rather than encouraging. So the manner in which the original 'drafts' were written was influenced by the thoughts of how they would be utilised in practice.

That 'practice' was to take the form of small groups with someone to coordinate and stimulate discussion. The drafts would be passed around the five or six people to read, suggestions as to what books would be helpful in obtaining an understanding of the period would be listed and then the group would come together two or three times per week to discuss the points covered.

These drafts formed what was later



Dublin 1922: Anti-Treaty IRA Volunteers in the streets

to be put together as *Questions of History* - the original aim, however, was not to write a book.

Several people took on the task of preparing the papers and this no doubt will be detected from a close reading of the book. What must also be remembered is that the authors themselves were part of the process of development - not 'above' it or removed from it in some way and what they wrote was not meant to be the final word on the subject but rather to provide a basis from which to stimulate discussion. The lessons learnt from the production of, and discussion of, the original drafts have meant that the later ones are (hopefully) more professionally produced. However they will not cover every single aspect of Irish or Republican history, nor is that their intention.

The main lesson that Republicans will hopefully learn from a study of *Questions of History* is that we must examine our history in detail as many of the problems we encounter today have occurred previously in one form or another. The fact that such a book was published by the Sinn Fein Education Department is indicative of the growing concern within the Movement to analyse its history and the role it has played in the struggle for National Liberation and Socialism.

What makes *Questions of History* different from all other books written on Irish or Republican history is that it was written by (active though imprisoned) Republicans who have grown up and developed in the course of a protracted phase of struggle which is still ongoing. Hopefully it will assist in the pursuance of that struggle. ■

*Questions of History*, Irish Republican Prisoners of War. Sinn Fein Education Department. 1987. £2.50, 156pp.

## EXTRADITION:

# 'Don't hand them over'

With the release of Pat McVeigh on 13 June, the first test case under the revised procedures of the Extradition Act ended in an embarrassing defeat for the Irish and British governments. Mrs Thatcher, who has steadfastly refused to answer questions about Gibraltar on the grounds of not prejudicing legal proceedings in that case, immediately said she was 'utterly dismayed' by the Irish court's decision. Kinnock 'hoped for an outcome which will ensure even more effective action against terrorists or suspected terrorists'. Irish Justice Minister, Gerry Collins, intends to force the judge responsible for the release to explain his actions in the High Court. GARY CLAPTON reports.

The Judge freed McVeigh because the British government had failed to prove that McVeigh was the person named on the warrants. For sticking to the letter of the law he is being presented as a maverick. Yet it is the Twenty Six Counties government that is perverting its own legal system in order to hand people over to Britain on the basis of little or no evidence. The warrants against McVeigh, for example,

were vague and wide-ranging, some of the allegations covering a twenty-six month period when he was actually in prison.

The McVeigh release is the latest in a number of similar cases in which Irish courts have refused to grant extradition. In this they are reflecting the high degree of popular anger over the issue. Extradition has become a major political question in the South:

anti-extradition committees have sprung up, large marches have been held and prominent lawyers have spoken out against extradition. Knowledge of the systematic injustice of British courts towards Irish people fuels this campaign.

Extradition is a cornerstone of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the Haughey government is determined to force it through by any means necessary. Hence, even after Patrick McIntyre had been released by a court, he was forcibly detained. He is now on the run. After Paul Kane was released by a court, he was chased by police and driven off the road. His arrest gave the police enough time to get extradition warrants from the RUC. Four other people are in detention awaiting extradition. The US courts have also just ordered the deportation to Britain of Joseph Doherty. The fight against extradition will continue. ■



Unionist bigots: Molyneaux and Paisley

## Unionists block talks

MAXINE WILLIAMS

Unionist party leaders have put paid to speculation that they would be talking to Dublin in the near future. Both Molyneaux and Paisley have now said that the British and Southern Irish governments will have to do more to show they are prepared to jettison the Anglo-Irish Agreement before the Unionists will move towards constitutional talks.

The Unionists see the involvement of the Twenty Six Counties government as the thin end of a nationalist wedge designed to undermine their historic privileges. Only a return to Stormont-style government (with some very token concessions to the SDLP) can, they believe, safeguard loyalist privileges by ensuring continued discrimination against Catholics.

The strength of this view amongst loyalist workers was shown in the recent strike by workers at the loyalist Harland and Wolff shipyard. They were striking against British government and anti-discrimination measures. These measures will

alter nothing substantial for the nationalist population and are merely one of the British carrots accompanying the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

This is the nub of the tactical disagreement between the Unionists and the British government. The Unionists fail to understand that British strategy is not in any way aimed at undermining their privileges. On the contrary, it is aimed at shoring up the sectarian six county statelet on which these privileges are based. The British government believes that only by isolating the Republican Movement can the six counties be safeguarded. Hence their involvement with Haughey and the SDLP. The SDLP's talks with Sinn Fein also form part of this strategy. The SDLP is attempting to convince the nationalist people that serious concessions can be won by constitutional means.

The Unionists refuse to accept this. But their campaign against the Agreement has crumbled in the face of British intransigence. Their present posture is merely aimed at wringing concessions from Britain by other means. ■

## IRA attack

On Wednesday 16 June an IRA bomb killed six British soldiers in Lisburn. This is the largest number of soldiers killed in a single IRA operation since Warrenpoint in 1979.

The government and press claimed that the bomb risked high civilian casualties because it exploded after a 'fun run' in the town. In fact, as the IRA said, 'Every care was exercised by our volunteers to ensure minimum risk to the local popu-

lation'. Eight civilians received minor injuries.

The IRA operation has seriously worried the British Army because it showed meticulous planning and intelligence work and was carried out in a staunchly loyalist town where soldiers felt safe. As *An Phoblacht/Republican News* said: '... there is no safe haven anywhere in Ireland for those who wear the uniform of British imperialism'. ■



## Gibraltar: Cover-up continues

MAXINE WILLIAMS

The recent Downing Street announcement of the postponement of the inquest into the killing of the Gibraltar 3 came as a surprise to nobody... except the Gibraltar Coroner and the British Foreign Office. The Coroner's decision to postpone it was not made until five hours after No. 10's announcement.

The reason given for the postponement was a clash of security demands between the inquest and a local arts festival to be held at the same time. Yet the

Festival has never produced any problems or led to a single arrest! No new date has been fixed. The government has now said it is willing to let the SAS men testify at the inquest, but wants them behind screens and strictly limited in what questions they will answer.

The whole affair smacks of the weight of government pressure being brought to bear on the Gibraltar Coroner as it was on the British media investigating the murders. Probably the government wants the inquest to be as far in the future as possible, allowing potential witnesses and the public time to for-

get the events. Some commentators have also argued that the government would like the inquest to take place during the Parliamentary recess. If so it is certainly not because they have faced any serious questioning on the issue from the Labour Party. Only an opposition as patriotic and grotesquely ineffectual as Kinnock's Labour Party would have failed to seize on Thatcher's acute sensitivity about the Gibraltar issue. The British Cabinet has done murder but Messrs Kinnock & Co are too busy with their new-found nuclear love affair to notice or to care.

## Framed prisoners: action needed

PAUL McKINLAY/BOB SHEPHERD

The appalling pressure of being wrongly held in prison for fourteen years has had serious consequences for the health of the framed Irish prisoners. Latest victim of this is Patrick Armstrong, one of the Guildford 4, who has now suffered a nervous breakdown.

There is an urgent need for stepping up the public campaign for the framed prisoners. Unfortunately, the Birmingham 6 campaign has now decided to call off the national march planned for November. The march, due to be held in Bir-

mingham, was relentlessly attacked in the press. London campaign representatives spoke against transferring the march to London, saying that people would not come out and that anyway, the police would not allow it. This pessimistic view does not represent the feelings of thousands of supporters of the Birmingham 6 all over the country who have waited for an opportunity to display support since the Appeal was lost in January. With this support, police obstruction could be successfully opposed.

The huge support for the framed prisoners must be translated into visible ac-

tivities. It is good to hear that the North West Birmingham 6 Campaign has decided to hold a local march on 29 October as the culmination of its week of action. This will give supporters of the framed prisoners an opportunity to show their strength. FRFI calls on everyone to support this march. If the fight for the framed prisoners does not continue, other frame ups will take place. Already, in order to guarantee a conviction, the case of those charged with conspiring to kill Tom King has been assigned to Winchester Court, a court in a highly militarised garrison town. ■

## British/Loyalist murder links

BOB SHEPHERD

Recent events have exposed the links between the loyalist murder gangs, the RUC and British Army.

The loyalist gun gang that attacked the Avenue Bar in Belfast on 15 May, murdering three people and seriously injuring sixteen others, escaped with the collusion of the RUC and the British Army. Nearby a UDR patrol was manning a road checkpoint and RUC and British Army patrols were escorting a loyalist parade. A 'panic button' fitted in the bar with a direct line to the RUC was pressed when the first shots were fired. The RUC, supposed to respond within thirty seconds, did not arrive for twenty minutes. Since 1971 over 140 people

have been murdered in loyalist attacks on nationalist pubs and clubs.

On 24 May Joanne Garvin, a soldier in the UDR and Cameron Hastie, a soldier in the Royal Scots Regiment, were charged in court in Belfast with passing photographs and information about suspected republicans to loyalists. Earlier two other members of the UDR were in courts charged with firearms offences. They were arrested near where two arms caches were found. One of the caches was in the Clough Orange Hall.

At 1.30am on 18 May the RUC were called to Blacks Road, Belfast, and told that the nationalist residents suspected a bomb had been planted at the back of their houses. The RUC said the area was safe. An hour later the bomb exploded. ■

**'SOME PEOPLE SAY "CAN YOU GUARANTEE WE'RE GOING TO WIN?". I SAY I CAN GUARANTEE THIS, YOU'RE GOING TO LOSE IF YOU DON'T FIGHT BACK.'**



Ron Brown

What's your response to the story that you were caught in a shower with a woman?

Ron Brown: The story doesn't stand up but once it was started it was used in all sorts of ways against me. It was cobbled together by MPs and certain journalists. I can't say for certain it was Labour MPs but I know that I've got enemies in this place. People are supposed to come here as representatives of the working class but obviously the temptation to represent big business is there because the money is good, very good.

At the PLP meeting that was held to judge me I attacked those in the party who were in the pockets of big business, who wrote articles for Fleet Street and who indeed, by doing so, were breaking party policy. I can understand their motives for having a go at me.

Even if it were true being in a shower with a woman. Or if it was two males in there. There's nothing wrong with that. It's hypocrisy to suggest that the morality of the 1880s should prevail today.

I'm told that as an inducement for information sums of £2,000 were offered just to look through the mail. May [Ron Brown's wife] herself was approached. They thought she was just a neighbour. She was offered £10,000 for stories about Ron Brown. She said she was not interested. £10,000 was the going rate. Mrs Longdon [the woman who was alleged to be in the shower] was offered £35,000 and if she did a photograph, £45,000. You know the old motto of the Murdoch press 'Make it short, make it juicy, make it up'.

**Leith Labour Party passed a motion of censure against you on Monday.**

RB: The motion was put by Derek Wilson, an ex-member of the SWP. It censured me for not giving an appropriate apology. Others waded in to attack me. Most of those individuals were ex-members of other left-wing organisations. It's interesting that they should take up this ultra-conservative line that they are now true believers in tradition, ritual and the monarchy.

I do believe in unity of the left but clearly they don't. They showed all their sectarian prejudices at the meeting. They used a document supplied that evening by the Chief Whip. There are many factors in that document which are clearly untrue. And I'm supposed to reply to that at about a minute's notice. I produced a letter from one of the senior clerks which stated that my voting record was above average and superior to most of

**Since FRFI 78 the attack on Ron Brown has gathered pace. The major protagonists have been Labour Party members undoubtedly acting with the full backing of Neil Kinnock. The Ron Brown affair proves that those who defend the people fighting back will be attacked relentlessly by the Labour Party and trade union leadership. It also underlines the urgent necessity for all progressive forces to defend people like Ron Brown when they come under such attack. RON BROWN spoke to TERRY O'HALLORAN and LORNA REID at the House of Commons on Thursday 16 June.**

the front bench spokesmen.

It doesn't go on to say why I am absent from this place. In here we can do the ritual dance up and down the stairs knowing full well that the Tories are going to win the votes. It's important to speak up from time to time but it's more important to be outside, to be at the various meetings, to be at the factory gates, street corners, to be where the working class is.

Many of them don't do that. In fact the new image coming out of Kinnock's office is not to be identified with workers in struggle, to try and create this middle of the road, middle class party which is going to win the next general election. That's a recipe for disaster. Kinnock should realise that an SDP type organisation has been tested before. If he's going to try a mark two version that's not going to work either.

The motion of censure means nothing because I'm not going to change my views. I'm not going to be some tame poodle who jumps to the tune of certain people.

The people who supported me were all the trade union delegates. They know you could sit in here all day, in the Strangers' Bar or wherever, getting pissed out of your mind, going up and down the stairs voting. I don't see myself as a professional MP. I see myself as a shop steward writ large.

**But isn't there a problem that the working class itself is divid-**

**ed? Isn't Kinnock seeking to appeal to the better off sections of the working class rather than stand with the people who are suffering the most?**

RB: In the 30s certain sections of the working class did benefit as well. Although the vast majority did suffer, just as today. If you look at Britain you do see many workers, particularly young workers, with no job, no hope, no future.

You see older workers as well, particularly former industrial workers, thrown onto the scrap heap. Even those workers who have done reasonably well hate the Tories. You can sense a feeling against the Tories even among the middle class. The Tory vote has plummeted in Scotland and I'm sure that's true about Merseyside, the North East and so forth.

People are fed up with this authoritarian government, with the erosion of civil liberties, with the insulting comments by Mrs Thatcher.

Unemployed workers have no representation whatsoever and we have to have some means of linking up the employed and the unemployed, tenants' organisations, even rate payers' organisations, youth, pensioners. Perhaps we should be thinking of setting up Councils of Action.

We see that developing, in a form, in Scotland just now, in the anti-Poll Tax Unions. Whether it becomes a mass movement I'm not sure. But the signs are looking good at the mo-

# The Commons is a ritual dance

ment. I think many people will understand very quickly what class law means when the Poll Tax is introduced.

**At the Socialist Conference we successfully argued for the Conference to organise an Action Against the Poll Tax Conference in the autumn. We said that the Poll Tax was the basis for unity in the working class because it affects every working class family.**

RB: In the coming period we've got to make it quite clear that we say 'Don't pay the tax'. Up to now the official leadership are simply hedging. In Scotland there's a recall conference coming up in September and along with, sadly only two other Labour MPs out of 50, I've been arguing don't pay the tax at all. It will be interesting to see what pressure we can build up on the official leadership.

I think in Britain, if we had a united front and that involves different organisations, not just Labour Party organisations, mobilising around the fight back against this particularly nasty class law, we could give the Tories a hell of a beating.

Some people say 'Can you guarantee we're going to win?'. I say I can guarantee this, you're going to lose if you don't fight back.

**Already in Scotland there are Labour councils setting up the machinery to implement the tax.**

RB: I think these councillors, many of them claim to be on the left, should put action where their mouth is. It's all very well to pass motions condemning the Tories but their role is to oppose this legislation. They shouldn't be encouraging officials and employees to do the dirty work for the Tories. By doing so they're incriminated as well.

It's pointless being a representative, a councillor or MP or whatever, if you're willing to bend the knee to a Tory state machine that's out to destroy the working class. If they want to be leaders then they should lead.

**At the Socialist Conference one of the arguments we came up against, most repetitively put by the SWP, was that the whole thing should be left to the trade unions. Given your experience in Scotland how do you see that?**

RB: I don't see any movement being successful unless it's broad based. It has to involve all the sections of the working class and, indeed, even people who regard themselves as middle class. It has also to be given a socialist orientation.

I don't think we can fudge it as though there was no politics.

That's always been a disaster. We've got to sensibly say we agree that this movement has to be organised according to certain principles. That could bring in a lot of activists from all sorts of groups and parties. That would give inspiration to the working class, particularly those who are not represented in trade unions: the unemployed, the youth, the pensioners and so forth.

I hope that this would develop so that you do see working class people together and also saying to their leaders 'You've got to be identified with us'. We should be saying clearly and categorically that 'You don't pay. You resist to the full. You ask trade unions to support you, you ask councillors to support you, you ask MPs to support you.'

**At the Socialist Conference Eric Heffer was adamant that the Labour Party could be transformed into a socialist party. Hilary Wainwright said she wasn't sure whether that socialist party would be a transformed Labour Party or a new socialist party. What's your view on that?**

RB: There are signs of almost a separate Labour Party led by Kinnock as another SDP type organisation. That may take a lot of MPs away from the concept of a socialist left wing party. It may mean that those who are com-

mitted to that would have to think their position out and perhaps form a separate party. I'm never one to give in to right wingers.

I think the left are correct in challenging for the principles of the party so the campaign on the leadership should go ahead. Kinnock in his statements regarding unilateral disarmament and other things simply means that he wants to get to Downing Street at any cost.

**What do you think about Denzil Davies' resignation?**

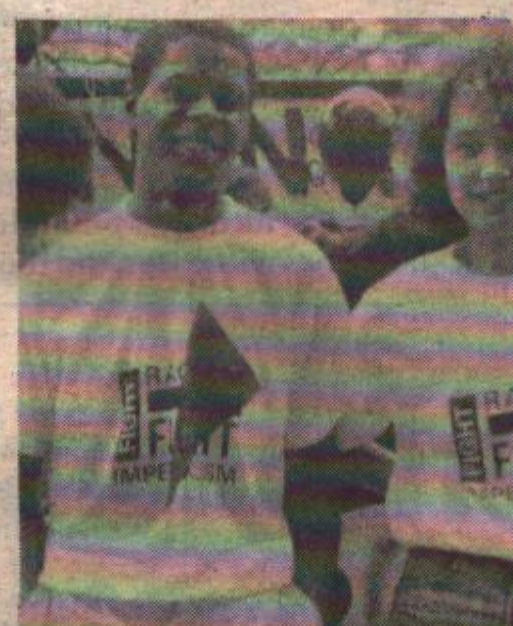
RB: If your leader doesn't come up and explain the shift in policy it makes you feel a fool. Denzil, who is not a left winger, decided that he had had enough. I admire him for that.

A lot of party members, even middle of the road MPs, are apprehensive. They think the policy review is going to be a political disaster, something that can't be sold to the working class. Maybe it'll look good on telly and the Fleet Street editors will clap but they represent the ruling class.

Keir Hardie said if you're ever praised by the Tory press you can't be doing your job politically for the working class. I think Kinnock should remember that. He's getting praised by the ruling class and the Tory press because he's carrying out their function.

## FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! SPECIAL FUND DRIVE

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# LETTERS

## NAMIBIAN WORKERS IN STRUGGLE

A Working Conference for Trade Union Activists  
**SPEAKERS**  
 National Union of Namibian Workers  
 Ron Todd  
 (General Secretary TGWU)  
 Rita Donaghy  
 (Vice President NALGO)  
 Women Against Pit Closures  
 SWAPO

Sponsored by: AAM, ASLEF, FBU, GMB, NALGO, NUJ, NUPE, TGWU, TUC.

**GRAVES CINEMA UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD**  
 Saturday 25 June • 9.30-5.00pm  
 Creche • Social  
 Registration: £5 delegates, £2.00 waged individuals, £0.50 unwaged. (Please state number of children when registering).

Organised by the  
**Namibia Support Committee**  
 PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW  
 Tel 01 267 1941/2

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**South Africa: Britain out of Apartheid! Apartheid out of Britain!** by Carol Brickley, Terry O'Halloran and David Reed. 64pp, 95p plus 30p p&p

**Viraj Mendis Must Stay!** Published by VMDC edited by Terry O'Halloran 32pp, 75p plus 30p p&p

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## Join the action join the RCG

- Take the side of all those struggling against imperialism - **Join the RCG!**
- A movement must be built in Britain in solidarity with the struggling peoples of Ireland, South Africa, Palestine, Central America. Help us to do this - **Join the RCG!**
- A movement must be built here in Britain which stands with the oppressed fighting racism, repression and poverty. Help us build this movement - **Join the RCG!**
- A movement must be built which challenges and defeats the treachery of the opportunist leaders of Britain's Labour and trade union movement - **Join the RCG!**

I wish to join/receive more information about the RCG

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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Return to: FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

## Men in drag

We, the North West Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Equality feel your photo accompanying your article on 'Section 28' was not the most representative one to use.

To show a man dressed in drag is an image which is particularly offensive to most women and to some men. It is not a positive image of lesbians and gay men working together to overcome Section 28.

There are many photographs you could have used to capture the spirit of the march in London - we are facing oppression enough without an organisation such as yours adding to it. Your faithfully,  
 JOANNE LOVE  
 Press Officer, NWCLGE

*I am a gay man and I do not dress in women's clothes, but I am not about to disown those who do. Are you saying you don't want transvestites on 'your' marches? Where do these proscriptions end? Lesbians in trousers and leather jackets? We must challenge all aspects of sexism and racism in drag acts on the scene and in gay men as a whole but this is not the same as disowning transvestites, transsexuals or men who dress in women's clothes just because we do not think they present 'a positive image of lesbians and gay men'. The man in our photograph knows who the enemy is and clearly identifies her. The NWCLGE has done a brilliant job mobilising the lesbian and gay community but we won't win our rights by trying to act and look as respectable as possible. Nor did it help the cause when a press statement was issued thanking the police after the march in Manchester. This was an insult to all of us, lesbian, gay and straight, who have been arrested and assaulted by the police.*  
 RICHARD ROQUES

## Whither Glasnost

Collectivisation may have ruined agriculture but it helped industrialisation. Newman suggests industrial planning was a colossal success. Achieving growth whilst improving living standards. He tells us of the 7 hour day but not the 6 day week 1 day off 5 on (Nove p191). He does not tell us what happened to wages. In 1937 there was a 35% increase in real income over 1935 but that figure was 85% or perhaps as little as 58% of the 1928 NEP figure. In the early 30s figures would have been much worse. Such a reduction in workers' living standards could only be achieved because they had no independent bodies to defend them.

Such power over workers and peasants is a powerful reason why Russia achieved a rate of growth greater than any market economy. The 'plan' is shorthand for the orders of the inner party elite around Stalin dictating to society ('the command economy' to use Gorbachev's phrase).

This system prides itself on the growth which it says saved Russia in the war. Now as 75% of the Soviet arms industry was soon in occupied Russia (p454 Deutscher Stalin) that in itself is not convincing. But the power of the centre to ration resources, built up in the 1930s was crucial. Thus defence moved from 15% of NNP to 55%. Wages by contrast fell to 40% of the 1940 figure - ie to a 1/4-1/3 of the last NEP figures in 1928. In UK wages rose with full employment in the war. Clearly patriotism and idealism made it easier to impose such staggering cuts but the crucial factor was the

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machine trained to impose them.

Crucial too the stupid ferocity of the Nazi enemy which gloated at the death of 20-30m Russians and would not give back their farms to the peasantry (Mann *History of Germany* p782).

40 years on the industrial-military machine is substantially in place serving a military-bureaucratic elite. But the machine is faltering. It cannot extract growth. It falls behind technologically. Living standards remain low whilst defence takes 20% of NNP (US figure quoted in Russian journal). A sign of the Russian malaise is the unique - to the industrialised world - decline in life expectancy. Gorbachev calls this 'a pre-crisis situation'. Production at the expense of consumption as in 30s/40s is not an option politically. He proposes 'From a predominantly centralised command system of management to a democratic system... based on optimal combination of centralism and self management.'

These would be big changes. The bureaucrats, defence industries stand to lose a lot. So too might the party which has ruled with a monopoly on power for most of 70 years. They are uneasy; opposed to democracy not self-management. But Gorbachev too is uncertain on the relation of democracy and party or between the nations inside the Soviet Union. But if he does not produce more democracy it is unlikely he will get the support of the masses to oppose the bureaucratic elite he fights. It should be clear socialists should support democratisation not resist it.

Fraternally,  
 JOHN HALES  
 London

## Support for seafarers

On Saturday 21 May members of City of London Anti-Apartheid Group went to Dover to join the NUS strike march and rally. From the moment we got the City AA banner out we found that we were attacked by different sections of people on the march.

Firstly we had NUS members condemning us for supporting a 'terrorist' like Mandela. We also had a few AAM supporters calling us opportunists and trying to create a division in the AAM, as if we had nothing else to do. Apart from these people we held the City Group banner high and marched to the Port gates.

As we marched we were cheered on by strikers showing solidarity with the black South African masses. Where was the

AAM banner? Where were the anti-racist, women's and all minority groups' banners?

There should have been more black and anti-racist groups and all oppressed sections of the working class taking part in the march and the strike to show the NUS strikers that all the oppressed sections of the working class must be united in the fight against the bosses who own P&O. At the end of the day we made lots of new contacts for the surround the embassy demonstration on 16 June.  
 Yours in struggle  
 PAOLO COWAN  
 London

## Rights for non-smokers in prison

Would you please inform all non-smokers that a guidance has been prepared by the Home Office. To quote from a letter I received from the Earl of Caithness via Joe Ashton MP in February 1987: 'I am very keen that we should do all we can to extend prisoner opportunities to enjoy a smoke-free environment, and you will be glad to know that we are preparing guidance to governors and medical officers to that end.'

That guidance will encourage governors to give favourable consideration to requests to be located in a smoke free cell where such a course is judged to be practicable in the circumstances of the case and taking into account local conditions.'

The major fault with this guidance is it is at the governors/doctors' discretion.

This information has been published in the press; why are non-smokers wallowing in smoke filled environments?

Get off your apathetic backsides and apply to be moved to a non-smoking environment. If you are refused, write to Caithness via your own MP or Joe Ashton MP.

Do not accept the 'over-crowding' argument. It's a nonsense. It is an easy task to provide no smoking cells. It is quite feasible that the stumbling block (discretion) can be removed and a non-smoking environment can become a basic human right for the incarcerated.  
 DESMOND JOHN GREEN  
 HMP Frankland

## Iraq bolstered by US intervention

Since 18 April when the US attacked and destroyed six Iranian ships, supposedly in retaliation for the holing of a US warship by

an Iranian mine, Iraq has made spectacular progress in the war against Iran.

There are serious reversals for the Khomeini regime and there is no doubt that it has been the level of US backing for Iraq which has turned the tide in the 8 year old conflict. US claims to be in the Gulf to protect shipping and uphold the peace are simply propaganda. The US have in fact given crucial aid since 1 July last year when the US fleet entered the Gulf. Since then they have destroyed or debilitated a third of the Iranian navy and US AWAC surveillance planes have supplied Iraq with vital information on Iranian movements. Reagan has also been exerting strong pressure internationally to isolate Iran.

As communists we must make it clear that this war has never been purely a local dispute between Iran and Iraq, but has played an integral part in US and European policy in the region.

We must therefore call for an end to the war, an end to arms sales to both regimes and an end to imperialist interference in the region. This does not mean that we call for support for Iran and the reactionary Khomeini regime in the war but that the best way to support the working class in both Iran and Iraq which faces intense repression under both regimes is to attack the war itself and its imperialist backers. As long as the war continues it will continue to give Khomeini and Hussein a hold over the masses which will hinder the building of popular resistance  
 ANDY PACEY

## Bogus 'Campaign for Palestinian Rights'

Some leaflets have recently been circulated bearing the name of the 'Campaign for Palestinian Rights'. We had not heard of this organisation before...

It has now emerged that this group has been set up by the National Front. In the April issue of *National Front News* it is claimed that the 'CPR' is a broad organisation.

*NFN* does not name any of the organisations or individuals involved, so that we have no evidence at present that this is anything more than the NF under another name. Either way, it is an organisation which no genuine supporter of the Palestinian people's liberation struggle will welcome.

There is a genuine co-ordinating organisation of pro-Palestinian groups, called the Interim Joint Committee for Palestine. If the NF ever asked to join that group, it would be rejected by all participants. But by claiming that the 'CPR' is a broad front, it is giving ammunition to those who would seek to discredit the solidarity movement in Britain by hinting (as a *Daily Telegraph* article did on May 17th) that genuine solidarity organisations are working alongside the NF.

The PLO seeks a non-racist solution to the Palestine problem, and as a solidarity group, PSC has always opposed racism and fascism.

We appeal to you to publicise the facts about the true character of the 'CPR', so that anyone who may be approached to support it will be warned about what lies behind the innocuous sounding title.

Yours in solidarity,  
 JOHN GEE  
 Palestine Solidarity Campaign  
 London

## REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST GROUP

Regular supporters groups to discuss the politics of the Revolutionary Communist Group.

Phone 01-837 1688 for details or write to RCG, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

## DUNDEE RCG

Supporters Group  
 Thursday 30 June 8pm,  
 DASS Offices, High Street,  
 Dundee.

For details of future meetings write to Dundee FRFI, PO Box 27, Dundee DG1 9DR

## NUS STRIKE

### MARCH AND RALLY

Wednesday 29 June,  
 Assemble 12 Noon  
 Speakers Corner

March to Pall Mall for picket of P&O

## TURKEY

MARCH  
 against the visit of  
 GENERAL EVREN OF TURKEY  
 to Britain

Saturday 2 July.  
 Assemble 2pm  
 Speakers Corner

## MANCHESTER RCG

### PEOPLE AGAINST THE POLL TAX

Tuesday 26 July 7.30pm  
 Church of the Ascension,  
 Royce Road, Hulme,  
 Manchester

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# FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!



## ON THE MARCH FOR VIRAJ

2500 people took to the streets of Manchester on Saturday 28 May for the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign's national demonstration. **SIMONE DEWHURST** and **SARAH RICCA** report.

At the opening rally as the crowds gathered, speakers included Mr Maharasingham of the Tamil Action Committee; Rev Ken Leech, Director of the Runnymede Trust; Kuomba Balogun of the National Black Caucus; Louise for the North West Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Equality; Eddie Newman MEP; David Kitson; Sharon Raghip and Walter Silcott, relatives of the framed Broadwater 3; Ken Strath from the Manchester City Council and Richard Riques for City AA.

### Reverend Ken Leech, Director of Runnymede Trust

'Around the Church of the Ascension as around a number of other groups a real culture of resistance has grown up ...'

### LTTE

'We pledge our unrelenting support to the progressive forces like the RCG to prevent the deportation of Comrade Viraj Mendis. Further I declare here that the legitimate and noble cause of our people supported by Comrade Viraj... will eventually be victorious...'

Led by banners from the VMDC and the Revolutionary Communist Group were religious organisations and the London Branch of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam followed by 50 other contingents. People donated over £700 to the campaign. 180 people

also gave their names and addresses. The RCG sold 300 copies of FRFI.

Concluding the demonstration was a rally addressed by a representative of the LTTE, Father John Methuen, Rector of the Church of the Ascension, Eddie Abrahams for the RCG and Viraj himself. The crowds exploded into thunderous applause, cheers and whistling as Viraj appeared from behind the church wall. Hundreds raised their fists, cheered and some wept to see the man for whom they had marched. Viraj thanked the demonstrators and called on them to return home and organise. ■

### Eddie Abrahams for the RCG

'The VMDC has shown that despite the retreat of the official labour and trade union movement, a serious fight against Thatcher can be built.'

### Viraj Mendis

'I am not asking you to give your lives to this struggle... I am just asking that you give a little of your time to be part of this campaign, to help organise our fight against the Home Office. The Tigers held off the Indian Army, we can surely defeat the Home Office.'

### Father John Methuen

'It is irrelevant to me and to the people of this church whether Viraj has been in sanctuary for one day, 500 days or 5000 days. Our commitment to him remains the same.'

# APPEAL JUDGEMENT

# VIRAJ

## the fight goes on

'They are saying that I have lost. This is not true. All that has happened is, not unexpectedly, the High Court has rejected my appeal against deportation. But the fight will go on with greater strength and determination because I know I have the people on my side. The solidarity demonstrations here at the sanctuary, in London and indeed throughout Europe from ordinary working class people to Bishops, Churches, MPs, and other personalities is a victory which we will build on to win my fight to stay here. And the fact is we can win and are going to win.'

Viraj Mendis, 17 June 1988

### Eddie Abrahams

No one who has followed the racist and undemocratic judicial process of Viraj's appeal against his deportation was surprised by the dismissal of his appeal on 17 June. Once again the judges refused to consider any of the real evidence showing that Viraj's life would be in danger in Sri Lanka and failed to take into account the fact that he has lived in Britain all his adult life. The VMDC is now taking the case to the House of Lords.

Home Secretary Douglas Hurd expressed his 'delight' at rejection of the appeal. With the confidence and arrogance of someone who knew the courts would uphold his position he pretended to be the sporting English gentleman at the end of a jolly fair fight:

'I said I'd abide by anything the court said and I hope that he [Viraj Mendis] will too. The next step should be for him and his friends to draw the right conclusions. He has fought it all the way through. He has put his case in the British courts, he's had a fair hearing and now he should go.'

### Bishop of Manchester

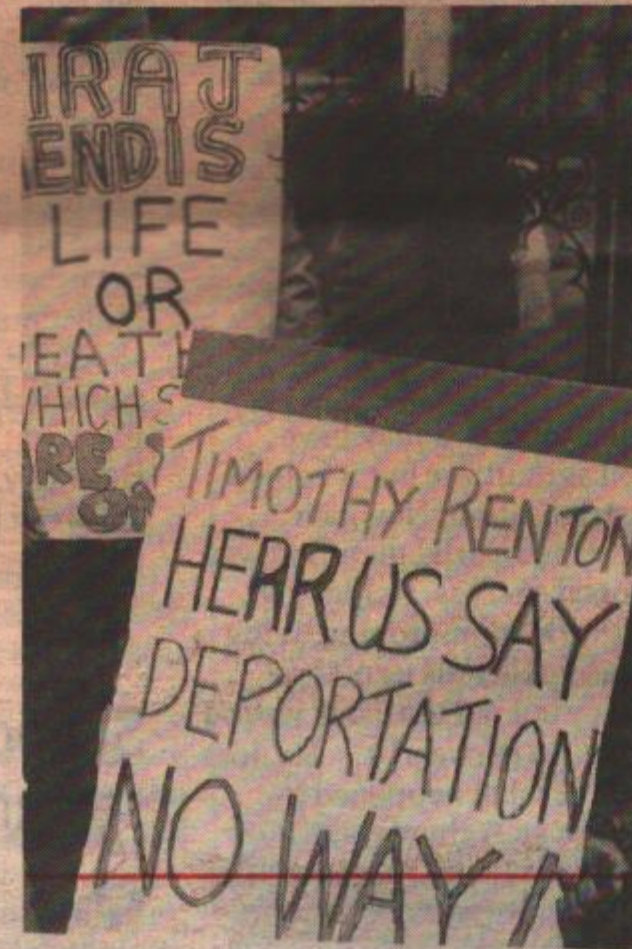
'It remains my firm belief that in the present troubled situation on the island of Sri Lanka, his safety would be at risk if he were to be deported. I still hope that the Home Secretary will use his discretion and allow him to remain in Britain on compassionate grounds.'

The VMDC has never placed reliance on the British courts which exist to serve their ruling class masters to enforce Britain's racist immigration laws. Viraj Mendis will not go. With the backing of thousands of people, in Britain, Europe and elsewhere, the VMDC has successfully resisted the Home Office for the past 18 months. It is with their support that the fight to save Viraj's life will continue.

After the 10 May hearings, the Home Office stated that if the appeal went against Viraj they 'would enforce the deportation order as soon as possible.' The Home Office has been forced to retreat on this. Following the

appeal judgement Minister for Deportations Renton declared:

'We will not take any action to remove him from the UK whilst waiting to hear whether the Lords are going to hear his appeal or not.'



'I think that now is the time for the Home Secretary to exercise his discretionary powers to announce that no further action will be taken to return Viraj Mendis to Sri Lanka where it is clear his life would be in danger.'

But Renton is still threatening to raid the Church and throw Viraj into a British prison:

'But we have always reserved the right to secure the removal of anyone who when liable to be detained under the immigration acts, has taken refuge in a church or chapel.'

This threat can be defeated. The hundreds of people who assembled at the sanctuary, ready to defend it, on the day of the appeal verdict, have shown the fighting spirit with which the next challenge will be met. The VMDC is organising a major weekend of national action on 29/30 July and in September it will organise a massive national conference to bring together all the fighting anti-deportation campaigns and those forces who

### European churches support Viraj

On the day of the appeal judgement there were church services and prayers for Viraj across Europe. In Gronigen supporters held a 12 hour vigil while church services were held in Rome, Brussels, Geneva, Rotterdam, Berlin and Bremen. Throughout Holland 50 convents said prayers for Viraj.

### Support from the Bishop of Namibia

On 16 June 1988 marking the anniversary of the 1976 Soweto Uprising the bishop of Namibia visited Viraj's sanctuary and expressed his solidarity with the words 'May God's victory and protection be upon you'.

are supporting the emerging sanctuary movement. The VMDC has always said that it is fighting not only for Viraj but for all black people threatened by racist laws. With the new Immigration Act becoming law in the near future, it is vital for everyone to join in the VMDC in the next stage of its struggle. ■

### The people come out for Viraj

While 50 supporters picketed the High Court in London, 300 joined a defiant all day demonstration outside the Church. It was a show of strength to warn the Home Office that any attempt to snatch Viraj from the sanctuary would meet solid working class community resistance.

Black taxi drivers and their friends from Hulme and Moss Side said they would stay all day in case the police did anything. A young working class couple from Gorton rushed to the Church saying 'It's about time we did something because it's going to be us next.' A woman came to tell Viraj that she had received letters from her imprisoned brother Patrick asking 'how is my brother Viraj?'. Two black youths who had visited the Church a few days before were there with their friends. ■

### Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign JOIN US

For further information contact: VMDC, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Hulme, Manchester M15 5AL. (Tel: 061-234 3168)