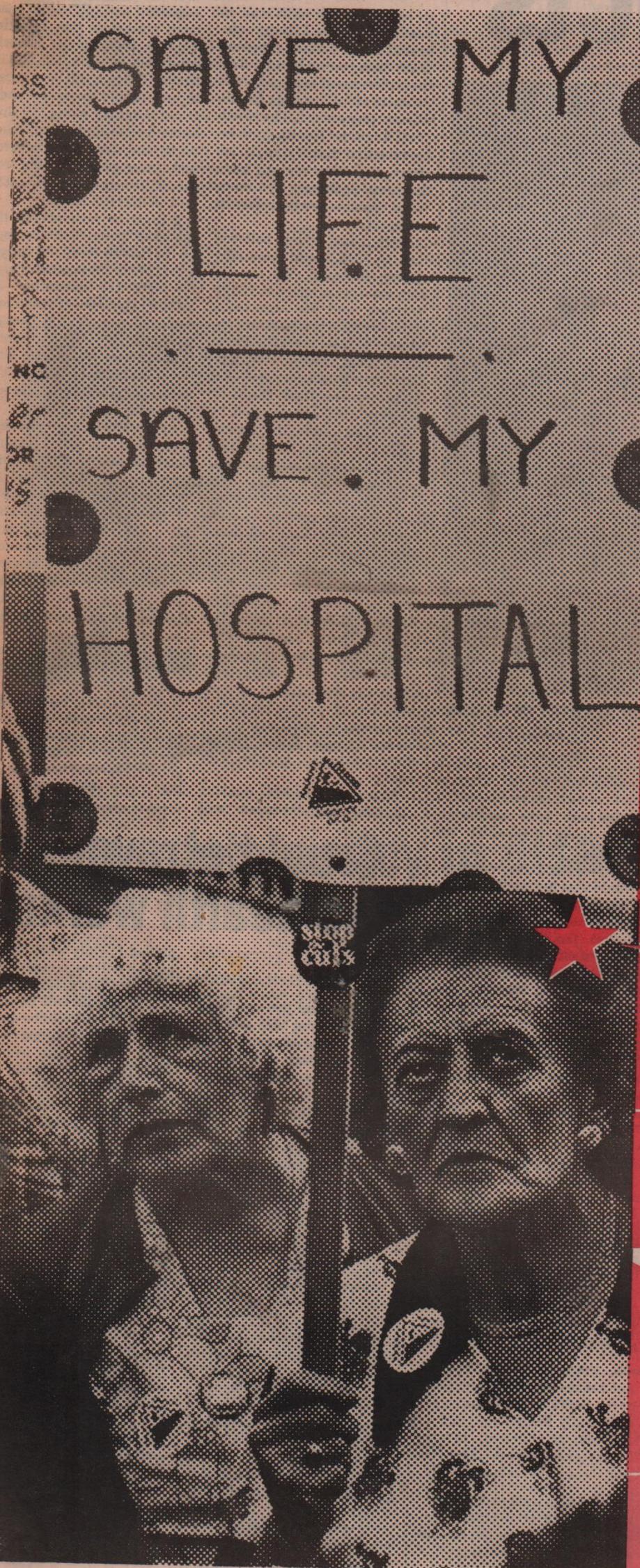


FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Revolutionary Communist Group

Number 80 August 1988

(unwaged 20p) 40p



... every citizen has the inalienable right to obtain exhaustive and authentic information on any question of public life that is not a state or military secret and the right to open and free discussion of any socially significant issue ...

The law must firmly protect the citizen's personal dignity, the inviolability of his home, the privacy of his correspondence, telephone conversations etc.

In the process of reform of retail prices it is imperative to proceed firmly from the principle that the change in prices should cause no harm to the living standards of the people

In the next five years we are going to have two and a half times as much finance available for hospital construction, and two and a half times as much for current expenditure

Any disclosure at all by serving or past members of the security forces will be an offence. Any disclosure at all of telephone tapping will be an offence. Any disclosure at all of information obtained in confidence from other governments or international organisations will be an offence

'Shooting may be justified as a method of arrest'

Anyone who still doubts the reality of the Poll Tax should note that a working class family in Glasgow with two school leavers at home will pay £1500 per year. The Queen however will save an estimated £330,000 a year

'This being my tenth anniversary in solitary, it is a record in British penal history ... It is a record of man's inhumanity to man imposed upon me by a barbaric prison regime.'

DEMOCRACY EAST & WEST

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THE CLEVELAND CHILD ABUSE REPORT

A hue and cry to disguise the facts

MAXINE WILLIAMS

The furore about the Cleveland child sex abuse scandal has done little to explain the causes of abuse or to help its victims. The terms of the debate precluded this. After all, the 'scandal' arose not because of social anger that children were being abused but because social agencies had - however inadequately - tried to deal with the problem. The motives of those who leapt most readily to attack the doctors and social workers and defend 'innocent' families are deeply suspect. Stuart Bell MP, the tabloid press and various right wing politicians have seemed more concerned to deny the existence of abuse than to discuss its causes and cure.

This is not surprising. The family, particularly the rights and powers of fathers, is a potent symbol for reactionaries in Britain. Stuart Bell talks long and loud of 'witchhunted' parents but is silent about the father who, having joined Bell's Parents Support Group, was found (according to Bea Campbell in the *New Statesman & Society*) to have a history of abuse and to have sexually penetrated both his children. The right wing papers that championed Bell and the parents are the same newspapers that print titillating photographs of scarcely adult young women.

They undoubtedly prefer to ignore the fact that of the 118 children removed from home in Cleveland, 70% were taken either because the family or the courts accepted there was cause for concern about abuse. 26 of the 118 children were determined by the courts to have been removed in error.

This figure means that in the majority of cases Dr Higgs and the Social Services had good cause for worry. Higgs, presented as villain of the piece, was found by the Butler-Sloss In-



STUART BELL MP
A campaign to hide the issues

quiry not to have routinely examined children for signs of abuse, as her attackers claimed. At most she placed an exaggerated importance on one diagnostic technique. Neither she nor under-trained and overworked social workers could be blamed for what followed.

Bell and the media were more ready to believe the police surgeon who Butler-Sloss found 'confused and confusing'. He and his police colleagues were reluctant to admit that abuse was taking place at all. Bell & Co were clearly more concerned to protect fathers and the institution of the family than to face facts. They portrayed a sinister

1984 type bureaucracy heartlessly wrecking families. There are indeed powerful factors and interests which destroy family life - but they are not, on the whole, social services departments. What are the facts?

Fact no 1: recent research indicates that as many as one in ten children suffer sexual abuse. It is a growing social problem not only in Britain but also in West Germany and the USA. As the vast majority of abusers are men, there are a large number of men abusing children.

Fact no 2 is that these men's power to abuse children is related to the wider social issue of the lack of women's rights and equality. Often women cannot escape from violent and abusive partners.

Fact no 3 is that if women have few rights, children have none. They are seen as the property of the family, particularly the father. Their problems are rarely socially discussed, they suffer a deteriorating education system, a lack of social care and of young people's organisations.

Fact no 4 is that relations between men, women and children are poisoned by these social inequalities and oppressive relationships which lie at the heart of capitalist society.

Fact no 5 is that sexuality, particularly male sexuality, is deeply affected by this situation. A multi-million pound pornography industry exists to pander to the grosser aspects of male perversity.

Fact no 6 is that cuts in social expenditure have worsened the situation for those most in need - 600 'at risk' children in London have no social work supervision. Where are the refuges to which women can go in an emergency? Or the facilities through which the abuser, not the child, can be removed and the whole family given intensive help? They simply do not exist.

So why no outcry about all this? Why no determined effort to discuss these issues? Why no



DR MARIETTA HIGGS
The villain of the piece?

co-ordinated national effort to start to solve these problems? To provide both rights and resources to make it possible for women and children to live in security? Because, quite simply, it would cost too much in terms of money and social upheaval. Better to keep the status quo in which the family is portrayed as a haven of safety and Britain as a society which cares for its children. Tell that to the three year old diagnosed with gonorrhoea in Cleveland. Or the thousands of others suffering in silence. Thanks in part to the hue and cry whipped up by reactionaries about Cleveland they must simply suffer on. ■

DAVE BURTON

In July 1988 the NHS was 40 years old. While Labour celebrated and Tories repeated their 'safe in our hands' lies, the government reneged on its promise of full funding for the nurses' pay award. The North West Regional Health Authority revealed that it was £3.3m short, and other regions have the same problems. Yet more ward closures are therefore in prospect.

In 1948 it was widely believed that the NHS would eventually abolish ill-health. Yet now in depressed areas infant mortality is rising, and life expectancy shortening. Death rates for unemployed men are 21% above the national average. Hospitals are dirty and decaying, and staff morale is rock bottom. The Black report of 1980 - suppressed by the Tories - showed massive health inequalities between rich and poor: and the gap continues to widen.

So what went wrong? Despite Roy Hattersley's recent description of the NHS as an 'indestructible' socialist institution, today's problems stem from inherent flaws. In setting up the NHS, Labour Health Minister Aneurin Bevan collaborated with the powerful British Medical Association (BMA). Their acceptance of the NHS was bought with control of the hospital system, retention of private medicine, and lucrative 'merit awards'. In his own words, Bevan 'stuffed the consultants' mouths with gold'.

As a result, the NHS remains curative, hospital-based and

open to commercial exploitation and privatisation. Preventive health programmes were neglected and individual treatment promoted, thus breaking the link between the material conditions of capitalism and ill-health. The rich still have access to preferential treatment and a two-tier system along US lines seems increasingly likely. Suppliers and drug manufacturers make ever greater profits from the NHS: drugs now account for 10% of the NHS budget.

It must be remembered that the attack on the NHS was begun by the Labour Party. As early as 1951 Labour introduced charges for teeth and spectacles. The 1974-9 Labour government reintroduced prescription charges, preparing the ground for a 1,200% increase under Thatcher. Denis Healey's 1976 'Year of Cuts' slashed £6 billion from the welfare budget.

Reformists - like Hattersley - argue that 'socialist' organisations can exist within capitalism. Marxists understand that the state - including its welfare functions - is an instrument of class rule, not reconciliation. Capitalist welfare, including the NHS, is therefore inevitably structured to serve the interests of the ruling class. The fight to defend the real material gains the NHS has brought to the working class is therefore part of the struggle against capitalism and all its friends. ■

● In July the House of Lords rejected government proposals to impose charges for eye tests and dental checks. However, the government has made it clear that it will attempt to reimpose these charges in the Commons.

Cruel betrayal for NHS health workers

GORDON TEAL

In April, to end the campaign in defence of the NHS and buy time for the government, John Moore, Secretary of State for Social Services, told nurses that they would receive an average pay rise of 15.3%, with some nurses getting up to 60%. Nurses will receive no such thing.

NHS domestic workers had already been told that they would have to work harder for lower pay and that their pensions were under threat. It was a bit much to think that things would be different for nurses.

Nurses were promised 4% immediately and the rest in the autumn when the new clinical grading structure was introduced. The truth is that the average rise for nurses will be about 8% with many, in particular ward sisters, getting only 4.2%. Moreover, the government is failing, to the tune of £150 million, to fund the new clinical grading system. Nurses will be graded below the level their skills merit.

Nurses are to be graded hierarchically from A to I. Under the new system two ward sisters at present on the wards will be

graded F. Only when one sister has left will the remaining sister be able to gain a G grading.

Staff nurses will be initially graded D. One will be graded F only if there is only one sister per ward. Nurses who were once told that they should move around wards to broaden their experience will now find that the grading system limits them to one ward. If they want to move they may have to take a step down in grading.

For many nurses rates for unsocial hours and weekend work will not rise at all when the new grading system is introduced. Competition and resentment will be the order of the day among staff. Many will leave and morale will fall even further.

The role of the NHS union and the RCN has been shameful. All of them welcomed the April announcement and the new grading system. Hector Mackenzie, COHSE general secretary, said the new system was 'an important step forward... with the potential to make this triumph for the profession'.

Nurses have been cruelly betrayed. Come autumn there will be thousands of very, very angry nurses. The only option to fight. ■

Harder and nastier: the 'reform' of Official Secrets Act

TERRY O'HALLORAN

On Wednesday 29 June Home Secretary Douglas Hurd released his long-awaited White Paper on the 'reform' of the 77 year old Official Secrets Act. Just as capitalist enterprises use the expression 'price adjustment' to mean price increase, so the government talks of 'reform' when it means strengthening. The White Paper proposals will mean a harder and nastier Official Secrets Act.

Any disclosure at all by serving or past members of the security forces will be an offence. That's Peter Wright dealt with. Any disclosure at all of telephone tapping will be an offence. So

Cathy Massiter, ex MI5, who revealed details of telephone tapping against CND is covered two different ways.

Any disclosure at all of information obtained in confidence from other governments or international organisations will be an offence.

Any disclosure of information about the security services by non-members would be an offence if it were likely to damage the operation of the security services or were of 'a class or description' of information likely to cause such damage. The latter formulation rivals the present Act for its vagueness and scope. As the White Paper so charmingly puts it: 'This would allow the

arguments before the court to be less specific.'

Any disclosure of defence information likely to impair the capability of the armed forces to carry out any of their defence tasks or, among other things, prejudice dealings between the government and another state would be an offence. This would cover Sarah Tisdall who leaked information about Cruise missiles and was sent to prison for six months in 1984.

Any disclosure of information on international relations would be an offence if it were likely to jeopardise or seriously obstruct the promotion or protection of UK interests abroad.

There would be no public in-

terest defence. No prior publication defence. And just in case anything's left out there will be a tighter disciplinary code for civil servants so that any who cannot be prosecuted can be simply sacked. That would deal with Clive Ponting.

In short the Official Secrets Act 'reform' means a conversion of the inefficient, cumbersome, universally reviled and archaic Act into an efficient, streamlined, acceptable, modern version that will be far more deadly.

Those who want to defend the rights of the working class must not only oppose this 'reform' but also make it known now that they will defy this Act and defend anyone who defies it. ■

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON GIBRALTAR

MAXINE WILLIAMS

When Amnesty International announced that it would be investigating the Gibraltar killings Thatcher's reaction was little short of hysterical. This Report by Amnesty will add fuel to the fire. That a respectable, liberal organisation such as Amnesty should dare to lay bare British murder in Northern Ireland must be intolerable for the government, especially in the sensitive months before the Gibraltar inquest.

The Amnesty Report shows just how far British rule in Ireland has gone down the path of legalised murder and disregard for all norms of legality. In dealing with the shoot-to-kill murders of six Irish men in 1982 and the subsequent cover-up Amnesty calls for a full judicial review and says:

'These developments have seriously called into question the government's commitment to investigate fully disputed killings by its security

forces, make the findings public and prevent the possibility of unlawful killings in the future.'

The Report usefully details the events surrounding the shootings. On the government's refusal to make public the results of the Stalker/Sampson inquiry it says this 'lends credibility to allegations of an official policy of deliberate and planned killings'.

Pulling no punches, it continues:

'Amnesty is concerned that some of the killings by the security forces may have resulted from a deliberate policy at some official level to elimi-

nate, or permit the elimination of, rather than to arrest individuals whom they identified as members of armed opposition groups.'

The Report draws an unfavourable comparison between international standards surrounding the use of lethal force and British standards. International standards require an 'absolute necessity', ie no alternative to the use of force, whereas British soldiers/police use force merely when 'reasonable'. The Northern Ireland judiciary's opinion on what is reasonable was summed up in 1977 by Lord Justice Gibson (subsequently killed by the IRA) who said:

'If you watch wild west films, the posse go ready to shoot their men if need be. If they don't bring them back peacefully they shoot them and in the ultimate result if there isn't any other way open to a man, it's reasonable to do it in the circumstances. Shooting may be justified as a method of arrest.'

The report cites figures showing that since 1969 there have been only 21 prosecutions (14 against the Army, 6 against the RUC, 1 against the UDR) for killings. Only two convictions resulted - one got a twelve month suspended sentence, the other got life but was released after two

years three months. Obviously Lord Justice Gibson's wild west justice lives on after his demise.

Not only do the police fail to investigate such killings (Amnesty refers to 'deliberately superficial' investigations) but the DPP will not bring prosecutions unless 'the level of public attention' forces him to do so.

The section of the Report dealing with inquests is valuable, showing as it does how Britain changes the rules to prevent any forum having the powers to investigate murders by the police/Army. Amnesty is critical of long delays in holding inquests. Since 1959 Northern Ireland inquest juries cannot bring in a verdict of 'unlawful killing'. Since 1980 other restrictions have been added. Often the families of the dead are not even notified that an inquest is taking place. The juries are selected by the RUC.

The section on supergrass trials also contains useful information. But coming, as it does, soon after the Gibraltar murders, it is the material on shoot to kill that is timely and powerful. ■

NEWS NOTES

25% of babies born to mothers in B&B accommodation are of low birth weight compared with a national average of 7%. Children living in these slums are more likely to get diarrhoea and chest infections and to suffer accidents. Overcrowding, appalling sanitation, malnutrition, fire hazards, poverty. Victorian values with a vengeance.

The scene is Birmingham County Court. Who is in the dock for incitement to discriminate under the Race Relations Act? Who urged the good people of Kinver, Staffordshire, to monitor and report any sightings of black people in cars because there had been one burglary in the village? National Front? British Movement? Not at all. It was the local cops who had issued this racist advice in their Neighbourhood Watch bulletin. A similar case is under way against the Met.

Remember Norman Willis' sly little scheme to do the dirt on P&O by launching a Commercial War? And getting us all to travel by Sealink? Cunningly using one capitalist against another? Sad to relate Norman's wizard wheeze has gone awry. Sealink has joined forces with, yes you guessed it P&O in a series of radio ads extolling the virtues of ferry travel.

Recent figures show that nine years of tax cuts add up to some £20 billion. £4.7 billion (23.5%) went to the highest earning 1% of households whilst the lowest earning 50% of all households received the princely sum of £3.4 billion (17%). Now be fair, it's tough at the top.

So tough that some of our oppressed multi-millionaires can't manage to pay tax at all. Murdoch's News International, pre-tax profits £111.5 million, has 'paid' minus £9.1 million tax in the last three years. His arch-rival, Maxwell, only achieved minus £3.2 million for Maxwell Communications, pre-tax profits £166 million.

There's been considerable competition for our half-witted headline spot this month. Despite some fine efforts from the RCP the *Morning Star* managed to get its nose in front with this offering, 12 July 1988, 'Turkey "not yet a democracy"'. Remember you read it first in the super soaraway *Morning Star*.

And finally... a novel line on the environment from the SWP. At a meeting on the SWP and green politics, they opined that the mass destruction of the Amazon rain forests was no bad thing. It would lead to industrialisation and therefore provide workplaces for the natives who could then join trade unions. No doubt Amazonians are right now throwing street parties and generally whooping it up. Next week: 'Nuclear war: is it so bad?'

Fuel to the fire



THEMIS MICHAELIDOU

Sharpeville Six: The fight continues

On 13 July Botha was forced to grant an indefinite stay of execution for the Sharpeville Six. In South Africa the people campaigned for the Six. The EEC threatened diplomatic action. Dukakis in the USA has backed the campaign. Even Thatcher has been forced to promise to intervene personally if all legal appeals fail.

The Six could still hang unless we act to save their lives. Join the Sharpeville Six Must Go Free rallies, organised by City AA on the Non-Stop Picket, outside the South African Embassy, Trafalgar Square, every Wednesday and Friday 6-7pm.

The RCG and City AA joined the 2 July London demonstration against Turkish tyrant General Evren's visit to Thatcher. The Turkish and Kurdish community dogged his every step, protesting against his record of torture and murder. In scenes that must have reminded him of home, the police brutally attacked and arrested demonstrators at Victoria Station on 12 July.

Turning the Third World into a burial ground

TREVOR RAYNE

The last forty years in industry has generated many chemical compounds previously unknown in nature. The explosion of chemical compounds is tearing down the biological barriers that preserve life. Animal and plant species have disappeared, soils have become chemical dust, forests have shrivelled, lakes and rivers turned septic. Chlorofluorocarbons are thinning the ozone layer. Concentrations of organic and inorganic materials in cities now often exceed health limits: mental retardation, physical handicaps, allergies, chromosomal disorders and chronic illnesses are all increasing. New diseases have appeared. Toxics seep through our environment silently. However, spectacular catastrophes make the headlines: Chernobyl, Bhopal, the liquid gas explosion in Mexico City, poison in the Rhine, poison in the North Sea, record radiation in the Irish Sea, Three Mile Island. An alerted population in the industrialised capitalist nations together with pressure group activity has succeeded in forcing regulations on waste-disposal. Capital faces rising costs: it values nature on a profit and loss account.

Britain is Europe's biggest importer of industrial waste because disposal costs are a fifth of those in France and West Germany. They are kept down by ditching 83 per cent of the materials in landfill sites rather than treating them with chemicals or incineration. There it festers, ready to explode or leak into the water and food chain. However, Britain can only take so much of the waste, and even here pressure is mounting to prevent the dumping. A new low cost site is sought: the Third World.

Waste disposal is a \$12 billion a year international business. In

1970 US transnationals had to dispose of 9 million tons of waste, today the figure is 370 million tons, which cannot be dumped in the USA because local laws forbid it.

Jamaica, in the US 'back yard', turns down, on average, four requests a week from US corporations to dump industrial waste on the island. Earlier this year the world was shown the *Khian Sea* traipsing round the Caribbean and Atlantic with 13,000 tons of Philadelphia's 'industrial waste' looking for a dumping site. That waste included dioxin materials, the most deadly organic substance known.

The contractors of the vessel have variously described the Philadelphia cargo as 'road building material' and 'fertiliser'. It was refused entry to the Bahamas, Bermuda, Honduras, the Dominican Republic and Guinea-Bissau, dumped the cargo in Haiti, was ordered to reload, but left 3,000 tons behind.

The Third World has many attractions for these merchants of death. Waste costing \$3,000 a ton to get rid of in Europe was offered to Benin by a Gibraltar based contractor for \$2.50 payment for every ton taken. A Nigerian landowner was paid £60 per month for 35,000 tonnes of European chemical waste that would have cost £1,000 a tonne in Europe.

Guinea-Bissau, reputed to take 10% of Europe's toxic waste, was offered \$600 million, three times the nation's annual product, by a British contractor, Hobday Limited, to take 15 million tonnes of chemical waste.

Preying upon their debts, the need for currency, their lack of chemistry trained officials and corrupt elites, transnational corporations are turning the Third World into a burial ground for their lethal effluence. *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* intends to increase its coverage of the fightback for the survival of the species. ■

Economic policy in disarray

DAVID REED

The knives are being sharpened. The dispute between Lawson and Thatcher has become more acute with the announcement that the arch-monetarist Sir Alan Walters is to return to Thatcher's kitchen cabinet. Walters was responsible for the devastation wrought on the British economy from 1979 to 1981. In that period manufacturing industry was cut by 20 per cent, tens of billions went in lost production and unemployment increased by 1.2 million.

No one should be deceived by Thatcher's hype, whether about the economy or her 'brilliant' Chancellor of the Exchequer. The arguments about 'bucking the market' or not are nothing but a smokescreen for an economic policy that is in total disarray. Unfortunately so is her majesty's loyal opposition. There is no body outside the Tory Party to exploit this.

Since the last issue of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* the problems have worsened. The balance of payments deficit for May was a record £1.2bn. This resulted from the highest ever

trade deficit of £1,075m and the highest ever total of imports at £8,186m. £5.4bn was wiped off shares on the stock market after the figures were announced. The June figure will be out after we go to press and they promise to be just as bad as May.

On 18 July the lending base rate was increased to 10.5 per



Lawson - a suitable case for backstabbing.

cent. There have now been six increases in only seven weeks. This time mortgage rates went up as well by approximately 1.7 per cent to an average level of 11.5 per cent. Thatcher's policies having devastated the poor, are now starting to hit some of her loyal voters. The budget tax cuts have been wiped out at a

stroke. Homeowners will have to find just over £30 a month more for repayments on a £30,000 loan taken out over 25 years, and between £50-£60 more for a £50,000 loan.

Interest rates must rise even higher if they are to slow down the credit boom. Inflation is already on the way to 5 per cent. The problem is that the high interest rates bring hot money flooding into Britain. The pound is soaring. Last week alone it rose 2.5 per cent against the average of other countries in spite of Bank of England intervention in the market to buy up some \$500m-\$700m of other European currencies. The pound is now 6 per cent above the DM 3.00 level that Lawson wanted to hold it at before the budget, and 3 per cent above the DM 3.08 level called 'unsustainable' not long ago. The consequences for the balance of payments are serious as Britain's exports will become less and less competitive.

A major run on the pound in the not too distant future seems inevitable. Interest rates will then be pushed up to penal levels and will drive the economy into a new recession. Then the real backstabbing will begin. ■

The PAC has declared the 1980s the decade of the Azanian Revolution. It is a revolutionary prediction based on the experience the PAC and the Azanian masses have had in collective action.

LESSONS OF HISTORY

Our organisation has a history of struggle in South Africa. In 1960, the PAC led the people in the most successful campaign against the Pass Laws. Because of the campaign of mental liberation, freeing ourselves from the slave mentality, which preceded the Pass Laws campaign, we made important gains. After the PAC was banned we formed a military wing. The armed insurrection within the country which followed, from 1961 to 1969, has been acknowledged as the most successful. Even liberal academics like Tom Lodge, who ordinarily would be critical of our position, consider that the campaign by the armed wing of the PAC, APLA (which we then called Poqo) was the most successful internally-based insurrection because it covered the whole country and because of the length of time that it lasted. Our people remember this very well.

In the 1976 Soweto Uprisings, the PAC, together with the Black Consciousness Movement, was centrally involved. These organisations were the only two whose members were charged and convicted for predicting and organising the 1976 uprisings.

We have learned many things from these experiences, not only as an organisation, but also how our people think and feel. Our founding President Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe said that in 1960 our people lost the fear of going to jail. We have deprived the enemy of one of the weapons against us. Many of our people have served jail sentences, including leaders of the struggle like our President Zephania Mothopeng and Cde Masemola who are still in jail, and John Nkosi who was recently released. They have all turned down conditional release. Our campaign against the Pass Laws in 1960 aimed to unite the leaders and the led. No longer was action to be confined to the masses without any way of protecting themselves. Leaders and the led would suffer equally. Our people now have overcome the fear of going to jail or remaining in jail.

In 1976 when the gun was used so systematically against our people, they lost the fear of their enemy's guns. Our people, like any other people, would like to achieve their freedom in a peaceful manner, but even with two Nobel Peace Prizes awarded to our compatriots, we do not have peace.

REVOLUTIONARY MOOD

It was on a solid understanding of ourselves with the people, the masses, that we declared the 1980s to be the decade of the Azanian Revolution. Events inside the country have continued to confirm the revolutionary mood which we predicted has arisen. It first erupted in the political base area of the PAC - Sharpeville, Sebokeng and the surrounding areas - in 1984. The regime which has successfully destabilised neighbouring countries, forcing others to sign unequal treaties, has failed to defuse the revolutionary mood inside the country. Now one state of emergency after another has been imposed. So many draconian laws have been passed, yet they have failed to defuse the revolutionary mood of our people.

There is a higher level of organisation among our people. We have seen the formation of organisations like the National Forum in 1983, like the UDF in 1983, both opposed to the so-called reforms. We have seen the people rally around on the principle of no collaboration with the racist regime. We have seen important events taking place like the successful holding

JOHNSON MHLAMBO INTERVIEWED

DECADE OF REVOLUTION

JOHNSON MHLAMBO, Chairman of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania joined the PAC in 1959, the year of its formation. He first became involved in the struggle in the mid-1950s when the racist regime started to remove settled black communities, called 'black spots', from areas which had been designated 'white only' under the Group Areas Act. After joining the PAC, he became chair of the Daveyton branch in 1962, and in 1963 he was arrested for his political activities along with many others. He was sentenced to 20 years which he served on Robben Island.

During a recent visit to London Cde Mhlambo talked to CAROL BRICKLEY and RONNIE TOMLINSON about the prospects for revolution in Azania.



JOHN KEMPSER

of the National Congress of Youth (Congress of the Azanian National Youth Unity) in Johannesburg, January 1988 which was attended by representatives from Western Embassies. The youth firmly identified their struggle with that of the Palestinian people.

The week of 20-27 February this year was called Sobukwe Cultural week. Meetings and events were held in 14 cities despite a crackdown at the time - it was on 24 February that the restrictions and bans were placed on 18 organisations. Both 21 March and 16 June were commemorated with stayaways from work and schools. From 6-8 June the massive stayaway was called by NACTU and COSATU. The record number of workers who stayed away proves the effectiveness of a united call. We believe that this momentum will be kept up and we will do everything to promote consultation between the various unions whenever they have to take action against their common enemy.

A PEOPLE'S WAR

The political momentum is there inside the country. But when you are dealing with such sharp contradictions, politics alone is not sufficient. Mass struggles must support the armed struggle. We believe in the strategy of a people's war - an internally based struggle. We cannot fight in the classical manner in which, perhaps, our comrades in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and other countries were able to operate, fighting from outside because they had firm rear bases. We can at the best hope for transit facilities from neighbouring and frontline states, therefore we must have firm roots inside the country. APLA has made progress. It is reflected even in the statistics coming

from the press of the enemy, where they admit that attacks by APLA combatants have increased even in the southern-most province of the country - the Cape province.

Our people are welcomed by the oppressed masses everywhere. But we are well aware that our resources are not yet sufficient. Many people want to be part of our political and armed programmes of struggle. We believe in training people inside the country and this is succeeding but our resources are limited.

PRINCIPLED UNITY

We are fighting against a very powerful enemy. We think it is very important to have a broad approach to the struggle. All the forces in conflict with the racist regime must be united. In the PAC we have worked out five principles around which people could unite in action and make a bigger impact on the regime. We have discussed these with organisations internally, we continue to discuss this with supporters of our struggle outside the country. Firstly, apartheid cannot be reformed it must be totally eradicated.

Secondly, the main vehicle for change is not the racist regime, nor the white minority, but the oppressed masses. Our campaigns must be designed to increase the fighting capacity of these people. We must make them conscious that they have the capacity to overthrow the regime. We have had to condemn certain divisive actions like necklacing of political opponents. We need to energise as broad a front as possible from the ranks of the oppressed.

Thirdly, we must continue to advocate and encourage all forms of struggle, but with the armed struggle as the principal form of struggle. We are aware that some people have scruples about this - some of our supporters belong to Muslim and Christian organisations, we encourage their involvement. But we have no illusion that the racist regime can be wished away by non violent forms of struggle alone. We must intensify the armed struggle.

The fourth principle, we must continue to call internationally for the complete isolation of the racist regime, but we must understand that the imposition of even mandatory sanctions will not be sufficient. International action must be seen to be a complement of the internal struggle which is the most decisive. Interna-

tional resolutions will not work until there is decisive action inside the country. Resolution 435 on Namibia is 10 years old. There has been no movement despite the agreement of the UN Security Council. What happens inside the country has to be decisive.

For this reason it is very important that people like you, and people in City Group of which you are a part, who support our cause, are advancing solidarity on a non sectarian basis. We want genuine supporters to work in such a way that they encourage working together. In supporting the liberation struggle it must be done in such a way that it is known that we are helping an oppressed people and the oppressed people themselves must eventually make their own choices. I welcome the principled support that the Revolutionary Communist Group, to which you belong, has given and that it has taken a principled position in supporting the struggle on a non sectarian basis.

The fifth principle that we have popularised is that we should resist the introduction of the East/West conflict in the resolution of the national liberation struggle in our country. We have seen how the Namibian people are being held hostage by an extraneous, irrelevant issue over which they have no control (the US/South African demand that the Cuban troops be removed from Angola before any moves towards South Africa withdrawal - CB). This is in line with the PAC position of non-alignment which was adopted when the PAC was founded in 1959, even before the Non Aligned Movement had developed.

These are principles which will unite broader and broader sections of people in our country.

ONE RACE - THE HUMAN RACE

We are fighting for a just cause - the demise of white domination. This does not mean the liquidation of white people as a people. White people living in equality with the oppressed majority, identifying with the oppressed majority are African, Azanians. When we speak of the establishment of an Africanist, socialist democracy we include white people. President Mangaliso Sobukwe said that there is only one race, the human race, to which we all belong. The history of that race has been a long struggle against all forms of oppression.

INTERNATIONALISM

The British government proclaims itself the source of democracy - the Mother of All Parliaments - but it is a question of democracy for whom? They created democracy for the white racist minority in our country. British companies have been the least responsive to calls for withdrawal and Margaret Thatcher says that black people will suffer if they do. But British companies who operate in South Africa are not philanthropic institutions, they went there to make super profits. The British government is serving the interests of a minority in Britain - the ruling class, by exploiting our people. They are reluctant to see the demise of apartheid.

Look at the role of Mrs Thatcher. She says she is opposed to apartheid. She is against the armed struggle. She is also opposed to sanctions. Will these three negatives make a positive? Will they destroy apartheid? Really she is conniving with the regime by cushioning it against the wrath of the oppressed people. That is why we have an internationalist perspective, to reach out to people like you. The working class in the advanced capitalist countries, where the socialist revolution should maybe have happened first, will themselves rise up when the super profits in 'under-developed' countries have dried up. ■

NO RIGHTS!
NO FLIGHTS!

South African Airways has been finding its filthy trade in apartheid a bit difficult in the past few weeks. Since March City AA has occupied the Airways in Regent Street 12 times. In Manchester RCG members and VMDC members have been demonstrating outside the Airways offices in support of the Sharpeville Six, despite concerted police harassment, they have established their right to demonstrate there.

In London . . .

On Saturday 2 July, City AA members occupied the Airways four times and were ready to for a fifth when the racists decided they had had enough for the day and closed early. The occupations began early in the day and lasted until 3pm. The occupiers included City AA members, RCG members, Humanist Party members and Camden Councillors. After the first occupation Airways staff had to resort to searching all customers looking for leaflets and posters. Eight people were arrested and variously charged with obstruction of police and the highway and breach of the peace.

On 19 July, Naomi, a City AA supporter and a mother of four, decided to highlight the role of the Airways by throwing red paint over the doors. She then made a speech to the crowd about the way apartheid tortures and murders black children. The crowd applauded and then the police arrived to take her away. She was charged with criminal damage.

The campaign continues and it was noted that the Airways offices was guarded by ranks of police when the Mandela march passed by on 17 July.

Carol Brickley

In Manchester . . .

Manchester police have been engaged in a deliberate campaign not only to protect the Airways offices in Manchester, but also to prevent any street protest. Manchester comrades have been picketing the Airways for four weeks, every Monday, in support of the Sharpeville 6 and have also held street meetings on Saturdays. For the first three weeks, police from Bootle Street police station arrested the demonstrators on bogus charges of noise pollution and obstruction of the highway. On the third occasion, on 4 July, 4 people were arrested and charged with breach of the peace. While they were being held at Bootle Street the custody sergeant said they would be released immediately, but was overruled by an Inspector who said 'charge them with anything, just lock them up'.

On the fourth picket eight people were arrested for singing and chanting. Again they were charged with breach of the peace, and this time the police entered local offices to invite complaints about the noise.

But on 18 July, the fifth picket, the racist police were in for a surprise. 60 people attended the picket including local councillors, as did Manchester BBC radio, Piccadilly radio and Manchester Evening News reporters. When the police threatened to arrest the picket for noise pollution, an on-the-spot Environmental Health Inspector tested the noise level and confirmed that the traffic noise was louder than the singing. After 2 hours of non-pollutant singing and chanting the police backed off! We organise to win!

Simone Dewhurst

SAVIMBI'S BRITISH CONNECTION

'This government will have nothing to do with terrorists...'

With increasing certainty of isolation in Angola, Savimbi visited Britain in July for 'informal' talks with the Thatcher government. TREVOR RAYNE looks at the background to Savimbi's long association with Britain.

Kostas Georgiu was a British subject and former member of the Parachute Regiment, nicknamed 'Colonel Callan'. Bored by the monotony of killing Angolan villagers, Callan thought up a diversion for himself: he stuck hand-grenades into the mouths of his victims and then exploded them. Callan had been recruited in Britain in 1975 to fight the MPLA government in Angola. With him went a number of MI6 agents. Savimbi, like Callan, is reported to have been recruited by British military intelligence in the period 1964-66. The Foreign Office could not help Callan when a People's Revolutionary Court dispensed justice to him in the summer of 1976. Savimbi, like Callan, turned to his master in times of trouble when he visited Britain this July.

In January 1975 the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA formed a transitional government in Angola. By April fighting had broken out with the other forces trying to oust the MPLA. In the intervening period Savimbi had travelled to London where he met Labour Parliamentary Under Secretary at the Foreign Office, Joan Lestor. When the fighting broke out Savimbi's UNITA received military aid including a Racial Communications radio system. Lonrho boss 'Tiny' Rowland supplied Savimbi with a jet for diplomatic sorties.

On 11 November 1975 the MPLA announced the People's Republic of Angola. In January 1976 a massive and open publicity campaign accompanied John Banks' recruitment of mercenaries to serve in Angola. The British press advertised the money to be earned: £750 for wrecking a tank, £250 for every soldier killed, £1,200 for capturing an officer. This was all done under the last Labour government! ■

ANGOLA-NAMIBIA PEACE PROPOSALS

TREVOR RAYNE

South Africa, the USA, Angola and Cuba agreed to 'Principles for a Peaceful Settlement in South Western Africa'. The Principles cover moving Cuban troops away from the front line in southern Angola, their withdrawal from the country, and the implementation of UN Resolution 435 on Namibia's independence. The Principles agreed do not stipulate a timetable for Cuban withdrawal, no terms for South African withdrawal from Angola, nor any role for UNITA. South African Foreign Min-

ister Pik Botha quickly insisted that the Principles were neither a cease-fire nor a truce. Cuban negotiator Jorge Risquet Valdez spelt out the Cuban position: an end to all external support for UNITA, South African troop withdrawal from Angola, the implementation of Resolution 435 which would be accompanied by the removal of Cuban troops on the basis of agreement with the Angolan government, and international guarantees for the security of Angola. The Angolan government refuses to negotiate with UNITA while it is supplied by South Africa and the USA, and the USA insists that UNITA aid is

non-negotiable and that UNITA must have a role in the Angolan government. The declaration of the Principles is still a far cry from peace.

Britain, the USA and West Germany have repeatedly tried to link Resolution 435 to a Cuban withdrawal, while retaining South African and hence imperialist control over Namibia, and its mineral wealth. An independent Namibia would cost South Africa its military bases in the Caprivi Strip from where it threatens Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Nevertheless, the apartheid state has been forced to the negotiating table. The US Presidential election campaign looks ominous from apartheid's point of view and the Botha government needs to be seen 'negotiating'. However, it is on the battlefields of southern Angola that the South African troops were given an exemplary lesson. The racist army has suffered heavy casualties at the hands of the Angolan and Cuban forces. This has jolted the fragile confidence built up in the apartheid state by the State of Emergency and Thatcher's support. Botha understands the anxiety rising in the white population could turn to panic, with young white males deserting the racists' ranks rather than go to face death.

The South African government will stall, and try to muster diplomatic and military support from its allies. It needs replacement aircraft for those lost in battle. Botha will appeal to his allies' strategic interests in the region, hoping that they will pressurise the Soviet Union to in turn exert pressure on Angola and Cuba. While neither apartheid nor imperialism have any intention of leaving Angola or Namibia to decide their own destinies, they can dwell on the fact that they have seen in Africa a conventional army able to match the South African Defence Force in conventional war, and break its teeth: something new at the negotiating table in southern Africa ■

RCG member Gary Lowe being arrested and assaulted during anti-Savimbi protest.



RACIST POLICE OFF OUR STREETS

MIKE RUSSELL

On 20 July I appeared in Bow Street magistrates court to answer to charges of assault on police officers, in the early hours of 17 June, after Soweto Day when City AA surrounded the Embassy. I asked the police to remove a drunken racist who was abusing the picket. I was then arrested, assaulted and racially abused - typically I was then charged with assaulting the police!

The police sergeant who arrested me, claimed that the picket was 'a mob likely to damage the Embassy'. Asked by Magistrate Robbins if 25 people was a large picket, Sergeant AD69 said 'Three people can be a large picket, these are bad people! AD69 then claimed that I pushed aside two picketers and from a standing position, kicked him in the testicles. Instead of rolling to the ground in agony, this superman claimed that he then arrested me straight away.

Another police constable then claimed that I bit his thumb in the police van, and it 'bled profusely'. He meant to imply that black people are cannibals I think. Magistrate Robbins then asked how I managed to bite him when according to the police evidence I was restrained by four policemen all the way to the station. Our intrepid mathematician said, 'Not four your honour, just myself, Sgt Watts and PC Tomms and another police officer at one point! Later PC Tomms admitted that he had an arm round my chest, my arms and legs could not move, and in this helpless manner I was slung into the police van feet first, and sat on all the way to Cannon Row Station.

At this point the magistrate said that Sgt Watts was not in the execution of his duty and dismissed the first charge against me.

I gave my evidence and explained how I was arrested, thrown into the police van and called a 'black bastard'. One of the policemen was throttling me, calling me a 'nigger' and saying that the South African police know how to treat niggers. I went on to tell the court how the police treat black people on the picket. When the police deal with black people they deal with them differently from white people. I was arrested by four officers and in a very violent way.

But each time I am arrested within minutes people from City Group have been at the police station demanding my release and got me a solicitor. In minutes 200 people can be mobilised to tell the police not to beat me up but to release me, so I feel confident when I get dragged off. I don't need to resist arrest or assault police officers.

The magistrate took a few seconds to sum up. He said he was dismissing all charges against me.

● On 20 July Ken Bodden won a civil action against the police for wrongful arrest and assault. In 1985 Ken, who is black and blind, was dragged from a picket outside Bow St Magistrates Court by plain clothes police. He was taken before magistrate Barrington-Black, admonished for making too much noise and released. But the police arrested him as he left the court, detained him for 3½ hours and then charged him with assault! Later the charges were dropped when the police realised that they had no power to do any of this. Ken was awarded £1,500 damages. The police are thinking about an appeal. ■

CHARIOTS OF HOT AIR

CAROL BRICKLEY

Embarking on a ten-day tour of Southern African frontline states during a parliamentary session, Neil Kinnock surely expected a major publicity coup, not only for the just concerns of independent black nations which border South Africa, but also for his own cause - securing his place as a future British Prime Minister.

It should have been a cinch. The Kinnock tour was timed to coincide with Mandela's birthday. Apartheid is the issue on which Thatcher has been feeling the pressure of isolation. It has become transparently clear, even to the Tories, that they cannot continue to argue with any credibility that all that is needed is time for the Botha regime to mend its ways. Even during Kinnock's tour Thatcher was hinting at a tougher line with Pretoria, sniffing in the wind a Dukakis victory in the US Presidential elections. Kinnock should have had a field day.

But Her Majesty's Loyal Leader of the Opposition took with him to Southern Africa a combination of hypocrisy, opportunism and imperialist arrogance unique to the British Labour Party.

It did not take Kinnock long to get going. After condemning ANC bombings in South Africa, Kinnock rightly denounced South Africa as a terrorist state. He could not stop there: there was a huge difference between the ANC and South Africa - 'where the vast majority of the population are deliberately and rigorously excluded from having any form of political rights and expression' - and organisations like the IRA which conduct violent acts 'without any vestige of excuse whatsoever'. With more than one eye on his Tory critics and the British electorate, Kinnock was sensitive to the fact that the gunning down of IRA members by British death squads in Gibraltar (of which he approves) is scarcely different to cross border raids by South African agents against ANC bases (which he would shortly be denouncing). If one day he becomes Loyalist Prime Minister, he will need to maintain British rule in Ireland.

He was now getting into his stride. Assuming the role of world leader in Botswana he pronounced 'I remain and will remain absolutely hostile to any idea of a conflict between Britain and the Republic of South Africa', and cautioned Michael Dukakis, who is at least within sight of electoral vic-

tory, not to use US troops against the regime. But it was not until his return to Zimbabwe from Mozambique that he finally lost his head.

White men travelling through Africa have always assumed that they are more important than anyone else. When Kinnock and his entourage landed at dusk at the wrong airfield on the Zimbabwe/Mozambique border - a war zone - he expected special treatment. He had just spent more than a week viewing the effects of South Africa's war against the frontline states, yet he could not hold his temper for long enough to withstand being held for an hour in a hut. He exchanged abuse with an armed lance corporal - he does not like guns being waved at him - whom he threatened would lose his job.

Only a week before this incident, South African agents attempting to free five captured South African saboteurs, escaped in an airforce helicopter stolen by a Zimbabwean airforce captain. The 'gun-toting' lance corporal who had the misfortune to meet the Kinnock party was only doing his job.

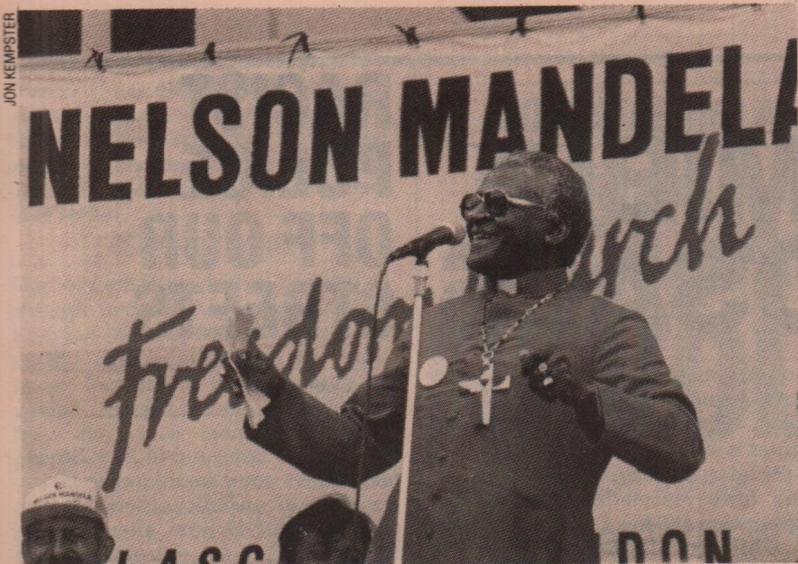
What fate would meet any black African opposition leader who landed at a British military airfield unexpectedly in peace time, let alone war?

What fate awaits black people who arrive on scheduled flights at Heathrow with all the right papers? Maybe the Kinnocks' next fact-finding mission should be no further than Harmondsworth Detention Centre.

On his return to Parliament, instead of making the impact that the frontline states deserve, Kinnock was greeted with the scorn of Tory racists. They, however, would have appreciated the stiff-upper-lip, the contempt for foreign culture, redolent of Thatcher's football supporters in Europe, which inspired the Kinnocks to sing *Jerusalem* in their darkest hour:

Bring me my bow of burning gold
Bring me my arrows of desire
Bring me my sword, Oh clouds
unfold
Bring me my chariots of fire
I will not cease from endless strife
Nor shall my sword sleep in my
hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant
land

Somewhere, as these refrains drifted across a Zimbabwean airfield, there must have been a hollow laugh. ■



Bishop Desmond Tutu speaks at the rally

Free Mandela!

CAROL BRICKLEY

On 11 July, 80,000 people assembled in Hyde Park to celebrate Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday. Thousands marched from Finsbury Park to Hyde Park with the 25 Freedom Marchers who had marched from Glasgow to London. In the park a rally calling for the release of Nelson Mandela heard Archbishop Desmond Tutu, speakers from the ANC and SWAPO and a video message from Winnie Mandela.

In South Africa the security police prevented any celebrations of Mandela's birthday, banning even a private party in someone's home, a football match and a concert in Soweto. Students at Cape Town university managed to hold a short celebration before it was broken up by the police.

On the Friday before his birthday, Nelson and Winnie Mandela announced that they would not take advantage of the regime's offer of a six hour unrestricted family visit on his birthday. Winnie Mandela announced that they did not want any privileges or special treatment.

Nelson Mandela has become the world wide symbol of the inhumanity of the apartheid regime, and the dignity of black people struggling for their freedom. For this reason South African agents and supporters have been at pains to discredit the movement over the last month when Mandela has been in the headlines.

First, at the Mandela concert they published an expensive 'official souvenir programme' to discredit the movement. 24 pages long, the programme was handed out by the thousand at the Wembley concert. It was later revealed in the *Observer* that it was produced by an organisation claiming to be 'Conservatives against Apartheid'.

On the Mandela demonstration, racists were again at work. Before the march and at Hyde Park they distributed bogus City AA leaflets headed 'Condemn the commercialisation of Mandela's suffering'. The purpose of the leaflet was clear - to sow divisions in the movement. City AA has made it clear that while it has political differences with the AAM, it supports all initiatives to free Nelson Mandela. Unfortunately AAM organisers refused to announce that the leaflet was bogus.

Apartheid is under pressure when it needs to employ cowardly disinformation tactics to discredit its opponents. The best way to fight them is through unity in the movement. ■

● Following the AAM Freedom for Mandela demonstration on 17 July 300 people joined City AA outside the racist South African embassy. The AAM London Committee had also called a rally outside the embassy that evening. City AA's rally was well in

progress, brilliantly chaired by three black comrades - Ritzzy from the Black Heroes Theatre Group, Mike, a supporter of FRFI and Gary, RCG member.

This was too much for the AAM who then began trying to drown out the City AA rally. Clive Nelson, full-time worker for the AAM, refused City AA's offer to share speakers. This was explained to the rally. The many young black and white people with City AA made it clear, loudly and militantly, that their interest was freedom for Nelson Mandela and not sectarianism and refused to stop their rally.

One hour later, Amin Mawani, chair of the AAM London Committee came back to negotiate and said the AAM would share speakers if the City AA speakers would restrict themselves to speaking only about Mandela and the ANC. Andy explained that City AA does not place any restrictions on its speakers except that they do not attack any of the liberation movements. Mawani replied that this was not acceptable. Again everyone in the City AA rally rejected this sectarianism and called for unity. In reply the AAM asked the police to place barriers between them and City AA to split the rally into two pickets!

At midnight everyone on the City AA rally joined hands to sing Happy Birthday to Nelson Mandela. The rally continued well until the early hours of Monday morning.

On Monday 18 July City AA held another rally for Nelson Mandela's birthday. Flowers and birthday cards were placed on the gates of the embassy. Again, the rally continued until very late. 75 people stayed overnight on the Non-Stop Picket. Shortly before midnight a window at the front of the embassy was smashed and 'Free Mandela' written in large letters on the front portico.

AAM attacks RCG in Manchester

● On Saturday 2 July when the AAM freedom march was in Manchester, AAM stewards joined forces with the police to try and stop RCG comrades selling FRFI. The stewards screamed and shouted at us to stop selling, calling us 'fucking Trots'. They then physically assaulted Simone pushing her to the ground.

In a display of racism, an AAM steward pointed to black FRFI supporter Mike Russell, suggesting he was mentally disturbed and then called him a 'nigger'. They told us that they had made an agreement with the police to stop papers being sold.

It was no surprise that only the RCG/VMDC contingent was accompanied by mounted police.

Simone Dewhurst

Home Office must grant a full review

Viraj Mendis has applied to take his case to the House of Lords. This is the only legal avenue left for him following the High Court dismissal of his appeal against deportation on 17 June. Even if Viraj does win the right to have his case heard by the Lords, the highest court of the land, the same narrow terms of reference that have applied to the entire judicial process will also apply to the House of Lords. Like the Court of Appeal and the High Court, the House of Lords will not consider all the accumulating evidence that Viraj's life is in danger in Sri Lanka. Neither will it consider the fact that Viraj has lived in Britain for 15 years, is a settled member of the Manchester community and has every right to remain here.

In June, the English cricket team cancelled its tour to Sri Lanka because the situation was too dangerous. Also in June, Amnesty International produced a new report confirming that there is a massive increase in torture, detention and 'disappearance' of Sinhalese political activists of all shades. The body of the report reads like the documents produced during the Nuremberg trials. Yet the British legal system purporting to administer justice will not take these facts into account. Douglas Hurd claims that Viraj has had a 'fair hearing'. This is sick. The reality is that the last time

any evidence was examined was more than two years ago.

In the next period the VMDC will be working to force the Home Office to grant a full review of Viraj's case, for as Lord Gifford QC put it in a letter to Renton:

'... even if the petition is turned down by the House of Lords, there are surely now overwhelming reasons for a reconsideration by the Home Secretary of the whole case, taking into account matters which have come to light since the original decision was made.' ■

Independent public inquiry

ED JONES

The panel of the independent public inquiry into whether Viraj Mendis has a well founded fear of persecution in the event of his removal to Sri Lanka will publish its report in early September. The panelists have publicly stated that the scope of Viraj's judicial process since his July 1987 judicial review has been too narrow to take the reality of the situation in Sri Lanka into account.

Unlike the High Court and the Court of Appeal, the inquiry panel have heard evidence from a wide range of expert witnesses and from people who have personal experience of the situation in Sri Lanka. Evidence has so far been received from Amnesty International, International Alert, Civil Rights Movement

of Sri Lanka, Asia Watch (a prominent US human rights organisation), Professor Manor a leading American academic who has made representations on behalf of Tamils on both sides of the Atlantic, the Tamil Action Committee, Bishop Reppon who has recently returned from a visit to Sri Lanka, a member of the LTTE Central Committee, Trevor Rawnsley lecturer, the British Refugee Council and others. Besides these several visitors and expatriates from Sri Lanka have made anonymous submissions.

Not surprisingly the British Home Office, the Sri Lanka High Commission and the Indian High Commission have so far refused to make submissions despite being invited to do so. Indeed the Home Office has never put its case about Viraj and Sri Lanka for judgement before the courts. ■

NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR VMDC

On 24 and 25 September, the VMDC will hold a national conference - 'VMDC and Sanctuary: building unity in action against deportations'.

The conference will be working out the next steps in Viraj's campaign to prevent his deportation. Of particular importance will be discussion on a strategy to force the Home Office to grant a full review of Viraj's case and lift the deportation order.

The conference will also provide an opportunity for the VMDC to share its experience in fighting the racist immigration laws, and in particular its experience in using sanctuary as a weapon in that struggle. To make this experience available to the movement as a whole, the conference will produce a guide to fighting deportations and will establish a co-ordinating committee to assist and develop the anti-deportation and sanctuary movement.

A major political rally on Saturday evening reflecting the broad political alliance the VMDC has built will be followed by a social.

On Sunday, a plenary session will draw together the proposals arising

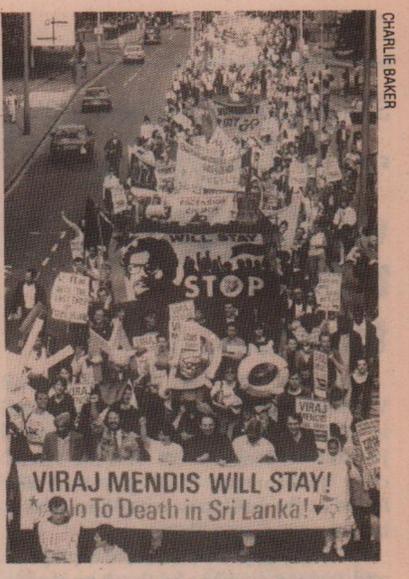
from the weekend's discussion and formulate a concrete programme of action to take the VMDC and fight against all deportations forward.

With the new Immigration Act coming into force in August, many more people are going to be forced into sanctuary. The VMDC conference can provide a way forward for all those determined to fight it. Come to the Conference.

I/We wish to register for the VMDC 24/25 September Conference

Name
Address
.....
..... Phone

Organisation/union
I/We enclose registration fee of £ (£10 organisations, £5 individuals, £3 unwaged)
Fill and return this slip to: VMDC Conference Committee, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Manchester M15 5AL (Phone 061-234 3168)



CHARLIE BAKER

Police attack VMDC activists

SIMONE DEWHURST

Manchester police launched a renewed campaign against VMDC and RCG activists in June. The series of arrests was no doubt intended both to test our ability to respond, as part of the build up to a police raid on the church, and to divert the resources of VMDC at this crucial time for Viraj Mendis.

On 24 June three people were arrested in Hulme following the usual Friday march. The excuse was the unfurling of a banner saying 'Police can't stop VMDC'.

VMDC immediately organised a picket of Platt Lane police station to peacefully demand the release of the arrested comrades. The police suddenly charged out of the station and arrested three of the picketers. The six have been variously charged with assault, breach of the peace and noise pollution.

As reported elsewhere, on 2 July Inspector Swan began a campaign of arrests of RCG and VMDC activists supporting anti-apartheid events in Manchester. For four weeks the police have tried to smash political activity on the streets of Manchester. For four weeks RCG and VMDC comrades have organised not only to defend Viraj but also to defend the right of all to march and picket. We call on everyone to join us, join the VMDC Friday marches, RCG street meetings and the pickets of SAA. Organise to win! ■

FREEDOM MARCHERS VISIT VIRAJ IN SANCTUARY

On Friday 1 July, the AAM's Nelson Mandela Freedom Marchers arrived in Manchester on their long march from Glasgow to London. In a special demonstration of solidarity the Freedom Marchers visited Viraj, with a special message from them and the AAM:

'... The destruction of apartheid and racism in South Africa will ... be a blow to racists the world over. ... Your struggle against deportation is part and parcel with that struggle and we wish you all success.'

It was a pleasure to see Indres Naidoo, ANC member and author of *Island in Chains* standing beside RCG member Viraj Mendis and AAM leader Alan Brookes as well as a representative of SWAPO, all united against racism and singing South African freedom songs in the Church of the Ascension. This positive gesture by the AAM was unfortunately negated by their sectarian and racist behaviour on the following day as the Freedom Marchers prepared to leave Manchester (see separate report this page) ■

Rajwinder Singh victorious

AURIEL FERMO

On Wednesday 22 June Rajwinder Singh won his right to stay in Britain. As readers know, Rajwinder has a mental age of 13, suffers from epilepsy and needs his family's care at all times. There was no one in India to give this care, but the Home Office still signed a deportation order.

Even to the last Timothy Renton displayed his racist contempt. He described the campaign to stop Rajwinder's deportation and the 373 heroic days he spent in sanctuary as 'deceit and defiance of the law'.

Deceit - no. Defiance - yes! The decision to use sanctuary and public campaigning to save their son is what forced the Home Office to back down; let Rajwinder come out of sanctuary while his case was reviewed and finally won through. This is what infuriates Renton and his ruling class partners. The support Rajwinder won from other campaigns, organisations, Labour MPs, in particular Pat Wall, and the community threatened to further expose Thatcher's inhumane laws.

Nothing will atone for the years of anxiety, but the fight back has meant final victory. As Gurdev, Rajwinder's father, told *FRFI*: 'We are all very happy now. For eleven years we have fought to have Rajwinder with us. These laws are racist that want to deport people. Now we want Viraj Mendis to win. We must win this case also - then we will be even happier.'

Dewsbury: green light given to racists

GORDON TEAL

In *FRFI* 72 we said the racist campaign by some Dewsbury parents, refusing to send their children to the predominantly Asian Headfield Middle School, would find allies in the High Court. Sure enough on 12 July the racist campaign won its case in the High Court on a legal technicality. The Kirklees council had failed to comply with statutory obligations about publishing arrangements for admissions of pupils to school. This means the parents can now send their children to the white Overthorpe school.

Instead of fighting the decision, the Kirklees council - dominated by the Labour Party and Social and Liberal Democrats - capitulated to the courts for fear of being surcharged. Typical are the comments of councillor Ripley who said, 'There was not enough room for them to go to Overthorpe, but if the courts say they can go we will just have to find room. We are not in the business of breaking laws.' Ripley's subsequent vow that multi-racial education will continue rings hollow in the light of this retreat.

How strong are the commitments of other similarly controlled councils to multi-cultural education when faced with the choice of upholding anti-racist education or complying with the law?

A green light has been given to racists who do not want their children mixing with black children. In conjunction with the opting out clauses in Baker's Education Bill, this decision provides the basis for apartheid in education. ■

Police murder admitted

Nine years after Blair Peach's death, his family have received compensation from the Metropolitan Police. SUSAN DAVIDSON recalls the events which led to his brutal murder in Southall.



Southall 1979: Police attack anti-fascists

On 23 April 1979 the National Front went ahead with their plans to hold a general election meeting in Southall an area with many Asian residents in West London.

This was to be the culmination of a year of National Front activity which had included a brutal attack on the black and Asian people of Brick Lane in East London on 24 September 1978. The Metropolitan Police had abetted the racist thugs and arrested dozens of youths who had organised

to defend their community.

In April the Met again supported the National Front, this time under the pretext of 'free speech' and escorted the tiny mob of fascists to their meeting place. The Labour government sent 5,000 police, including the notorious Special Patrol Group (SPG), into Southall to force the black community to submit to the insult of a National Front meeting in their midst.

The resistance was led by the Southall Youth Movement but the

entire community, supported by socialists and other progressive people, mobilised to protest. They had not forgotten Swarm Singh Grewal, who died in a Southall police station, nor 18 year old Gurdip Chaggar who was stabbed to death by a gang of white youths on the streets of Southall in June 1976.

Over 800 people were arrested and 342 charged with the serious 'offence' of defending the community. Blair Peach was killed.

He was murdered by a blow to the head from a police weapon. His family campaigned for a proper inquest and it was during the course of this that the contents of police lockers were displayed. The array of 'personal' weaponry included spiked bludgeons. Among the evidence offered by the police was that Blair Peach had an unusually 'thin skull'.

The verdict of 'misadventure' returned by the jury was interpreted by the coroner to mean that the police has used 'reasonable force' to disperse a crowd of stone throwers. In fact Blair Peach was walking down a road leaving the demonstration with friends when he was cornered and bludgeoned by the police.

After nine years of continuous struggle in the courts the family have, against all the corruption and cover up, won an admission of guilt and compensation from the Metropolitan Police. The £75,005 paid to the family of Blair Peach in July is equivalent to the sum that would have been awarded if a policeman had stood trial and been found guilty of killing 'without lawful excuse' says their solicitor. It is an admission of guilt.

But, as Celia Stubbs, Blair Peach's friend, says, 'the fact remains that the policeman who killed Blair Peach is still walking the streets of this country'. The family will continue to campaign for the police statements and notebooks which were not available at the inquest to be made public. ■

Som Raj wins

TERRY O'HALLORAN

On 27 June Som Raj finally won his right to stay in Britain with his wife and two children. The 12 page judgement, read out by Lady Elizabeth Anson, was a typical example of the humiliation and emotional torture black people suffer under the immigration laws.

Every detail of Som Raj's life, and his wife Sarjeet's, was publicly pawed over. Whether Som Raj loved Sarjeet and how much. The difference in their ages. When they met. How they met. What each said to friends and family. What their families thought of the marriage. Som Raj's personal integrity and honesty. Sarjeet's emotional state.

One wonders how Lady Anson would survive such a minute public examination of her own private life? But of course such emotional torture is not intended for the likes of Anson but only for black people. As Som Raj said throughout his four year struggle: how do you prove that you love your partner?

Not content with this torture Anson also engaged in the now routine official rubbishing of defence campaigns. 'May I say at once that I found

the large number of "pro-forma" letters counter-productive to the appellant's case' sneered the Lady. At the end she claimed to have reached her decision 'in spite of, rather than because of, the many representations made on behalf of the appellant.' The fact is, without the campaign Som Raj and Sarjeet would have been another unknown black family torn apart by racist immigration laws.

Having impugned Som Raj's honesty, Lady Anson herself did not hesitate to lie through her teeth: 'Furthermore there are a lot of words about "a black family" and racism [in the representations] but the laws that I have to decide on in this determination take no account of colour or race.'

Interestingly Som Raj's campaign was not the only one to be attacked. Lady Anson remarked that 'some of the letters... were often not really trying to help this appellant but for political reasons to change the immigration laws and some of the writers appeared to be members also of other "support groups" such as a group that supports an appellant in a completely different case who is called Viraj Mendis.' No finer compliment could be paid to Viraj Mendis. ■

Leove Bongay under threat

NICKI RENSTEN

Leove Bongay has had a second appeal to the adjudicator rejected and has been served with a deportation order, which she is contesting.

Leove will be one of the last to have the right to challenge a deportation order. From 1 August, under the new immigration Act, this right will disappear for black people who have lived in Britain for less than seven years.

Already sections of the Act have been phased in, making it a criminal offence for airlines to transport 'illegal immigrants' and ruling that men bringing wives and families to Britain must prove that they have the means to support them. The latest clause introduced will make it easier for the Home Office to implement wholesale deportations, and harder for people like Leove Bongay to set up a campaign.

Karapatan Na Maiwan/Right to Stay Campaign can be contacted c/o Asian Women's Resource Centre, 143 Minnet Avenue, Harlesden, London NW10. Tel: 01 961 5701 or c/o Commission for Filipino Migrant Workers, St Francis Centre, Pottery Lane, London W11. Tel: 01 221 0356

STOP PRESS

On Friday 22 July Marion Gaima lost her judicial review. ■

NOTES

STRIP SEARCH AT HEATHROW AIRPORT

On 27 June Olive Todd James arrived at Heathrow Airport. She was just recovering from an abdominal operation. Although she was travelling on her Jamaican passport Olive is also an American citizen. As the weather was cold Olive had her coat buttoned up. This was the reason offered later by the customs officers for their 'suspicions'.

She was taken to a small room and strip searched down to the removal of her sanitary pad. After an hour Olive was released to her waiting relatives.

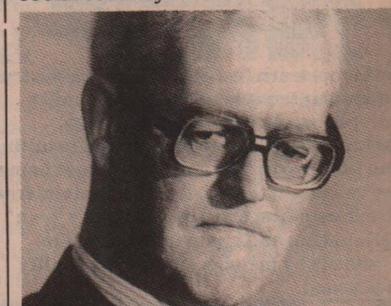
Olive told *FRFI*, 'I am a nurse and have worked with women who have been raped. I feel as they do. I am as much against drug trafficking as anybody but I feel this to be an unwarranted physical assault and racist. There were only three black women travelling and I think that I was picked out because I was travelling on my Jamaican passport. I intend to campaign in the USA and warn that women who travel to Britain may have to take their clothes off before they are allowed to enter the country, especially if they are black.'

RUDY NARAYAN BARRED

Black barrister, Rudy Narayan, has been barred for two and a half years for so-called 'misconduct'. Internal correspondence between a trial judge and the clerk of Birmingham Crown Court shows that the system was deliberately manipulated to prevent Narayan defending two black men on riot charges stemming from the uprising in Handsworth in 1985. The two cases were scheduled for exactly the same time and day in two different courts and Rudy Narayan's 'misconduct' is that he retained both briefs.

BONN PLAN FOR TAMILS

The West German Interior Ministry is planning to offer 27,000 Tamils £100 per family to accept one-way tickets back to Sri Lanka. Tamils who refuse this 'offer' will be repatriated by force. This is being sold as an economy measure which will save £35 million per year in social security.



Hurd: propaganda offensive

DOUGLAS HURD AND THE SUMMER RACE RIOTS

Douglas Hurd has cast the first stone in a renewed propaganda offensive designed specifically to pave the way for police violence in the inner cities.

In a 'secret' report to Thatcher 'leaked' to the media, Hurd claims that 'ethnic violence will flare up this summer' and he cites the flash-point areas and groups: Sikhs versus Hindus in Sparkbrook, Moslems versus Sikhs in Southall, Afro-Caribbeans against whites in North Peckham.

This report creates a deliberate atmosphere of tribal warfare, 'black on black' violence. The role of the police is then portrayed as that of a neutral peace-keeping force.

pricing reform, a revision of wholesale, purchasing and retail prices should be carried out after a country-wide discussion. In the process of the reform of retail prices it is imperative to proceed firmly from the principle that the change in prices should cause no harm to the living standards of the people.



The changeover of factories to self-financing and such forms of labour as the team contract will hit the most unprotected part of the worker collective - women with children - hardest. They are becoming "undesirable" labour power'. Zoya Pukhova chair of the Soviet women's Committee told delegates.



We must learn to distinguish between true national interests and their nationalist perversion. Any claims to national exclusiveness are intolerable and insulting, and this also for the nation in whose name they are voiced. In the spirit of the Leninist tradition we should first of all combat one's 'own' nationalism and chauvinism, and this primarily by members of the nationality concerned.



Party organisations must withdraw their support from those communists who, while occupying important posts, treat their jobs cynically, and the needs of citizens with callous indifference. Such officials should be dismissed without delay, and attempts to shift them to other executive jobs must be frustrated.

Page numbers after references/quotes refer to Gorbachev's speech as published in Soviet Weekly July 1988.

Excerpts from the Resolutions passed by the conference appear below photos on these pages. The full resolutions are in Soviet Weekly 26 July 1988.

'Nothing of this kind has occurred in this country for nearly six decades'

said Mikhail Gorbachev in his closing speech to the 19th All-Union Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). For four days between 28 June and 1 July 1988, 5,000 delegates participated in an historic event, the most open, political debate held in the Soviet Union in their lifetimes.

DAVID REED reports on Gorbachev's speech

Significant parts of the conference were televised. Edited versions of all the speeches (delegates had the right to edit their own speeches before they were released), including those of speakers with their names down to speak but unable to do so because of shortage of time, were published in the press. Journalists from all over the world, through press briefings, television and official news agency reports, were able to obtain a remarkably full picture of the conference proceedings.

This was the first party conference held for 47 years, the last one took place in 1941. It had been called to discuss the progress of perestroika. The basic question facing the party, said Gorbachev in his opening speech, 'is how to further the revolutionary restructuring launched in our country... and to make it irreversible' (p3)*

PERESTROIKA

It was at the April 1985 plenary meeting of the central committee of the CPSU, one month after Gorbachev had become general secretary, that the party laid the basis for perestroika, the economic and political reforms for restructuring Soviet society. The programme was instituted by the 27th Party Congress of the CPSU (25 February-6 March 1986). Perestroika was the CPSU's response to the dangerous social and economic crisis facing the country and, in particular, the urgent need to renew and revitalise the stagnating Soviet economy.

The party conference had been called because the results so far from perestroika had been very limited, and a significant section of the party were, in practice, blocking the reforms. Gorbachev in his opening speech said that a large number of party organisations were 'no match' for the tasks of perestroika. The party had underestimated the extent and gravity of the deformations and the stagnation of the preceding period (p3). A steelworker from the Urals brought home the reality of this during the discussion when he said: 'The workers are asking outright: where is perestroika? In the shops, everything is the same. There was no meat, and there still isn't any. Consumer goods have dropped out of sight'. An opinion survey of 11,000 industrial workers carried out by the Institute of Sociology of the Soviet Academy of Sciences showed deep cynicism about the possibility of reform. More than 73 per cent felt that so far 'there are no conditions which would really ensure changes. Instead of real perestroika we are just having a lot of talk'. In his closing speech Gorbachev stated that representatives of nearly all delegations had argued that 'bureaucratism still resists, shows its teeth... and puts spokes in the wheels' (p19).

The economic reforms involve a reduction in the role of state planning, the introduction of complete operational autonomy (khozraschot) and self-financing in many economic units and the creation of a new private sector through the cooperative movement. In reality the process is being deliberately blocked by a bureaucratic managerial apparatus. Ministries and central planners are still setting each factory obligatory orders using the familiar command methods of economic management. Under the new Law on State Enterprises this should have ceased with around half of all Soviet manufacturing industry

producing for the wholesale market and a diminishing share going to the state. In fact still almost all industrial production is accounted for by state orders. 'What is most intolerable', said Gorbachev, 'is that enterprises are being compelled by means of state orders to manufacture goods that are not in demand, compelled for the simple reason they want to attain the notorious "gross output" targets' (p4). This distortion was spotted much later than it should have been and shows that 'the progress of the economic reform calls for continuous attention by the CPSU central committee and the government'.

The cooperative movement, essentially a new legalised private sector, is seen as a crucial component of the economic reforms. It 'will open up extensive opportunities for resolving many of society's vitally important problems' (p5). In reality this sector is so far insignificant only employing around 200,000 people and mainly providing high cost services.

Finally a by-product of the political and economic reforms introduced under Gorbachev's leadership has been the upsurge of demands by national minorities. Years of neglect and instances of Great Russian chauvinism towards national minorities has created in some cases a deep resentment, and the more open political climate has led to increasing demands by national groups, some in no way progressive, for political, economic and cultural autonomy. In Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian populated enclave in Azerbaijan where 126,000 Armenians and 37,000 Azerbaijanis live, a general strike in the period before the conference had left the civil authorities without effective control. The demonstrators were demanding that Nagorno-Karabakh come under Armenian control. One delegate to the conference pointed out that the socially dangerous character of the situation was rooted in years of stagnation. These developments quite clearly have forced on the party an urgent reassessment of the implementation of the Soviet Union's nationalities policy, as an essential part of the process of furthering perestroika.

MAKING PERESTROIKA IRREVERSIBLE

According to Gorbachev, earlier efforts at economic reform, in particular those of Khrushchev in the late 1950s, had failed because they were not linked with political change, with a fundamental democratisation of the political system. Gorbachev argues that at a certain point the political system resulting from the October Revolution 'underwent serious deformations'. This made possible the despotic rule of Stalin and his circle, the repression, crimes and lawlessness. The command methods of administration resulted from those years. The difficulties experienced today are rooted, therefore, in the system created by Stalin. (p7).

The decisions of the 20th Congress of the CPSU (February 1956), the denunciation of Stalin and the exposure of his crimes by Khrushchev, opened the way to overcoming 'the violations of Leninist principles in the life of the party and state'. However these possibilities were not utilised because 'the importance of socialist democracy was underestimated and belittled'.

Because the deformations in the political system remained, the eco-

nomics reforms undertaken at the time were bound to fail. The stagnation in economic and social life continued. Economic management became increasingly concentrated in the hands of the party-political leadership and the bureaucratic apparatus increased out of all proportion.

During the Brezhnev years 'the machinery of management, which had grown to almost 100 national ministries and government agencies, and 800 in the republics, began practically to dictate its will in both the economic and political field'. The party bodies as well, were powerless in the face of this process. Gorbachev concludes that: 'It is this ossified system of government, with its command and pressure mechanism, that the fundamental problems of perestroika are up against today' (p7).

Gorbachev and his supporters had called the all-party conference precisely to tackle that 'ossified system of government' and the bureaucratic party apparatus which were blocking perestroika. Their attack was necessarily two-pronged. First to call for a more consistent and more radical implementation of the economic reforms and, therefore, the extent to which the Soviet economy is influenced by market mechanisms. Second to demand a thoroughgoing reform and democratisation of the Soviet political system. It is in this context that glasnost (openness), truth and criticism are seen as vital aspects of perestroika.

ECONOMIC REFORMS

The conversion of enterprises to khozraschot, self-financing and self-management and the introduction of private enterprise in the form of co-operatives are the fundamental features of the economic reforms. At the beginning of next year all enterprises engaged in material production will operate on the basis of khozraschot. Gorbachev believes it is now vitally necessary to accelerate the conversion to wholesale trading in the means of production, and to complete it within the current five year plan. (p5).

Underlying Gorbachev's whole approach is that the reforms cannot work unless there is a material incentive for each and every person to become involved. 'To put it plainly, the reform will not work, will not yield the results we expect, if it does not affect the personal interests of literally every person, if it fails to become every person's vital affair'.

In this context the setting of economic norms by work collectives and managerial bodies have to directly relate incomes with the end result. Any improvements in the collectives' work should be encouraged by higher incomes. 'We cannot tolerate any form of scrounging, be it overt or covert, and any opportunity to lead an untroubled life while doing poor work'. Wage levelling has to go. Wage differentials are crucial incentives. Enterprises should pay their more efficient workers more and 'cut down the incomes of those who are lazy, wasteful and idle' (p5).

In agriculture in an attempt to overcome what are chronic food shortages, Gorbachev argued for a nationwide programme which would allow farmers to lease land from collective and state farms and would promote diverse contractual arrangements for organising and stimulating labour. 'We must make the farmer sovereign



The vanguard role of the CPSU in perestroika is impossible without a profound democracy. Our prime task is to fully restore the Leninist principle which implies free discussion at the stage considered, and concerted action after that.

THE 19TH A return LENI

master, protect him against command methods and cardinally change the conditions of life in the villages' (p4).

To encourage the house building programme - practically every family is to have a separate flat by the year 2000 - all bans and restrictions have been lifted as to the size and height of buildings. Gorbachev also regards as reasonable the many proposals on letting people buy their own flats off the state 'so as to be able to leave them to their heirs'. (p4)

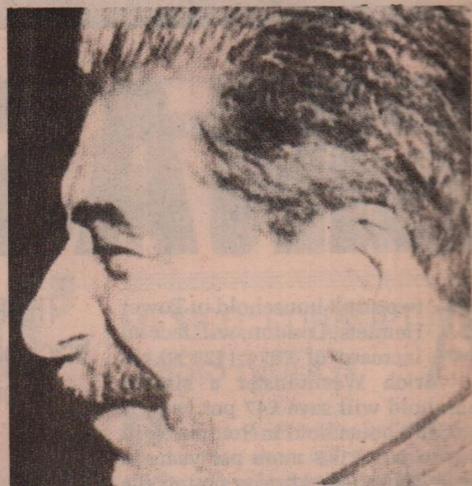
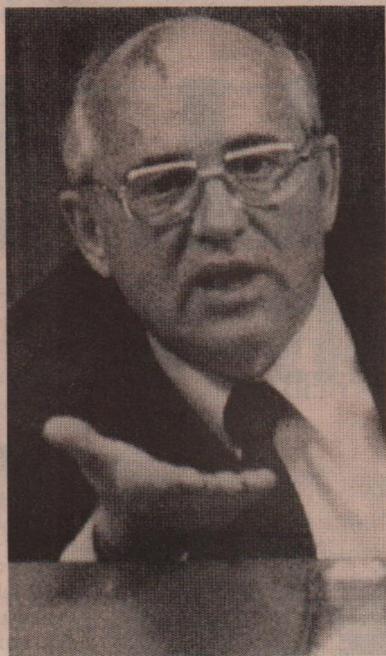
Connected with the economic reform is a pricing reform. The prices of raw materials and fuel are too low. Cost-efficient methods of production are not possible under these conditions. The retail price of many food products, in particular, meat and milk, is considerably lower than the actual cost of producing them, lower than the state's procurement price. The state covers the difference as a subsidy to the consumer. This 'undermines the incentives for producing these products and gives rise to a wasteful attitude' (p5). It also has led to a growing deficit in the state budget which is now so serious that it is 'undermining the stability of the rouble and of monetary circulation as a whole, and giving rise to inflationary processes'. (p3)

The withdrawal of state subsidies from products such as basic foodstuffs is not without political consequences as the experience of other socialist countries has shown. Gorbachev has made it clear that 'any change in retail prices must on no account cause a drop in people's standard of living'. The full amount of state subsidies removed from foodstuffs would be returned to the population in full as compensation (p5). Whether the economy will be strong enough to achieve this remains to be seen.

Finally perestroika has implications for the Soviet Union's foreign economic policy. In order to make use of the advantages of the international division of labour, enterprises are allowed extensive access to foreign markets, to establish direct foreign economic ties and start joint ventures. While relations with the socialist countries are given priority the long-term objective is to go over to a freely convertible rouble, building broad economic ties with capitalist



Perestroika and in the renewal of our society... democratisation of the party's inner affairs. Leninist vision of democratic centralism... when this or that question is being decided by the majority decides it.



The CPSU will never again allow a repetition of anything resembling the periods of the personality cult and stagnation which caused deep deformation in socialist society, held back its development for whole decades and resulted in huge loss of life and countless moral and ideological losses

THE 19th ALL-UNION PARTY CONFERENCE

RETURN TO LENINIST PRINCIPLES?

and developing countries. To do this successfully, however, the Soviet economy will need to achieve the levels of cost-effectiveness and productivity of the major imperialist countries.

DEMOCRATISATION OF THE SYSTEM

Unless a thoroughgoing democratisation of the Soviet political system, of both the state/government bureaucracies and the party apparatus, took place, the crucial economic reforms would be blocked and the 'ossified system of government' would remain. If the system was to be reformed a number of basic steps had to be taken which would fundamentally change the relationship between the Soviet state and the communist party, and between both of these and the Soviet people.

What is vital, Gorbachev argued, is that millions upon millions of people had to be involved in administering the country in practice, and not merely in word. Further the maximum scope had to be given to the processes of self-regulation and self-government of society. Conditions needed to be created to allow the full development of the initiative of citizens, representative bodies of government, party and civic organisations and work collectives. In addition steps had to be taken to further the free development of every nation and nationality in the Soviet Union on the basis of internationalism. Next came two further tasks which were crucial to Gorbachev's reform programme. Socialist legality had to be strengthened and there must be a strict demarcation between the functions of the party and state.

Socialist legality had to be radically strengthened in order 'to rule out any possibility of power being usurped or abused, so as effectively to counter bureaucracy and formalism' (p7). The constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens has to be guaranteed and protected against any abuse by the authorities. The central principle is 'everything not prohibited by law is allowed'. There is to be absolutely no departure from the principles of 'innocent until proven guilty' (p10).

There had to be a 'strict demarcation of the functions of party and state

bodies in conformity with Lenin's conception of the communist party as a political vanguard of society and the role of the state as an instrument of government by the people' (p7). The most pressing task was to restore the full authority of the soviets of People's Deputies, 'and half measures just won't do' (p8). In electing soviet and other representative bodies there will be a right to nominate an unlimited number of candidates, including non-party candidates, and discuss them 'broadly and freely'. There has to be strict compliance with democratic procedures of elections, including secret ballots, and the right to recall deputies.

Gorbachev made it clear that the communist party will not relinquish its role as ruling party (p15). He argued that 'it is very important to back the role of the soviets as the people's representative bodies with the prestige of the party'. To do this it would be most practicable, as a rule, to nominate the first secretaries of party committees to serve as chair of the respective soviets. The election would be by secret ballot and if the deputies rejected the nomination then, says Gorbachev, 'the party committee and the communists will obviously have to draw the necessary conclusion' (p8). Presumably, they would elect a new first secretary of the party committee who was acceptable.

A five-year term of office would be established for all soviets of people's deputies and those serving in elected offices would, subject to nomination and approval by soviets, only be allowed to serve for two consecutive terms (10 years).

The supreme body of government would also be restructured and extended. The USSR Congress of People's Deputies would consist of 1,500 deputies, as now, from the territorial and national-territorial constituencies plus approximately 750 deputies elected at the congresses or at plenary sessions of the governing bodies of party, trade union, cooperative, youth, women's, veterans', academic and artistic organisations. The whole body would elect from among its members a relatively small (400-450 strong) bicameral USSR Supreme Soviet - a standing legislative, administrative and monitoring body - and also elect by secret ballot the Pre-

sident of the Supreme Soviet. The government structure at the top level would comprise a Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet guided in its work by the President of the Supreme Soviet.

Together with the democratisation of state and government bodies goes the democratisation of the party. 'Democratic centralism was at a certain stage replaced by bureaucratic centralism'. This happened because 'rank-and-file communists lost real opportunities to influence the party's activities' (p11). The prime task is to fully restore the Leninist vision of democratic centralism, which requires free and open discussion when this or that question is considered and concerted action after the majority decides it (Resolutions, Section 2.8). Finally the CPSU is to conduct its policies through communists working on government bodies and in all spheres of the social fabric (p12).

SOVIET FOREIGN POLICY AND PERESTROIKA

A reshaping of foreign policy took place at the April 1985 central committee and 27th Party Congress in line with perestroika (p6). In particular it is a concern of Gorbachev and his supporters that 'foreign policy activity should contribute ever more to releasing the country's resources for peaceful construction, for perestroika' (Resolutions Section 1.6). The decision to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the attempt to resolve the Angolan/South African issue, the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea and the agreement with the USA to reduce nuclear weapons have all to be viewed in this political context.

Gorbachev and his supporters argue that while the military threat from imperialism 'has not been removed to this day' the war danger has been pushed back. International relations, 'without losing their class character, are increasingly coming to be precisely relations between nations' (p6). The axis of international affairs is moving away from confrontation towards cooperation and mutual understanding and negotiations that hold out the promise of specific results. 'Freedom of choice' is a key factor in the 'new thinking' in

a world where 'Sovereignty and independence, equal rights and non-interference are becoming universally recognised rules of international relations.

A RETURN TO LENINIST PRINCIPLES?

Throughout Gorbachev's speech there is a continual reference to a return to Leninist principles. However Lenin's political practice followed from a thoroughgoing theoretical analysis of the economic, social and political conditions at the time and changed with a change of these conditions. While it might still be expedient to use Lenin's authority to argue against your conservative opponents within the party, it is disingenuous to pick and choose some of Lenin's views and then take them out of their context.

There is little point in Gorbachev recalling Lenin's definition of the socialist state as one 'which is not a state in the proper sense of the word' (April 1917) if it ceased to have any relevance for Lenin's political practice soon after the October Revolution. By June 1918 Lenin was clear that the dictatorship of the proletariat (a class state in the 'full' sense of the term - something Gorbachev seems to suggest was a non-Leninist deformation (p7)), a regime in transition from capitalism to socialism, would last for a long time and that a whole historical epoch would be necessary for the elimination of the state. Is Gorbachev really suggesting that the Soviet state has nearly reached that point in time?

Lenin also only briefly put forward the idea of the separation of party and state, but never elaborated it further at the time because it was impractical given the fact that communists constituted a minuscule number of people in a vast population. Lenin's position, in fact, soon after the revolution was that as long as imperialism existed a centralised state, led by the communist party, would be necessary to defend the gains of the October Revolution from a predatory imperialism. Does this then explain why Gorbachev's foreign policy (not Leninist in any respect) is built around a world where apparently a non-militaristic, non-predatory imperialism is coming into existence? It

is not a view many oppressed peoples would share.

Yes, Lenin did quite correctly attack the growing state and party bureaucracy, precisely because, in the very difficult conditions at the time, it was succumbing to the prevailing backward cultural values and was taking on all the modes of behaviour of the old tsarist regime. But it is not permissible to turn Lenin into a liberal in order to make that point.

Gorbachev and his supporters represent a section of the ruling group, an educated elite, whose elevation in the Soviet party is closely connected with the growth in importance of science and technology for the Soviet economy in the post-war years. 'Without high standards of education, scientific research, general culture and proficiency on the job, the objectives of perestroika cannot be achieved' (p5). The revitalisation of the stagnant Soviet economy utilising the most modern technology and scientific techniques is also crucial if the Soviet Union is to withstand the economic and military threat of imperialism. Further, as well as advancing the interests of the educated layers Gorbachev represents, it is also vitally important for raising the living standards of the Soviet people. That is the key to understanding Gorbachev's strategy.

Gorbachev and his supporters in the party are not strong enough alone to defeat the old conservative bureaucracy. They have to appeal to the millions of rank-and-file communists in the party and if necessary through the party to the Soviet people. Hence glasnost (openness) is an essential component of perestroika. It is this fact which explains why this remarkable party conference has taken place.

However perestroika is not without its dangers. The economic reforms will certainly lead to a revitalisation of the stagnant Soviet economy. But if the Soviet economy does not grow fast enough the economic reforms can lead to unemployment and a fall in living standards for the working class. And, as has been demonstrated in other socialist countries, they will also open the door to a new wealthy elite of profiteers, middlemen and other get rich quick merchants, introducing a new corrupting influence, that of capitalist market values, into the Soviet regime. The danger is that such developments will acquire a political expression in the form of new political currents/parties seized on and promoted by imperialist interests.

Glasnost, however, can open the way for a return to Leninist values, if the Soviet working class re-enters political life and becomes a decisive influence on the direction of the party and, therefore, the Soviet regime. This is the great hope for the future. It is why the 19th All-Union Party Conference of the CPSU is such an important historic event that must be welcomed, analysed and discussed by socialists and communists everywhere. ■

SMASH THE POLL TAX

A two adult household in Tower Hamlets, London, will face an increase of £674 (121%). In rich Westminster a similar household will save £47 per year. A two adult household in Bradford will have to pay £148 more per year. In South Bucks (stockbroker country) a similar household will save £430 per year.

Black people will suffer severely because they are more likely to live in inner cities, to have a larger than average household size and lower than average earnings. 31% of white people live in Metropolitan areas compared with 80% of West Indians, 55% of Bangladeshis, 71% of Pakistanis and 68% of Africans. The contrast is even more extreme for Inner London. 4% of all white people live in Inner London compared with 38% of West Indians.

6% of white people live in households with more than three adults compared to 17% of West Indians and 22% of Asians.

The Policy Studies Institute survey *Black and White Britain* found that in 1982 median earnings of white men were about £20 per week higher than for West Indian men and £18 higher than for Asian men. There was little difference in women's earnings largely because overall women's earnings are so low.

The *Low Pay Review* Autumn 1987 estimates that the average total Poll Tax will be £400 for white households and £800 for West Indian households.

A claimant in Camden will have to find an extra £83 per year or £1.60 per week out of already reduced benefits. In Westminster whilst an employed two adult household will save £47 an unemployed two adult household will lose £59.60 per year or £1.15 per week.

Families on £500 or more per week presently pay 1.8% of their income in rates. Under the Poll Tax this will be almost halved to 1%. Families on £75-100 per week (a third of all households) will face an increase from 3.7% (rates) to 3.9% (Poll Tax). Again the differential will be more extreme for low paid families in inner cities.

Anyone who still doubts the reality of the Poll Tax should note that a working class family in Glasgow with two school leavers at home will pay over £1,500 per year. The Queen, however, will save an estimated £330,000 per year.

The Poll Tax is a direct attack on the working class especially low paid workers, claimants and black people. The poor in the inner cities will be hit hardest of all. The rich will gain. The poor are to be robbed for the benefit of the rich. TERRY O'HALLORAN and LORNA REID report.



Buckingham Palace. The Queen will save £330,000 a year, whilst palace servants (average income £5,000 pa) will pay £395 pa.

Kinnock: denounces non-payment campaign

The poor will pay and the rich will save.



WHO WILL FIGHT THE POLL TAX?

If the Poll Tax is not defeated millions of working class people will be plunged into ever deeper poverty. But what forces can be relied upon to prevent this?

Certainly not the Labour Party. Labour controlled councils throughout Scotland are right now sending their snoopers into working class schemes to force people onto the Poll Tax register.

In Scotland some 25% have either refused to register or not yet returned their forms. Strathclyde Regional Council, despite its claimed opposition to the tax, is now sending out threats to fine such people. To save their consciences they are also sending accompanying letters expressing their regrets.

Strathclyde Regional Council have not only refused to defy the law, but also voted, by 30 votes to 19, against employing all available legal means of opposing the tax.

In England and Wales, despite the fact that the legislation has not yet become law, councils are already advertising for Poll Tax officers. Margaret Hodge, Labour leader of Islington Council, has the nerve to boast about the 'victory' of 'forcing' the government to introduce the tax in one go rather than phase it in. This, says Hodge, 'removes an unnecessary administrative burden'. Such is the character of official Labour 'opposition'.

Neil Kinnock has already denounced the campaign for non-payment as 'a counsel of despair, fruitless'. While 18 Labour MPs have signed a pledge to support non-payment, the



JOHN STURROCK/NETWORK



Labour Party NEC has voted decisively against a non-payment campaign.

And what of trade unions? NALGO is offering trade union membership to the scabs who are employed solely to implement the Poll Tax whilst refusing to defend any NALGO member who refuses to co-operate with the tax. NALGO has now voted, overwhelmingly, against boycotting work on the Poll Tax.

The STUC's idea of opposing the Poll Tax is to call a week of action including a *ten minute* industrial stoppage on 14 September. The STUC, like the Labour Party leadership, in the guise of the Stop It campaign, is actively opposing non-payment.

Those who want an effective campaign against this tax will have to fight the Labour and trade union leadership.

SCOTTISH CAMPAIGN HIJACKED

On 10 July over 300 anti-Poll Tax activists gathered in Glasgow only to see their campaign hijacked by the Militant Tendency with the support of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

This right-wing block succeeded in suppressing any serious discussion on the way forward and imposing a bureaucratic Militant dominated leadership determined to tie the campaign to the official Labour and trade union movement: a recipe for disaster.

The Militant/SWP backed resolutions took policy-making away from the grass roots; excluded ethnic minority groups, community groups and political organisations from representation in the leadership; distanced the campaign from those refusing to register; called for a non-payment campaign to be built next April to be

led by the very Labour and trade union leaders who are already scabbing on the struggle.

Pollokshields Anti-Poll Tax Union's call for a democratic campaign based on maximum participation and maximum activity was overwhelmingly defeated. Yet it was Pollokshields that initiated the conference. Anti-Poll Tax activists in Scotland must now fight to break the sectarian grip of Militant and its SWP hangers-on.

In FRFI 79 we said that '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.' We only need to add Militant.

The SWP reject with contempt community organisation in favour of a strategy based wholly on the official labour movement. At the Chesterfield conference the SWP denounced council tenants as 'drug pedlars, junkies and people claiming homes under false names.' (FRFI 79).

In their pamphlet *Socialists and the struggle against the Poll Tax*, they are more polite: 'community organisation stands in stark contrast to the power of the workers organised in the workplaces'. The SWP not only excludes everyone outside the trade unions but also ignores the fact that trade unionists also live in communities, or perhaps the SWP think they live in the factories?

There are more than 40 active anti-Poll Tax groups in Glasgow. Pollokshields recently held a 200 strong local residents' demonstration, the first ever political demonstration in the area. Public meetings attract up to

Local activist denounces Militant

Stewart Petrie is vice-chair of Pollokshields Anti Poll Tax Union. He spoke to Terry O'Halloran during the conference.

'Over 200 people attended our first public meeting including representatives of the united churches of Pollokshields, the tenants association, the community council, individual members of the community, political groups within the community and the Asian minority who have been extremely active in our campaign. Their whole culture, the extended family system, is under direct attack with this tax. We had the first political demonstration in the history of Pollokshields, with nearly 200 residents.

'We're a community-based organisation on a broad democratic front which publicly, on a fortnightly basis, debates the Poll Tax. The committee is then given a mandate to carry out the wishes of the public meetings.

'We held a meeting of local groups in the McLellan galleries and took the decision to hold a conference on 10 July. The aim of this conference today was to discover the best way forward as community based groups, bringing in the trade union movement, bringing in the Labour Party, the political groups, tenants associations, community councils. Discussing it openly, deciding on a policy to carry the fight forward.

'Unfortunately, the conference has not carried out these aims. It has been usurped by a certain political faction. I feel that the group who are now trying to control this conference are a political faction within a political party. They are using this conference as a means to attack the members within their own party. If they were really democratic, if they were really concerned about defeating the Poll Tax, they would come out in the open the same as any other group and fight their corner.'

200 people. There is clearly a basis for an effective campaign in Scotland if the setback of the Glasgow conference is overcome.

In England and Wales anti-Poll Tax groups are starting to emerge. Their political composition, level of activity and level of support varies widely. RCG members and supporters are working wherever possible in local groups and in all-London Against the Poll Tax committee.

In our work in Scotland, England and Wales we are campaigning for: a democratic campaign open to all with equal rights for all; a principled campaign based on non-implementation, non-co-operation and non-payment; an active campaign based on mobilising in the communities, the trade unions and wherever support can be won; an independent campaign that refuses to be held back by the interests of Kinnock/Willis and co.

Such a campaign can not only defeat this vicious attack on the working class but also mark a turning point in the fight back against the Thatcher government. ■

The estimated Poll Tax for a two adult household as compared with rates.

Losers:	
Tower Hamlets	increase £674pa
Camden	increase £488pa
Bradford	increase £148pa
Winners:	
South Bucks	decrease £430pa
Elmbridge (Surrey)	decrease £336pa
Westminster	decrease £ 47pa

The Queen will save an estimated £330,000pa whilst palace servants, average income £5,000pa, will have to pay £395pa.

A claimant will have to pay extra:	
Camden	£83pa
Tower Hamlets	£78.40pa
Greenwich	£73pa
Westminster	£59.60

It will cost an estimated £435 million to collect the Poll Tax (more than twice the cost of collecting rates).

Sri Lanka: one year of the 'peace accord'

A year ago FRFI wrote of the 29 July Indo-Sri Lanka peace accord, 'the Agreement cannot hold the fissures that run through Sri Lanka together. Indeed, it is threatening to explode them. A military intervention is the likeliest response to continued violence and unrest in the south.' TREVOR RAYNE assesses the current situation.

This is the government which Tory ministers call a democracy.

TIGERS UNBOWED

Over 3,000 Tamil civilians, 500 Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and 2,000 Indian Army troops have been killed since the July 1987 accord. Currently, the Indian Army is engaged in the perversely named 'Operation Checkmate', a search and destroy mission aimed at capturing LTTE leader Vellupillai Prabhakaran. It includes heavy artillery bombardments, helicopter gunship raids, population round-ups, torture and burning down of houses. It is currently focused on the north east of the island.

Gandhi is attempting to force LTTE into accepting provincial elections which, he hopes, will help redeem his political position in India. LTTE

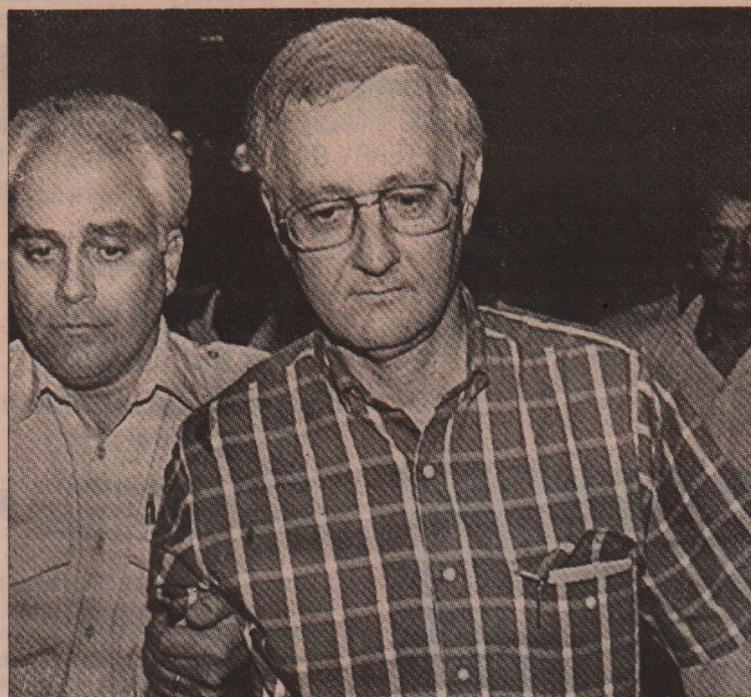
has declared its readiness to take part in elections, but not at the expense of sacrificing Tamil ambitions to Sinhalese chauvinism, and not while the Tamil population are being terrorised by an Indian soldier for every 22 civilians. LTTE demands a permanent merger of the north and east provinces; alterations to the 13th Amendment; an end to Sinhalese colonisation of Tamil areas. The 13th Amendment, while pretending to devolve power on Tamils within the Sri Lankan state, enshrines in law Sinhalese colonial-type rule over Tamils.

The accord was formed to suppress the Tamil national struggle and to remove imperialist forces hostile to India from the island. To maintain the accord India must attempt to strengthen the ruling UNP government of Sri Lanka, and to maintain its troops on the island, and assuage Sinhalese chauvinism, India must be

seen to be successfully suppressing the LTTE. Yet every day LTTE guerrillas continue to hit the Indian Army hard, while the Sri Lankan government retains the services of Israeli Mossad agents and ex-SAS officers, and continues to be supplied with Pakistani and South African weapons. Gandhi is caught in a trap for, as the Tigers' Batticaloa commander recently stated, 'LTTE is ready and prepared to carry on this guerrilla war for the next fifty years if necessary - it all depends on India's political initiative.' ■

DEMONSTRATION

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! urges all its readers to demonstrate in support of the Tamil national liberation struggle and against the Indian Army atrocities. Rally in London on Sunday 31 July. Assemble 1.30pm, Marble Arch for a march to the Temple. Organised by the Tamil Eelam Support Committee, 54 Tavistock Place, London WC1. Tel: 01-837 7162.



Richard Melton, expelled US ambassador who fomented counter-revolution.

SANDINISTAS COUNTER US SUBVERSION

On 11 July the Nicaraguan government expelled US ambassador Richard Melton and several of his staff for destabilising the country. The mouthpiece of the Roman Catholic church hierarchy, Radio Catolica, was suspended indefinitely, and the CIA-funded *La Prensa* was shut down for 15 days.

At the time of Melton's arrival in Nicaragua in mid-May, the Mexican paper *El Dia* reported a CIA destabilisation plan based on funding internal opposition groups. The idea is that the internal opposition provoke civil disobedience, forcing the Sandinistas to use repression which is then photographed, broadcast, etc., and used by Reagan to renew military funding for the contras.

The end of June visit by US Secretary of State Shultz to its four US Central American puppet regimes was aimed at lining them up behind a contra aid programme.

US embassy officials were identified urging demonstrators against the Sandinistas in Nandaime on 10 July. Clashes with Sandinista police took place. At this point the Sandinistas' patience gave out! Every concession they have made since the regional peace accord last August has been demanded by the US government only to be condemned upon concession as merely a cosmetic!

On a recent visit to Cuba, Nicaraguan President Ortega stated that the Nicaraguan revolution had aroused the hopes of struggling peoples whom the United States had tried to convince that revolutions were impossible in Latin America and the Caribbean after the victory of the Cuban Revolution. This notion is refuted by the victory of the Nicaraguan Revolution, whose example is what most concerns the United States government.

Revolution is possible!

Mike Webber

'In the north a long process of attrition is setting in aimed at destroying the Tigers...' (FRFI 71). One year on and no end to the predicted horror is in sight. Two reports issued by Amnesty International in June record the work of the Special Task Force, which was transferred from Tamil areas to the Sinhalese south after the accord. 'After the signing... many more arrests were made under the Emergency Regulations (these provide for indefinite detention without charge or trial: TR)... By mid-August 2,000 arrests had reportedly been made... in the south'. Those arrested included JVP, Sri Lanka Freedom Party and Communist Party members. 'The president was reported to have stated in December that members of the JVP had to be eliminated and offered the security forces immunity from prosecution for any action taken in combat'.

Hundreds of Sinhalese have 'disappeared'. The report documents some of them, students, teachers, farmworkers, bundled off buses, grabbed at home, in front of eye witnesses. The authorities deny making any arrests or having records on the abducted. Such a fate awaits Viraj Mendis. There is the roll-call of tortures: burning with red hot iron rods, beatings with clubs and bars, suspension by the thumbs, pulling out of finger nails, chilli powder rubbed in wounds and genitals, hot needles pushed in the penis... Such a fate awaits Viraj Mendis.

Amnesty vigorously condemns the Sri Lankan government for refusing the International Committee of the Red Cross permission to visit its prisons and the United Nations the right to investigate the 'disappearances'.

US Propaganda Coup in the Gulf

ANDY PACEY

The prospect of peace in the Gulf following Iran's unconditional acceptance of UN resolution 598 is welcome to anyone who wishes to see an end to the eight year old conflict which has caused hundreds of thousands of senseless deaths.

This will inevitably lead to claims by the Reagan administration of yet another foreign policy success. The truth is that Iran has been forced into submission since the imperialist military machine was unleashed in support of Iraq.

US claims that their massive military presence in the Gulf was designed to protect shipping and uphold the peace have never held water. In fact their presence has worsened the plight of tankers. Attacks on merchant shipping increased to 178 in 1987 from 80 in 1986. The recent downing of the Iranian airbus with the loss of 290 lives only serves to further demonstrate the brazen hypocrisy of US claims.

The US attack on Iranian oil installations and the destruction of a third of the Iranian navy coincided with the biggest Iraqi land offensive since the war began which finally drove Iran back to its own border. Following 12 months of defeats and the degree of imperialist backing for Iraq it is not surprising that the Iranians have suddenly accepted a ceasefire. Hashemi Rafsanjani, the speaker in parliament and main orchestrator for peace, admitted as much saying 'the imperialists and reactionaries came to Iraq's aid with all their might sparing no criminal act and seeking to uphold the Baghdad regime through massive military,

financial, political and propaganda aids.'

The Reagan administration will try to use Iran's plight to justify not only its original decision to occupy the Gulf with 15,000 military personnel and 27 ships but also to continue their presence. By subduing Iran the imperialists have ensured their continuing economic and political domination of the Gulf region and the price they will ask of friendly Gulf states such as Iraq is to keep a much larger military capacity in the area, permanently. The aim is not peace but control over the Gulf oil supplies. If the US had wanted to stop the war eight years ago they could have immediately introduced an arms embargo against both sides.

If any proof were needed that Iraq is no innocent party in the war it is given by their assault on Iranian positions and reluctance to accept the peace offer. The Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz has called for talks without setting a time limit and called for Gulf waters to be cleared of mines which could take many months.

The decision to offer a ceasefire has serious implications for the fundamentalist leadership in Iran. Rafsanjani has the backing of Ayatollah Khomeini but there are many conservatives who oppose any compromise. Indeed the Ayatollah defended himself by saying that reversing his promise to fight to the death had been 'more deadly than taking poison'. It will also open the way for progressive elements still organising within Iran to attack the waste of lives and resources over eight years of war which has achieved nothing. The Ayatollah's retreat reflects the increasing war weariness which is leading the people to question the regime and its chauvinism. ■

NOTES

MEXICO: CORRUPT AND CRISIS RIDDEN

Seven days after Mexico's 6 July election the expected victory was declared by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Their candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, in countering the threat of the National Democratic Front, NDF, led by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, promised greater democracy and a fair election. However, a fraudulent win has been diagnosed by many political observers including the two main opposition parties. In response to evidence of fraud the people took to the streets in their hundreds of thousands to protest.

Since the 1910-1917 revolution, when the PRI took power, the PRI have held unchallenged power. Cárdenas fought inside the PRI and finally last year broke away and built up an alliance with a number of small but influential left wing parties.

Cardenas is the son of a former Mexican president, who nationalised oil in the 1930s, distributed land to the peasants, and poured a popular front-style movement into the corporatist mould of the PRI. This background enabled Cardenas to appeal to the peasantry, the workers and many outside the PRI monolith. The writing was on the wall for the PRI after the 1985 earthquakes when one million Mexicans instantly organised themselves and revealed the PRI as an emperor with no clothes. This and the mobilisation on the streets against the election fraud show the growing confidence of the Mexican masses.

Dean Jackson

EL SALVADOR-US POLICY IN CRISIS

El Salvador's spring electoral far saw victory, and control of the legislative assembly, for the ARENA party founded by death squad chief Roberto D'Aubuisson. The death squads are stepping up their activity death squad killings in the first four months of 1988 are triple what they were for 1987. The terror has failed to hold back the popular struggle. On 1 May over 60,000 people demonstrated to demand an end to US intervention and human rights violations, and the formation of a new government including the FMLN/FDR.

FMLN commander Joaquin Villalobos, pointing to the 60 per cent abstention in the elections (impressive given that voting is compulsory) observed that 'the abstentions seriously weakened and undermined the counter-insurgency programme. The situation that was generated during the elections is undeniable: dual power was right there in the capital, the speeches and juggling acts notwithstanding'. FMLN activity has been stepped up with the occupation of a hydroelectric dam on 11 May with over 120 government casualties and the cutting of over half the country's main power lines in sabotage action from 11-20 May.

US counter-insurgency strategy is looking played out. The political and military influence of the revolutionary forces is advancing again. Washington is worried: \$2 million a day has not bought its stooges anything more than time, and that is running out!

Mike Webber

Nationalism and the struggle for socialism

John, could you tell us about the campaign against extradition?

Probably 80% of the Irish people are opposed to extradition because of the well known litany of cases, the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four, the shooting of Aidan McAnepie, the release of Corporal Thain, the Gibraltar murders. They feel that an Irish person, for racist reasons, would not get a fair trial in Britain.

Some of that has been deflected by Haughey pulling one of his many strokes with his so-called safeguards.

What was the response to the McVeigh case?

Most people were happy. Almost as happy as they were at winning the soccer match.

You got the pro-British politicians then screaming blood. 90% of the time you get bad decisions from the courts. When we protest we're told there's an independent judiciary. When the establishment get the odd reverse they criticise the same 'independent' judiciary. Irish people are glad to see the system beaten anyway.

Nobody has been extradited yet which is of some significance. Haughey probably has a certain fear of his own supporters.

Who is involved in the campaign?

The campaign is reasonably broad-based. Among the sponsors you have Captain Kelly of the famous arms trial who's on the Fianna Fail national executive, myself and Matt Merrigan who are left wing trade unionists, Neil Blaney who's a sort of nationalist Kevin Boland who's a nationalist, Des Wilson a people's priest in the Six Counties. The left, Republicans and nationalists generally.

There's a number of views in the campaign. My view is that all of the anti-imperialist issues are linked: the police searches, Operation Mallard when they swept the country like a shower of demented ducks; police repression North and South; all that area.

There's a small group who like to confine it merely to extradition. There are people on the left like myself who would go even further and link it to issues like the health cuts and education cuts.

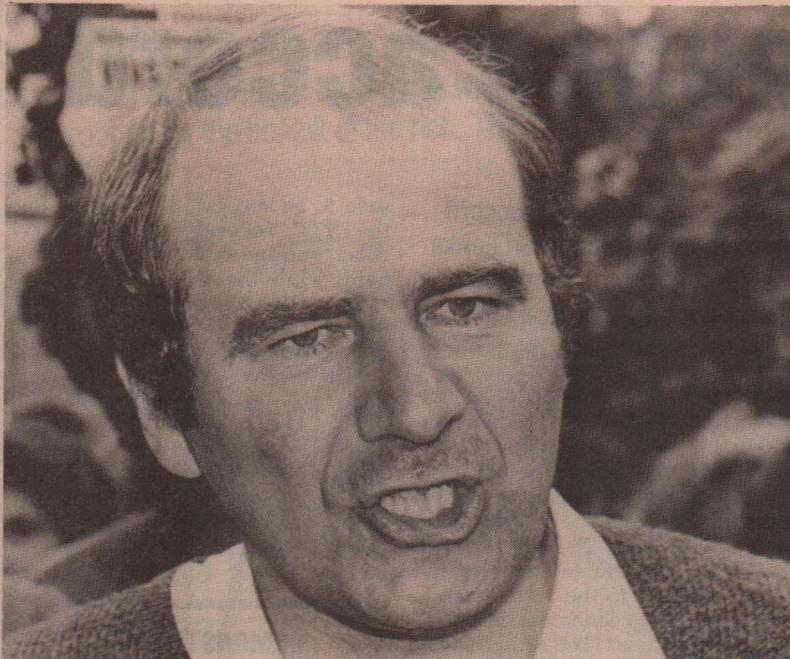
Most people would go as far as the extradition itself, press censorship and general repression. There would be a significant minority in favour of tying it into the social issues as well.

Fianna Fail have interned people, hanged people with a borrowed British hangman, Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act was brought in by Fianna Fail, not by Cruise O'Brien.

We've been arguing for some time that the issue of the Southern ruling class cannot be avoided. There has to be a political struggle against them. Presumably within the campaign there must be quite different views on that aspect?

Very different views. Some of them honestly held and some dishonestly held. Kevin Boland now is very good on the national question though he is a Minister of Justice in a Free State government. He would accept common ground with me on the national question but we'd have differences on the economy.

Sinn Fein's present strategy now is anti-Nationalism. You have Adams talking to Hume with Haughey's



Revolutionary trade unionist John Mitchell.

GERARD LIVETT

JOHN MITCHELL is general secretary of the Irish Distributive and Allied Trades Union (IDATU), the fourth largest Irish-based union. IDATU is a militant and growing union. It supported the Dunnes stores strikers during their historic campaign against apartheid produce. One of Ireland's leading left-wing trade unionists, John Mitchell not only supports the struggle against apartheid but also the struggle against British imperialist rule in Ireland. He, and his union, have been suspended from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions because he publicly described the Six Counties trade unions and the ICTU Northern Irish Committee as a 'Mafia' and 'Uncle Tom' unions. He has refused to recant. He is now involved in the campaign against extradition. Inside and outside the Republican movement debate is growing about the way forward especially in relation to the Southern ruling class. John Mitchell represents one important trend in that debate. He talked to TERRY O'HALLORAN in London on 16 June at the Non-Stop Picket Soweto Day Rally. The views expressed in the interview are, of course, his own.

bleasing. And, as a sort of quid pro quo, Sinn Fein are not attacking Fianna Fail. I think the campaign is going to fail for that reason.

I think after a certain period of time people will be quietly extradited.



De Valera: 'Labour must wait'.

The question of the Irish ruling class has been a problem for some time. About 80 years. De Valera said labour must wait. Gerry Adams says socialism is not on the agenda.

Sinn Fein has made its mind up, recently and publicly. Sinn Fein is for Brits Out and we'll deal with the structure of the state afterwards. I wouldn't support that position and people who think like me wouldn't. There's no point in having the Brits out and having Haughey, Paisley and

Sinn Fein is for Brits Out and we'll deal with the structure of the state afterwards. I wouldn't support that position.

John Hume running the country. It would be exactly the same as before.

There's a lot of resistance within the Republican Movement on this strategy especially within the prisons. I would say even within the army.

Is the campaign built within the working class or is it seen as getting 'respectable' support?

Again you would have the two tendencies. Sinn Fein have this romantic view that in some way Fianna Fail are slightly more radical than Fine Gael or O'Malley's gang, which they're not really.

Fianna Fail have interned people, hanged people with a borrowed British hangman, Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act was brought in by Fianna Fail, not by Cruise O'Brien it was brought in by Gerry Collins the present Minister for Justice, they brought in the Forcible Entry Act which has been used against trade unionists. I don't see any difference between Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, the Progressive Democrats or indeed the Labour Party. But Sinn Fein is talking about these famous Fianna Fail grass roots.

The left, which would include some of the Sinn Fein grass roots, would say 'a plague on all their houses'.



Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey: no friend of republicans.

So how do you see a movement against imperialism and the Southern ruling class developing?

There are still a lot of left wing people who believe the national question is important. My basic premise is that the two theories, the Sticky theory that you look after the social questions and ignore the national question and the Provo theory that you get the Brits out and then you deal with the other, have both failed. There's no reason why you can't do both at the same time.

I hold that view very strongly and there's a lot of people now would share that view. A lot of the prisoners would share that view. The League of Communist Republicans, the group within the Kesh who brought out Congress 86, would share that view. I disagree with their call for a Republican Congress but their analysis is very good. They're very influential people.

The two wings of the IRSP have that view but they're not relevant any more. They're too discredited.

Sinn Fein have lost about a third of their membership in Dublin simply because they have no politics. I would guess that most of those would identify with this kind of line. I



Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams.

would be hopeful that out of all those groups, the left wing of the trade union movement that sees the national question as relevant and the people who come from a Republican background who see the social issues as relevant, something could emerge over the next year or two.

You got into trouble over remarks you made about the trade unions in the Six Counties.

I was suspended from the Congress committee over that and the union

was subsequently suspended from the Congress. I made the very true point that trade unionists in the North have never spoken out against repression.

They've actually collaborated with it. They've been on all sorts of committees. Terry Carlin, the Northern Ireland officer, was on the Standing Advisory Commission on Human Rights which whitewashed strip searching. I asked him at an executive meeting to either resign from Congress or to resign from the Committee. He did neither.

We're still suspended. I don't propose recanting. I can't tell lies. The unions in the North are run by the CP, by and large. They've got a certain amount of power they think. They have presided over the discrimination in Shorts, Harland and Wolff over the years. They never said anything about it because it would alienate the Protestant working class. That's the same as alienating the white South African working class. They've never produced anybody who was in favour of socialism.

It is an anti-working class body. You can't paper over the cracks in the name of imaginary unity.

Trade unionists in the North have never spoken out against repression. They've actually collaborated with it.

Do your members support your stand?

I got 19 to 1 support. We represent probably the most exposed area in the economy. Young workers, a big turnover of staff. I think the reason that I get support from the members is simply because we do the basics very well.

We back people. We probably have more strikes than all the other unions in Ireland put together. And if people want to go on strike we don't ever have unofficial strikes. As a friend of mine said, the cure for unofficial strikes is to make them all official.

We back our members and I think they say if they're sound on strikes, they're probably sound on the broader issues.

EXTRADITION

The Irish government continues to do Britain's bidding by handing over Irish political prisoners.

Paul Kane is the latest Irish Republican to have the threat of extradition to a British court hanging over him. Paul Kane has been on remand for three years. All serious charges against him have been dropped and even if he was found guilty he would have to be released shortly. Yet High Court Judge Costello has continued to remand him back into Portlaoise prison to facilitate extradition.

On 5 July he was finally ordered to be extradited. The Dublin government applied to have Kane flown to Belfast. This would have avoided a border hand over to the RUC and the inevitable protests which would have accompanied this. Kane's lawyers successfully appealed against the attempt to fly him to Belfast and are challenging the extradition order as a whole.

Gary Clapton

From Lindholme to Longriggend: prisons explode

TERRY O'HALLORAN

In June there was a major disturbance at Haverigg prison. Then, on 16 July, Lindholme blew. Lindholme is a converted RAF camp and holds 880 male prisoners, mostly Category C. Approximately 100 prisoners took part in the protest. Sixteen escaped though only two are still free.

By the time the prison officers had re-established control six of the camp's seven blocks had been damaged. At least 46 prisoners were subsequently transferred out. 30 'ringleaders' had been ghosted out the weekend before the protest.

The cause of the protest is believed to be the stricter regime introduced by new governor Dai Thomas who took over just three weeks before. Thomas' previous posting had been at grisly Risley (see report on this page) so it is not difficult to believe that his arrival would cause trouble.

Then on 19 July resistance flared up at Longriggend remand centre in

Scotland. 80 prisoners took to the roof to protest against conditions in the centre. The prisoners came down that night.

The prison authorities moved swiftly to suppress news of the protest. The police cordoned off the area for a square mile around the centre.

Initially the prison authorities had admitted that the prisoners had displayed banners, presumably with their demands. Later, however, this was denied. The story was put out that the protest was caused by prisoners fighting with each other about the television. The press were kept far away from the prison so that this ludicrous tale could not be challenged.

The next candidate for a major explosion is the infamous Glenochil where so many young prisoners have died. On 21 July the media were allowed to go into this stinking hell hole. Some prisoners managed to shout their grievances out.

One said 'I complained about my mattress getting soaked by urine running under the cell door. And they beat me up and took it away'. Another:

'I've had to go 18 days without a wash. My girlfriend came in with my year old baby daughter to visit and the lice were dripping from my hair'.

Prisoners in A Hall have been on 24 hour lock up since early May when there was a protest against staff brutality. When the media went in, in July, many prisoners had been con-

tinuously locked up, literally unable to leave their cells to wash or slop out, for up to 18 days.

The place stinks of urine and excrement. The floors are running with urine and decaying food is splattered everywhere. All the staff are now routinely decked out in full riot gear complete with shields and batons.

Sooner or later Glenochil will blow.

These are the inhuman conditions prisoners are made to suffer. Neill Kinnock found it intolerable that he should be kept in a hut for an hour or so. Will he therefore open his mouth on behalf of prisoners in Britain cramped three to a cell with their own pots for 24 hours at a time? ■



A section of Haverigg Prison's burnt-out shell.

Ten years in solitary

ROBERT MAUDSLEY, HMP DURHAM

On 29 July 1988 I will have been detained against my will and protests on Rule 43 GOAD [Good Order and Discipline] for a period of ten continuous years without rest or respite. I was placed in solitary confinement at Wakefield control unit (F Wing) on 29 July 1978. Apart from numerous 10/74s to other prisons where I am always placed in the punishment block, in strip cells, special cells or cages like I am now at Durham jail, I have spent the last ten years in the control unit at Wakefield.

The control unit at Wakefield is designed to modify and alter the inmate's behaviour. In reviewing the literature on the special isolation unit in New South Wales, Australian psychiatrist Dr WE Lucas concluded that solitary confinement:

'Can produce profound alterations in thought, mood and behaviour and it influences prisoners strongly towards compliance with the demands of their custodians. If it is applied systematically with the aim of producing these effects, or used for long periods as a punishment it must be defined as a torture. It may be torture when used in behaviour modification programmes no less than when used for interrogation.'

I have gone through that behaviour modification programme for ten years now. I am left wondering how much longer I will have to go through it since the authorities have given me no indication whatsoever as to how many more times they will systematically 'rubber stamp' and renew my period of solitary confinement.

This being my tenth anniversary in solitary, it is a record in British penal history but it was not a record I set out to achieve. It is a record of man's inhumanity to fellow man imposed upon me by a brutal barbaric prison regime operating in the Wakefield control unit which I have no intention of kneeling to. Hence, because of my unwillingness to co-operate and modify my behaviour to their set requirements, my tenth anniversary is fast approaching.

I am asking for the support and help of all at FRFI and all inmates

who read FRFI by providing written statements of their own experiences in the control unit at Wakefield or on Rule 43 GOAD in other prisons. Please send such statements on my behalf c/o FRFI as I hope to undertake legal proceedings against the governor at Wakefield and the Home Secretary. I will shortly be visited by my solicitors to set such proceedings in motion, but we need written statements from the inmates on 43 GOAD not 43b protection to support and strengthen our case.

It is shortly my tenth anniversary, this year or next year it could be anyone else's anniversary because of the ambiguous wording of Rule 43 GOAD as defined by Prison Rules 1964. It needs to be challenged and altered to prevent further mental torture of fellow inmates. I hope you can give me your support and full help to challenge this barbaric regime of repression and restriction. ■

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)

I enclose a donation of £ _____ to help pay for a prisoners subscription to FRFI. (Cheques/POs payable to Larkin Publications)

Please send me a standing order form.

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____

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

ALEXA BYRNE

'Male inmates remanded to Risley enter an institution which is profoundly depressing... they are for most of the time forgotten people' - Stephen Tummin, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Nearly every page of the Prison Inspector's report details the daily hell that prisoners in Risley Remand Centre are subjected to. The government's own Chief Inspector exposes the 'barbarous and squalid' 'appalling and totally unacceptable conditions' of the jail. There were three suicides at Risley in the summer of 1987 in the space of five weeks. The report was rushed through in response to these deaths.

Risley was opened in 1965 to hold 608 prisoners - 514 men and 94 women. It currently holds 956 - 831 men and 125 women. 631 of the men are on remand and 84 of the women. 14% of the prisoners are black.

Arrival at the Centre for many people follows a long journey - sometimes of 100 miles in vans with 30 people crammed into 3 cells and a channel for urine running between the cells. The reception room's 'cages' are very dirty and scruffy, some with toilets in full view and new inmates have to change into prison clothes and eat here. No information cards, rule books or reading material are allowed to new prisoners.

The whole jail is in a state of decay, particularly two of the men's wings, B and C. 'Squalor, low ceilings, poor lighting, overcrowding, slopping out' and small cells. Because the prisoners spend more than 20 hours a day in the cells, they are forced to throw rubbish, dirty clothes and excrement out of the windows and are not supplied with cleaning materials. Steel mesh grills have been fixed over the

windows and the debris collects here. The windows are fixed and made of polycarbonate sheeting, so there is no ventilation to the cells and very little natural light.

Arrangements for serving food are disgusting and unhygienic. First the women's wing is at some distance from the kitchens so by the time food reaches them it is cold. On the ground floor of C wing the serving area is next to the toilets and both areas are 'dirty and dilapidated, and need complete refurbishment'. The canteen for B and C wing ('in an appalling condition') had, until recently, a leak from the recess area above and is very cramped.

One of the most serious findings of the inspection is the total lack of care, supervision or even acknowledgement of those prisoners who are mentally ill and suicide risks. No Suicide Prevention Management Group has been set up under Circular Instruction 3/1987 - in fact this CI has not been observed at all. No training in suicide prevention measures has occurred at the centre. The cursory general medical examination of prisoners at reception makes no assessment of suicide risk. Four prison officers in reception did not know anything about form F1996 (relating to suicide risk) and the POA has instructed POs not to fill the forms in anyway until they have received suicide prevention training.

'Between 1 February 1987 and 30 January 1988, 216 inmates were notified as possibly suicidal by the police... They were all put into single cells.' This is contrary to Paragraph 37 of C13/1987 which states that suicide risk prisoners are not to be alone.

The first question asked by the doctor at reception is 'Do you consider life worth living?' One man who replied 'No' was put on normal location. In the women's section 14

prisoners were mentally disturbed and should have been in outside hospitals. Six of these women suffered 'gross personality derangement' but because of a dispute over staffing levels they were held on normal location, not in the hospital.

The Chairman of the Board of Risley comforts himself with his view that the suicide rate at the centre is 'no worse than at any other large institutions holding remand prisoners'. In fact the suicide rate in Risley is rising. From 1980 to 1988 there were two. In the following three years there were five - a threefold increase. The Chairman, governor and Home Office have presided over the death and decay that is Risley. They simply administer the nightmare Thatcher's prisons.

POWs birthdays

Stephen Nordone 2 August
No. 758663
HMP Gartree
Leicester Road
Market Harborough
Leics. LE16 7RP

Paul Kavanagh 12 August
No. 1888
HMP Leicester
Welford Road
Leicester LE2 7AJ

Ronnie McCartney 3 September
No. 463799
HMP Gartree
as above

Paul Hill 13 August
No. 462778
HMP Long Lartin
South Littleton
Evesham
Worcs. WR11 5T2

US murder in the gulf

ORGANISE WITH FRFI

LORNA REID

In July Manchester police launched an attack on our right to demonstrate on the streets (see reports in this issue). After 14 arrests on a variety of charges ranging from Noise Pollution to Public Order Act Section 5 RCG members and supporters in Manchester mobilised a wide range of local forces to defend the right to demonstrate.

On Monday 18 July 60 people joined the RCG's weekly picket of South African Airways, the focus of police attacks. Manchester City Councilors Dennis Barker and Yousuf Gooljari joined the RCG, the VMDC and, the Iona Church Community Group, the North West Campaign for Gay and Lesbian Equality, Manchester Women's Group, Women Against Deportations, Women for Wages for Household and many individuals for a mass picket. The Environmental Health Officer from the City Council confirmed that the picket was not committing any noise offences. The strength of the picket forced the police to back off and no arrests were made.

Our comrades in Manchester have initiated an organising committee open to all groups and individuals to defend the right to demonstrate.



Police attack RCG and VMDC activist.

RCG DELEGATION TO IRELAND FOR ANTI-INTERMENT COMMEMORATION

RCG members and supporters are now finalising their plans for our annual delegation to Belfast to participate in the Anti-Internment commemoration on 14 August. Our London branches held a successful series of forums on Ireland to mobilise and prepare for the delegation.

To mark the introduction of internment without trial in Ireland on 9 August 1971 we are holding a public meeting

in London on 4 August on the subject of British terror in Ireland. Another public meeting will be held in London to report back from the delegation on 18 August where delegation members will give eye-witness accounts.

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! BUY IT! SELL IT! DO IT!

593 copies of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* 79 which carried a profile on Nelson Mandela were sold on the Anti-Apartheid Movement demonstration on 17 July. A further 156 copies were sold on the City AA rally outside the racist embassy later that evening. A record number of 521 FRFI badges were sold during the day.

The last Communist Forum on South Africa in this series will be held on Sunday 31 July in the Marchmont Centre, London, on the Communist International. This series of forums has examined from a communist perspective the role that Britain played in the formation of apartheid and its continued support today for the regime. We have discussed the historical conditions leading to the Sharpeville and Soweto uprisings in South Africa and the role played by different forces in the liberation movement, particularly the PAC and the Black Consciousness Movement. A new series of forums will begin in September.

THE RCG AND THE POLL TAX

In the London Against the Poll Tax campaign there is an argument that the involvement of political groups has to be limited. We are arguing that the necessary unity of forces to defeat the Poll Tax must be a genuine unity built on the principle of democracy. Our experience of building open and democratic campaigns involving the broadest possible progressive forces holds vital lessons for a successful campaign against the Poll Tax. Our branches are holding public meetings on the Poll Tax over the summer period.

Following our intervention in the Socialist Conference in Chesterfield in June we have attended the South London Socialist Conference and the West Yorkshire Conference. At South London we again intervened on the issue of the Poll Tax and called for support for the national action against the Poll Tax conference to be held in October. The delegates unanimously passed a resolution supporting non-registration, non-compliance and non-payment and support for the national conference. Unfortunately, the West Yorkshire conference preferred to limit their future activity to organising more forums for discussion but not on the issue of the Poll Tax. We are continuing our intervention in the Socialist Conference network to build support for the action conference. ■



Iranians burying the bodies of those murdered by America.

NICK LEWIS exposes the US murder of 290 people on IR 655 and the US attempts to lie its way out of its guilt. The Western media have repeatedly tried to compare the US mass murder in the Gulf with the Soviet Union's shooting down of KAL 007 in 1983. TERRY O'HALLORAN examines the truth behind that incident. In fact both cases reveal the US ruling class' contempt for civilian lives and its willingness to risk mass murder to achieve its military and political aims.

On Sunday 3 July the American warship *USS Vincennes* fired two heat seeking missiles at an Iranian airliner on its scheduled flight from Bandar Abbas to Dubai. The plane was blown out of the sky. 290 people were killed. While Iranians searched the sea for their dead, Thatcher declared 'We fully accept the right of forces engaged in such hostilities to defend themselves'. From the moment the *USS Vincennes* carried out its act of wanton mass murder the US administration was issuing lies.

Lieutenant-Colonel Keith Schneider claimed 'an Iranian F-14 was approaching the *Vincennes* at a high rate of speed'. Harrowing Iranian television pictures (dubbed 'propaganda' by the Western media) showing rescue workers retrieving the bodies floating in the sea, forced the US

to change its story.

White House spokesperson Martin Fitzwalter said 'in a proper defensive action... an Iranian airliner was shot down.' Admiral William Crowe, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, went further and directly blamed the Iranians for the murders:

'This aircraft [the airbus] headed towards the *Vincennes* and commenced closing at high speed... The suspect aircraft was outside the prescribed commercial air corridor.

'A warning was sent on both military and civilian distress frequencies... but the aircraft neither answered nor changed its course. There were electronic indications on *Vincennes* that led it to believe that the aircraft was an F-14.'

Officials added that the plane was flying at 7,000ft and descending into an 'attacking position'. Reagan used these tales to dismiss the incident as 'an understandable accident'.

The US story was soon shown to be lies.

- IR 655 was a normal commercial twice weekly flight from Bandar Abbas to Dubai, as listed in the *Official Air Guide* published monthly in the US and air travel guides.

- At all times the plane was well inside the eleven mile wide international civilian air corridor across the Strait of Hormuz. This was confirmed by the Italian frigate *Espero*.

- 30 miles out of Bandar Abbas IR 655 was flying at 12,000ft and had just got permission to climb to 14,000ft. This is when it was blown out of the sky. John Siden, radar operator on another US ship, confirmed that IR 655 was climbing when shot down.

- IR 655 was emitting only standard civilian signals.

- IR 655 was flying at normal speed for a civilian airbus.

The facts are clear. A civilian Iranian plane flying in a civilian air corridor in broad daylight was blown up in mid-air by a US warship equipped with the most

sophisticated radar and the most lethal weapons, patrolling 8,000 miles from home in waters it had no right to patrol. It was an act of mass murder by a US administration determined to impose its will on the Gulf.

Indeed the US has a record of complicity in such massacres. The Israeli fighter that shot down a Libyan airliner in 1973, killing 106 people, was US supplied. In 1983 US backed UNITA bandits shot down an Angolan TAAG Boeing 737, killing 130. The Stinger missiles used by Afghan reactionaries to shoot down civilian planes on at least three occasions, are US supplied.

The Western media, with few exceptions, have faithfully reproduced administration lies. The *New York Post* said 'Iran is to blame and Iran alone'. *USA Today* claimed that the airbus was on 'a mad kamikaze mission'. A US official's idiotic claim that the Iranians had filled the plane with 'dead bodies' was faithfully reported.

But no amount of US lies or media slander can disguise the fact that 290 people were cold-bloodedly shot out of the sky by a US warship acting on Reagan's instructions to protect the rule of US imperialism in the Gulf.

Nick Lewis

'What's history is history, be it fact or fiction'

So said then White House Press Secretary Larry Speakes in 1983 when questioned about the growing holes in the US administration's account of the shooting down of KAL 007 by the Soviet Union.

On 1 September 1983 a Soviet SU-15 fighter plane shot down KAL 007. 269 people died. The US administration used the incident to mount a propaganda attack on the Soviet Union and get Congressional approval for the MX missile programme.

Gradually the truth emerged. KAL 007 was nearly 400 miles off-course deep inside Soviet airspace and flying over sensitive military installations when it was shot down.

- It could not have been accidentally off-course.

- The pilot, Captain Chun Byung-in had repeatedly given false reports of his position and altitude.

- Before take-off at Anchorage

he had secretly loaded an extra 10,000lbs of fuel.

- He had altered his own flight charts in line with his actual course that night.

- He had executed an air rendezvous with a US RC-135 spy plane before entering Soviet airspace.

- He had ignored tracer warnings and executed evasion manoeuvres when challenged by Soviet fighters.

KAL 007 was initially identified as an RC-135. It was never identified as civilian airliner. After the warnings were ignored and the plane suddenly accelerated to escape, it was shot down.

The US denied that their spy planes were in the area. Later they had to admit that at least one RC-135 and probably other spy craft were in the area.

They claimed that the Soviets knew it was a civilian airliner.

Later they had to admit that their own intelligence data confirmed that the Soviets had not been able to identify the plane as a civilian craft.

They released tapes of communications from the Soviet fighter. Later they had to 'correct' their translations to include the pilot's report that he had fired tracers among other 'errors'. Experts who listened to the tapes found that the 'errors' could not have arisen from mistranslation or indecipherability.

They issued maps showing KAL 007 flying a completely different course from the one it had, in fact, flown.

Over and over again they lied. But it was not only in order to create maximum propaganda advantage over the Soviet Union, it was also to cover up their own role in the affair.

For the only plausible explanation of KAL 007's behaviour that night was that it was on a surveillance mission on behalf

of US intelligence. The best probability is that it was acting as a passive probe, flying deep into Soviet airspace in order to activate Soviet radar and air defences. The resulting electronic traffic is then monitored by the US spy planes and satellites.

Of course such missions carry risk. The Soviet Union is likely to shoot down any military plane it finds playing this game. The gamble was that the Soviets would not shoot down a civilian plane. Unfortunately, the Soviets never knew it was a civilian plane.

The US ruling class had gambled with 269 lives and lost. Yet despite being directly responsible for the deaths, the US then cynically proceeded to use the incident which it had itself created, as a propaganda weapon against the Soviet Union. Reagan is as responsible for the 269 deaths on KAL 007 as he is for the deaths in the Gulf.

Terry O'Halloran

LETTERS

LARKIN BOOKS



New pamphlet: Viraj Mendis Life or Death?

This pamphlet shows how the VMDC is fighting for Viraj's right to stay in Britain. It shows why Viraj's life is in danger in Sri Lanka. It shows the injustice of the British courts which have refused to consider the facts of his case. Viraj's fight goes on. You can join it!

Edited by Eddie Abrahams and Viraj Mendis.
Published by Larkin Publications.

48pp, £1.50 plus 30p p&p. All cheques/POs payable to Larkin Publications. Please send your orders to Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.

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

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

Miners Strike 1984-85 People versus State by David Reed and Olivia Adamson. 144pp, £2.50 plus 40p p&p

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

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Gorbachev and the export of revolution

On 2 November 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev delivered a long speech devoted to the 70th anniversary of the October revolution, before the leading bodies of party and state. Among other things, Gorbachev denounced those 'who put their stakes on the export of the revolution' ('Trotsky and the Trotskyites'), later he says that 'countering leftist extremism, he (Lenin) argued that it was possible for countries with different social systems to coexist peacefully'.

Now, what does this mean? Let's review the historical record first. The two main supporters of the 'export of revolution' in Lenin's time were Nikolai Bukharin who opposed the signing of the Brest-Litovsk peace in 1918 and Marshal Tukhachevsky who briefly and without success proposed the formation of an international general staff of the Red Army in 1920 (Trotsky was never connected with either grouping). Does anyone in the CPSU defend such proposals today – and if not, what is the purpose of Gorbachev's remarks?

The answer to question 1 is no. To answer question 2 it should be realised that 'export of revolution' refers above all to the direct intervention in Afghanistan, which has nothing to do with the proposals of Bukharin and Tukhachevsky. The Red Army did not go in to overthrow an existing pro-imperialist regime and make a revolution but to defend an existing (since April 1978) national democratic government against CIA-backed bandits. The difference is basic but clearly lost on that wing of the Soviet leadership which is pressing for withdrawal from Afghanistan without any guarantees of the revolution's survival.

Afghanistan is a particularly stinking example of Gorbachev's 'new thinking'. Others include the grossly exaggerated importance given to last December's treaty scrapping land based intermediate nuclear weapons, which can easily be moved out to sea (and Star Wars is not mentioned, of course). The biggest concession on Reagan's part at the Moscow summit seems to be his acknowledgement that the USSR is no longer an 'evil empire' – and that, no doubt, to improve Bush's chances in the election!

Front-line fighters against imperialism could be forgiven for regarding 'new thinking', at least as it applies to their struggles, as a polite expression meaning demoralisation, and wondering whether, if Gorbachev is prepared to abandon the Afghan revolution and urge it to share power with the CIA bandits, there is ultimately any revolution that can count on backing from the USSR at this time. An article in the 17 February issue of *Literaturaya Gazeta*, urging that the Afghan 'solution' be adopted by the Nicaraguan government in its dealings with the Contras is scarcely reassuring. So far the Sandinistas have politely ignored the hint. And hopefully, as the CIA and the Pakistani regime tear up the Geneva accords in returning to use Pakistani territory as a base for the bandits, hopefully the CPSU will decide that Afghanistan is after all worth defending – not least in the interests of defending the USSR itself.

MIKE WEBBER

Write to:

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BCM Box 5909,
London WC1N 3XX



Two faces of democratisation

John Hales' letter (*FRFI* 79 June-July 1988) raises so many points, in a rather disconnected way, that it is difficult to know where to begin. I hope I will not do injustice to his argument by concentrating only on three questions.

Firstly, I did not argue that socialist planning succeeded in 'Achieving growth whilst improving living standards' in the way that John Hales suggests. It is undoubtedly true that during the First Five Year Plan in particular the immediate consumption of sections of the working class fell, but 'cultural and social provisions' for the working class increased throughout this period.

Secondly, John Hales argues that it was the power exercised by the 'inner party elite around Stalin' which was 'a powerful reason why Russia achieved a rate of growth greater than any market economy.' This does not fit the facts. Throughout the period of the first three Five Year Plans, the Stalin leadership continually tried to break the power of the middle-level bureaucracy in state and party, and to raise the political level of the rank-and-file membership.

On this point, I urge comrades to read the brilliant work by the US academic J Arch Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges. The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938* (Cambridge University Press 1985) which clearly shows that: '... Stalin, Zhdanov and others preferred to revive the educational and agitational functions of the party, to reduce the absolute authority of local satraps, and to encourage certain forms of rank-and-file participation... It was Stalin's intention to inspire action "from below", to conduct a mass political campaign for increased participation and grass-roots criticism.' (p 105)

Thirdly, John Hales concludes: 'It should be clear socialists should support democratisation not resist it.' While it's not clear from the letter who is resisting democratisation, it might be a good idea to be clear what 'democratisation' is. It means one thing to the sections of the intelligentsia in the Soviet Union who aspire to the 'democratic freedoms' of their counterparts in the imperialist countries, and who, more to the point, covet their privileged social position. It means something quite different

in the context of the *perestroika* of the party, preparing it to face the renewed challenge from imperialism.

Socialists in Britain can play their part by exposing the true meaning of 'democratisation' in the first sense. Why do a few thousand utterly unrepresentative dissidents, mystics and charlatans, get so much publicity in the Western media? It is because 'democratisation' can be directed *against* the Soviet system, opening it up to imperialist influence. Socialists here can be confident that the working class and its allies in the Soviet Union will use 'democratisation' to revitalise the party – we must unmask the hypocritical praise for 'democratisation' by the imperialists and their allies in the labour movement.

PATRICK NEWMAN
London

Flawless campaign

It is time once again to renew my subscription to your excellent paper, so please find enclosed a cheque for £10 to show my appreciation for the abundance of information, news, analysis you have provided over the past year.

I am enclosing a resolution which I got passed unanimously at Sutton Trades Council in May which is just one small example of the effects of your flawless campaign on behalf of Viraj Mendis. After a lengthy speech giving the history of his activities, I am pleased to say that several delegates became more involved with the issues surrounding the racist policies of the present government in relation to immigration and this is attributable to *FRFI* for its persistent disclosures of government, both national and local.

Once again I say thank you and keep up the good work.
M. MURTAGH
Surrey

Fightback starts here

The TUC under the leadership of Norman Willis are collaborating with the Tories to implement the Employment Training Programme which is equivalent to the Workfare programme in America. The ETP means that people have got to work for their benefits – the unemployed will have to work 35 hours a week for an extra £10 on top of their benefit. Willis claims that the ETP will work but he is

FRFI needs £500 per month

In June we raised £532, but with only a few days left of July we have raised only £327.83. Please rush your donations to us to help keep the price of the paper at 40p waged and 20p for unemployed. Many readers would not be able to afford the paper if the price went up. Act now by sending us your donations to subsidise FRFI, and ask your friends to help as well. Organise fundraising events over the summer to help us meet the target.

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stabbing us in the back. The Unemployed Workers Charter (UWC) are lobbying the TUC on 5 September at the Bournemouth conference.

Many of the trade unions like NALGO, NUPE and others have refused to co-operate with the ETP because it does not provide proper training for the unemployed and does not pay wages at trade union rates.

I will be going to the conference to express my opposition to Workfare.

The Tories must not be allowed to get away with this. We must call for a massive fightback. The unemployed are being exploited and threatened with no benefit for six months if they do not accept a placement on the ETP slave labour scheme. The fightback starts here.

Yours in struggle,
ERROL BAPTISTE
London

Stop Evren

On 14 July I supported a demonstration against General Evren's visit to Cambridge. At the rally which was mainly attended by Kurds, Turks and Cypriots, I spoke for the RCG which was the only left group present. We were well received by the demonstrators as we expressed our solidarity for the Kurdish and Turkish people and our unconditional support for the people's liberation army of Kurdistan and those fighting fascism in Turkey.

The necessity of the national democratic revolution as a precondition for the socialist revolution was stated and the analogy drawn between Ireland and Kurdistan for Britain and Turkey.

Other speakers included Amnesty International, Cambridge Trades Council, the Organisation of University Lecturers and the Committee to Stop General Evren's Visit.
ADAM SHERWOOD
Cambridge

Robeson – a class conscious fighter

The historic contribution of Paul Robeson is undermined by the playwright Rashleigh (*FRFI* 77) and attacked by Mark (*FRFI* 78). Both from the left and the right Robeson is regarded as an idealist who failed.

This is the standpoint of the mean-minded chauvinist who fails to appreciate that Robeson's magnificent stand in favour of the communist countries was an historic extension of his stand against American imperialism and racism. In actually supporting what Mark calls 'the bureaucracies of Eastern bloc nations' Robeson gave proper political concreteness to the struggle against racism, just as today the anti-racist stance is meaningless without active support for the anti-imperialist liberation movements.

Moreover, as a black communist in the cold-war period of the MacArthur regime, Robeson was personally very courageous. He stood openly on the side of those the American administration had declared were its enemies.

Here was a man who, with his wonderful voice and acting ability could have limited himself to making money and moral statements. Instead he was a class conscious fighter whose life work strengthens us as communists today.
SUSAN DAVIDSON
London

RCG ACTION

RCG SUPPORTERS GROUP meet regularly to discuss the politics of the RCG and plan our activities. For details of supporters groups in your area please contact: RCG, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.

PUBLIC MEETINGS ON IRELAND END BRITISH TERROR IN IRELAND

Thursday 4 August 7.30pm
ANTI-INTERMENT IN BELFAST
Thursday 18 August 7.30pm
Both at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1 (Holborn tube)

ANTI-INTERMENT MARCH

Demonstration to demand **Troops Out of Ireland! Prisoners Out Jail!** Called by the *Irish Freedom Movement*. 6 August. Assembly 1pm Islington Town Hall (rear), Upper Street, London N1.

RCG COMMUNIST FORUM

SOUTH AFRICA *The Communist International* introduced by An Higginbottom. Sunday 31 July 6pm Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont Street, London WC1 (Russell Square tube).

NORTH WEST BIRMINGHAM SIX CAMPAIGN WEEK OF ACTION

Demonstration – Free the Birmingham Six! Saturday 29 October Assemble 12 noon Strangeways Prison, Manchester. For further information contact **NWB6 Campaign** c/o 53 Glynn Street, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 7DN.

TAMIL EELAM SUPPORT COMMITTEE PROTEST DEMONSTRATION AND RALLY

Sunday 31 July. Assemble Tyburn Way (Marble Arch tube) at 1.30pm. March to Temple Place. In remembrance of men, women and children who were killed in cold blood in Sri Lankan state sponsored terrorism. Campaign in Tamil Eelam. Over 20,000 civilians have been killed.

PICKET WORMWOOD SCRUB PRISON

Friday 5 August 6.30pm. Called by **Broadway Farm Defence Campaign**, Family of Winston Silcott, Engin Rag and Mark Braithwaite and Tenham Three are Innocent Campaign.

For more information, ring 01-1688.

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 teacher's opportunist leaders of Britain's Labour and trade union movement – **Join the RCG!**

I wish to join/receive more information about the RCG

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HANDS OFF IRELAND!

Ever since the latest phase of the Irish struggle began, opportunists in Britain have been searching for a middle path between supporting British rule in Ireland on the one hand and supporting the revolutionary struggle of the Irish people for self-determination on the other. They always begin by denying the political, economic and strategic reasons for Britain's occupation of Ireland. Thus Charter sponsor Ken Livingstone argues:

'There is no reason anymore, either economic or military, for Britain to remain in Northern Ireland... It's only a matter of time before the Government recognises that withdrawal is the best policy.'



Having rejected the material basis for the British occupation of Ireland the Charter supporters then peddle the myth that Britain can play a progressive role in Ireland. Charter sponsor Chris Myant (CPGB and long standing opponent of the Republican Movement) calls for:

'constructive, broadly based action by the left in support of a job creation programme in Northern Ireland, firm action against discrimination, radical changes in the law to end the gross abuses of civil rights'.



This view is not a new one in the working class movement. Lenin called it 'socialist colonial policy' eighty years ago. It represents the interests of the labour aristocracy in the imperialist oppressor nation who want to continue to enjoy the benefits of imperialist exploitation whilst removing the threat of the liberation struggle. Hence they must convince people that imperialism can rule in a humane and just manner and that there is no necessity to use revolutionary force to destroy its rule.

So Myant talks about 'the pressures of the IRA's continued campaign and the media's skilful exploitation of its bloody excesses' as an obstacle for those supporting withdrawal. Myant & co talk as though Britain would

be more willing to withdraw if only there was no pressure on it to do so! Yet they know that before 1968 few people in Britain gave a damn about oppression in Ireland let alone talked about withdrawal.

The British ruling class cannot allow the revolutionary reunification of Ireland because it poses a threat to its economic, political and strategic interests in Ireland and to political stability in Britain. Hence the war and the brutal repression by Britain. Britain can rule Ireland only by repressive means and has never conceded anything to the Irish people except in the face of revolutionary force.

Why has the Charter emerged now? The answer lies in Britain's current strategy in Ireland. Seizing on the prolonged military and political stalemate that has existed between the Republican Movement and Britain since the defeat of the hunger strike (1981), the government has launched a series of initiatives with a single aim: the isolation and defeat of revolutionary Republicanism and the armed struggle. The Anglo-Irish Agreement is aimed at persuading Six Counties nationalists that under Twenty Six County influence Britain can be persuaded to reform the Six Counties and end discrimination and injustice.

Therefore Britain has sought to bolster constitutional nationalism, particularly the SDLP. The SDLP, acting as agents for Britain, has begun to put pressure on Sinn Fein to seek reforms and abandon the armed struggle. The

As time goes by...

The last twenty years is littered with failed attempts to find a middle road on Ireland.

The early 70's - The Bill of Rights Campaign
Its successor in 1976 was The Better Life for All Campaign

1978 - International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland

1979 - Young Liberals march for an end to the war

1980 - Charter 80

1981 - Don't Let Irish Prisoners Die

Often these 'initiatives' share the same personnel. They always share the same fate - they disappear without trace.

Charter campaign, whether all its supporters are aware of this or not, is effectively an adjunct to this process. Clare Short is very clear about this:

'There is a new movement taking place in Ireland... The Social Democratic and Labour Party and Sinn Fein have been talking for months about what political conditions might produce a cease-fire...'

Not surprisingly the Charter also rejects the Troop Out Now position. Chris Myant informs us that:

'Many of those involved had originally wanted a more traditional "Britain must get out now, full stop" approach. In its place is something more broad, more responsible and with more chance of success.'

Once again the task of building a principled movement for troops out now and self-determination for the Irish people has been sacrificed on the altar of opportunism.

The fact is that either you support the Irish people or you support the British ruling class. One or the other must win. There is no middle road. The Charter will therefore no doubt go the way of all previous attempts along these lines (see box). However, whatever opportunities this campaign creates should be used by revolutionaries to tell people in Britain the truth about Ireland that the Charter itself seeks to suppress. ■

On 30 June, Labour MP Clare Short launched the TIME TO GO Charter 'calling for British withdrawal from Northern Ireland'.

The political essence of the Charter - imperialist paternalism - is revealed in its statement that: '... Britain has a responsibility to make possible the process of reconciliation'.

Nick Lewis, Terry O'Halloran and Maxine Williams examine this new campaign.

TIME FOR A SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT



BRITISH TERROR

BOB SHEPHERD

The British army's callous disregard for the lives of ordinary nationalist people, even children, was shown again during the last few weeks. On 15 June a speeding British army landrover ran down three year old Gerald Flynn from the nationalist New Lodge Road area of north Belfast. They left the fatally injured child lying on the road. A neighbour immediately attempted to drive the child to hospital, but he was stopped for speeding and his car searched by the same British army landrover that had knocked the child down. By the time he reached hospital Gerald Flynn was dead.

On 20 June Johnny Carson, a father of three, was attacked by a British army patrol at New Barnsley Green only yards from his home, his 66 year old father was attacked when he went to his son's assistance and his sister Bernadette was batonned on the arm.

At the same time, just down the road, Anne Morris was pushing her ten month old son Gerard in his pram. A British soldier deliberately kicked the pram over as he ran past towards New Barnsley. Gerard took the full force on his forehead and eye. When Anne went to make a formal complaint she was laughed at and verbal-

ly abused by the RUC and the soldier who had kicked the pram over.

A taxi-driver was shot by the RUC on 30 June and died three days later. The IRA had attacked an RUC base and the RUC responded by indiscriminately spraying the area with bullets, fatally wounding the taxi-driver.

Another nationalist area under virtual siege by the RUC and UDR is the tiny nationalist area of the Markets in south Belfast. In one week in June 28 houses were raided, some as many as three times. Local people have been subjected to constant abuse as the area is saturated with RUC and UDR forces, they have been constantly stopped and questioned as they attempt to go about their business.

This saturation of nationalist areas with the RUC and British army comes at the same time as the loyalists are gearing up for the Orange marching season. Loyalist mobs have been continuously attacking vulnerable nationalist districts over the past few weeks, houses have been stoned and petrol bombed.

Loyalist murder gangs have also continued to operate. On 6 July in Dromone, County Down, Terry Delaney was murdered by the Ulster Freedom Fighters (cover name for the UDA). The assassins shot him in the head as he waited for a lift to work. ■

Gibraltar cover-up

MAXINE WILLIAMS

The government's attempts to ensure that the inquest into the Gibraltar murders is meaningless, continue.

Government lawyers argued that the SAS men should be anonymous and screened from view. They sought to limit questioning to how, when and where the three were killed. No matters affecting 'security of intelligence' should be raised.

The Coroner ruled that the SAS men must be visible to the jury and the lawyers but could be screened from the rest of the court. He also ruled that while the inquest would not consider matters of intelligence and security it would inquire into relevant matters 'preceding the moment of the shooting'. One of the 'relevant matters' being that the three were unarmed.

It is reported that the SAS men will attend the inquest, now set for 6 September. In addition to the limits agreed by the Coroner they will be able to refuse to answer any incriminating questions. The Coroner has already indicated that he is unhappy that the inquest will be the sole inquiry into the deaths and has said that it is likely to be flawed and possibly meaningless. ■