

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

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PHILIPPINES Marcos era ends

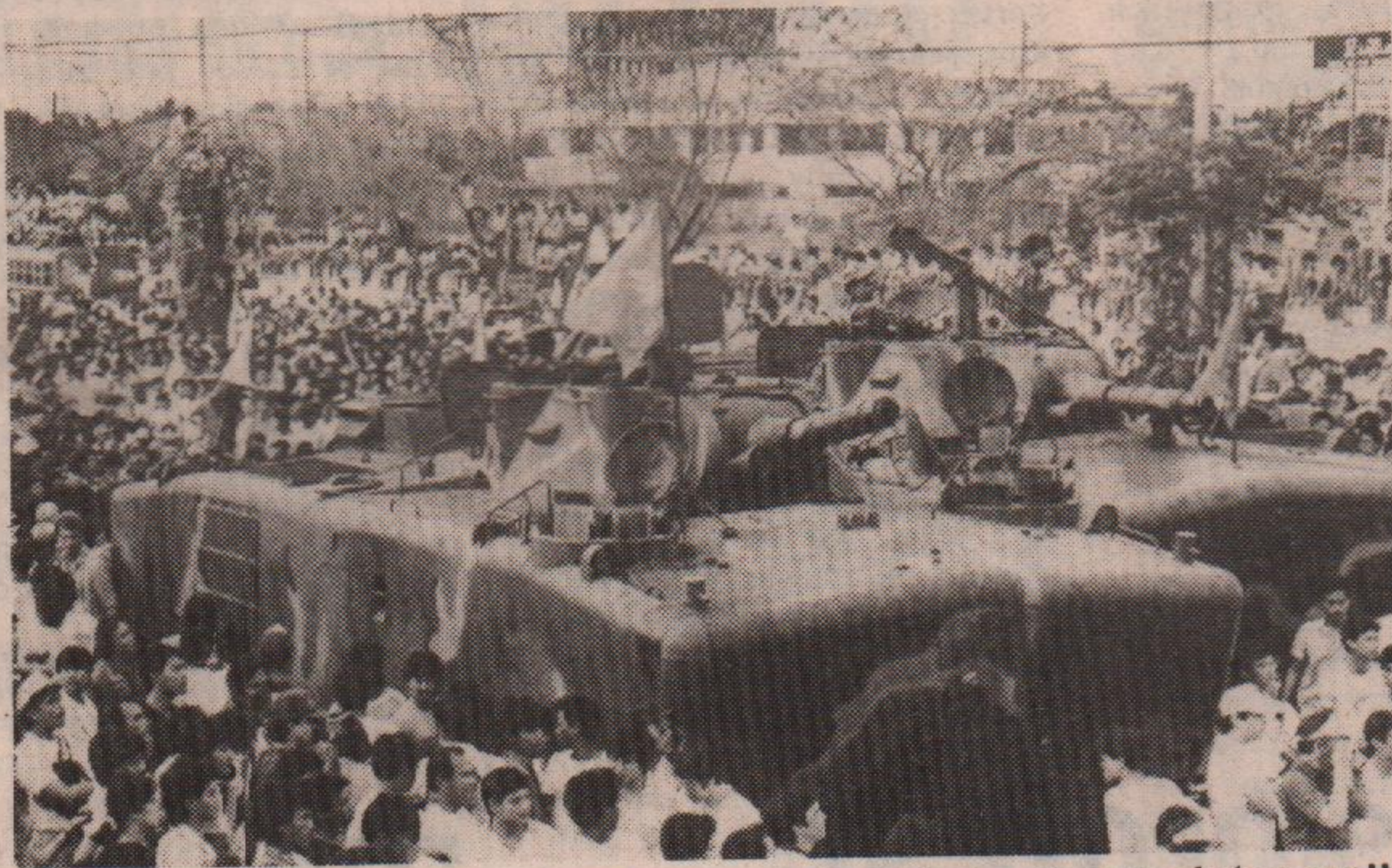
In Haiti and the Philippines two tyrants had outlived their usefulness for imperialism. So on 10 February a US-supplied plane ferried Haitian dictator 'Baby Doc' away from the vengeance of the masses. On 25 February a fleet of US helicopters shuffled Philippines' President Marcos and his closest cronies from the Malacanang Palace just hours after his comic inauguration as President. Marcos' last gambit had failed in the face of massive mobilisations following the rigging, corruption and murder of the 7 February elections.

Marcos was forced into the elections by the Reagan administration's alarm at the mounting anti-imperialist movement led by the Philippine Communist Party (CPP), National Democratic Front (NDF) and Bayan—a left-wing mass organisation. The spectre of popular revolution was to be exorcised by an electoral contest of bourgeois factions. The US hoped to confine the movement to constitutional politics subordinate to capitalist interests. Whilst backing Marcos, Reagan was careful to keep bridges open to 'Cory' Aquino's opposition.

When on 15 February the stooge National Assembly eventually announced the rigged election result, conferring on Marcos yet another presidential term, the people's anger had already begun to surge into the streets.

Among Aquino's middle-class and bourgeois supporters there was widespread indignation. They feared most that Marcos's continued rule would provoke the masses into attacking the foundations of imperialism in the Philippines—foundations upon which they had built their own fortunes.

Under the combined impetus of mass popular pressure and middle-class indignation, Aquino was compelled to maintain the challenge to Marcos. At a rally on 16 February she borrowed the slogan of 'Revolution', qualified after her own bourgeois fashion, as 'peaceful revolution', and called for civil disobedience and a general strike. Simultaneously she sought to head and to restrain the mass movement. To ensure that the 'revolution' remained 'peaceful' she appealed to the masses to remain at home or go to church on the day of the general strike! In contrast, the popular Bayan vowed to send thousands of radicals into the streets.



Recoiling at this prospect, the ruling class and military began to transfer their loyalties to Aquino. In a decisive move, after meeting with US envoy Philip Habib, two Marcos cronies—General Ramos and Defence Minister Enrile—barricaded themselves in the Defence Ministry on 22 February and called for Marcos's resignation. Thus began the rapid desertion of most centres of authority to Aquino's side with the aim of keeping the State intact.

Critical in denying Marcos the ability to launch a counter-attack were the hundreds of thousands of people who flooded the streets and made a human shield round the Defence Ministry. Pleas by the Roman Catholic Church for calm went unheeded as people began assaults on institutions of the Marcos dictatorship. Further resistance threatened to precipitate a civil war opening the way for the working class and oppressed to emerge as a dominant force. Marcos was told by the US administration 'Cut and

**Haiti
Baby Doc
overthrown**
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Thousands block the path of Marcos's tanks two days before the fall

cut cleanly'—in other words 'get out!'

Aquino's programme

'In historical struggles one must make a still sharper distinction between the phrases and fantasies of the parties and their real organisation and real interests, between their conception of themselves and what they really are' (Karl Marx)

Aquino, Ramos and Enrile have draped their programme in the slogans of 'revolution', 'people's power', 'democracy' and 'justice'. Aquino in particular has been acclaimed as the saviour of the Filipino people. In fact she has, only temporarily, salvaged the Philippines for imperialism and that section of the local bourgeoisie who resented Marcos and his cronies accumulating wealth at their expense. Aquino and her new Prime Minister Salvador Laurel are enormously wealthy landowners. The new Finance

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Viraj Mendis appeal rejected

Viraj Mendis's appeal against a deportation order has been rejected. On 21 February he received a 10 page statement by M Patey, the Immigration Appeals Chief Adjudicator outlining the reasons. It is a considered political attack, by a representative of British imperialism, on Viraj's activities as an FRFI supporter. 'It ill behoves' reads the statement 'a man who was living here without authority to participate in campaigns against the deportation of others.'! Defending British 'democracy' and the reactionary Sri Lankan regime, the statement is a true demonstration of the real standards of British 'justice'. The Home Office is determined to uproot our comrade and throw him upon the mercies of the Jayewardene regime which, at this very moment, is organising pogroms against the Tamil people and arresting Sinhalese left-wingers supporting the Tamil struggle.

Viraj applied for political asylum on the grounds of his open support for the Tamil struggle for self-determination.

Expert witnesses reported at the appeal the enormous repression of Tamil people in Sri Lanka and the harassment of the Sinhalese left. Patey however, who appropriately holds the title of Member of the British Empire, disregarded such niceties stating: 'I must accept that Sri Lanka is inherently a democracy where the rule of law applies'. He ignored the evidence, the Sri Lankan PTA, which allows detention for 18 months without trial and the 6th Amendment which makes it an offence to advocate separatism. The Home Office added that a PTA in Sri Lanka was no proof of the absence of democracy, since every 'democracy' had such laws, including Britain! A letter from the Sri Lankan High Commission stating that Viraj was not wanted for any crime was deemed to be an 'unequivocal guarantee' against repression! That Sri Lankan press publicity on Viraj's case could lead to Jayewardene's unofficial thugs attacking him did not of course figure.

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Broadwater Farm Police attack follows Kinnock walkabout

On 10 February Neil Kinnock visited the Broadwater Farm Estate where he was photographed with Bernie Grant. This cynical publicity stunt designed to secure some electoral support from the community took place amidst a severe intensification of repression on the estate. Yet Kinnock who only recently announced his 'view' that 'individual freedom comes before equality' remained silent on the systematic repression of the rights of the Broadwater Farm Estate community.

The brutality of the arrests and detentions were to be seen not long before Kinnock's visit when a young black man was dragged from his car on the estate. In a flash 30 cars and vans and 40 to 50 policemen on foot were at the scene. The victim's log book and tax certificate had already been seized by the police during two previous raids on his flat. On this, his third arrest, he was charged with 'grievous bodily harm' while being violently manhandled into police custody. Turning to a young woman who was protesting against this treatment, a policeman said, 'We're not leaving this Farm until we kill one of these black bastards'. While telling FRFI comrades about this incident she said that she was too frightened to give her name as a witness for fear of police reprisals.

And immediately after Neil Kinnock and his press entourage left the estate,

the police smiled and raced up the stairs of the very block where the Labour leader had been served lunch, raided a flat and arrested the resident. This despite the fact that Kinnock had been having discussions with the Scotland Yard

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Labour Party knives out for the left

The vote by the Labour Party National Executive Committee to start disciplinary proceedings against 16 Militant supporters in the Liverpool District Labour Party, and to suspend its executive committee, comes as no surprise. It marks just one stage further in Kinnock's 'clean-up' of the party. Carried out in the name of democracy, the clean-up is central to Kinnock's strategy for winning the next election. His plan is simple - to isolate and defeat the left in the party, while shifting Labour Party policy rapidly rightwards. Kinnock is determined to isolate any voice which detracts from Labour's appeal to the potential middle class, and white, skilled working class vote.

But, in reality, Kinnock knows he still has a long way to go before Labour is safely on the road to winning the next election. The Labour Party's present success in the opinion polls, where it leads the Alliance by 1% at 36%, with the Tories trailing at 27%, is due entirely to the Tories' own goals, rather than to any alternative put forward by Labour.

Knives out for poor

Labour's latest pronouncements on economic policy show how far to the right Kinnock is going. Gone is even the pretence of a Labour Party as champion of the poor and oppressed. Instead, Kinnock and Shadow Chancellor Roy Hattersley are now putting forward the Labour Party as the champion of a regenerated British capitalism. This is Kinnock's alternative to Thatcher's US-style capitalism and the Tory wets/Alliance European-based capitalism.

In a recent speech Hattersley pronounced that the 'encouragement' of British manufacturing industry should begin 'immediately' after the election of a Labour government. The 'encouragement' will take the form of massive state subsidies financed through borrowing. What Hattersley does not point out is that international bankers and financiers, unlike the Labour Party, do not deal in fantasies. Borrowed money, as oppressed nations throughout the world have found out, has to be repaid - at ferocious rates of interest. It is the working class that invariably bears the brunt of this.

Neither does Hattersley point out that the only other 'encouragement' known to bring about such major shifts in capitalist investment would be low wages on a par with those in oppressed nations. Wages in Britain would have to be driven down massively to bring about the 'economic miracle' these two 'socialists' are dreaming about. Hattersley and Kinnock prioritise low inflation and the stimulation of private industry over cutting employment - sentiments of which Thatcher herself would be proud. Labour has now dropped all pretence of planning for full employment. The unemployed will just have to wait their turn while Kinnock hands out massive subsidies to private companies. Renationalisation,



Hatton: due for purge?

tions, of course, are now 'well down the list' of Labour's priorities.

Kinnock's allegiance to the 'haves' at the expense of the poor was made even more explicit in a recent interview when he stated that the middle classes and those on higher incomes would be 'quite safe' from increased taxation under a Labour government. 'Individual freedom' (ie the right to a fat salary) he said 'must come before equality' (ie even a minimal distribution of income in favour of the poor).

On the question of union legislation under a future Labour government, Kinnock has said that compulsory ballots would be retained for the election of union officials and over political funds. The TUC have already fallen in behind Kinnock on this by not expelling the AUEW and EETPU, who continue to defy them on this issue. A majority of trade union leaders are now said to be in favour of a 'review' of TUC policy on ballots. Kinnock has also made it absolutely clear that while Labour Party legislation will ensure the right to strike, there can be 'no return' to the pre-Thatcher state of affairs when legal immunity could be claimed for all forms of industrial action. There is little doubt that Willis will fall in behind this too. When he said recently that the TUC must move from 'protest to priorities' he was saying that *nothing* must stand in the way of electing the next Labour government.

Olivia Adamson



Austin Rover: up for grabs

MIKE ABRAHAMS/NETWORK

Margaret Thatcher's fatal compulsion

The crisis of British capitalism continues to reveal substantial conflicts of interest within the ruling class. It is no accident that the divisions over Westland (see FRFI 56) have carried over and been given clearer expression in the conflicts surrounding the sale of British Leyland.

Opposing Thatcher and her cronies are the bourgeoisie who turn a profit from manufacture. Heseltine and Heath, playing the patriots, cry with indignation at the prospect of selling BL off to the US transnationals, Fords and General Motors. These champions of things British favour joint industrial ventures with European partners not out of principle, but out of sheer necessity. Helicopter and car production are financially beyond the means of British firms alone. British capital needs allies if it is to retain its world position and do battle with the Japanese. The Europeans are seen as manageable, the US appears as a colossus, unmanageable, capable of dispensing with its British subsidiary.

Thatcher's bourgeois cronies filch profits from banking and the City markets. Playing the knights of free enterprise, they hide their global banking and monopoly combine concerns in the language of competition. In Thatcher's 'property owning democracy' of 'popular capitalism' fewer than one in twenty people own shares of any form or value. Combined, these private individuals own less than 28 per cent of all company shares, the bulk being owned by City institutions.

The BL Sale

If Swiss banking laws on secrecy,

Stock Exchange regulations and Lord Hanson combined to ensure that Sikorsky-Fiat won the Westland bid, Thatcher was very quickly forced into retreat over the BL sale. There are 13 MPs representing constituencies with BL plants having Tory majorities below 15 per cent. There are other Tory marginal seats with a direct interest in BL. These MPs have reason to be concerned.

The capitalist world car industry has an over-capacity of 5 million cars a year. Half of this surplus is on the European market. Last August British car stocks exceeded sales by two to one. The European car market is the most competitive in the world and BL is struggling. Ten years ago BL cars employed 120,000 manual workers, today the remnant, Austin-Rover, employs 38,000 workers. Yet even this destruction of capital and jobs plus £3.7 billion, £200 for every tax paying family, pumped into BL, has not produced profitability. Austin-Rover estimate they need 19 per cent of the domestic market to ensure profits: in December they managed just over 14 per cent. The law of capitalist crisis must assert itself: the weak devoured by the strong, capital must be compressed into fewer and fewer hands, its unprofitable branches be lopped off, its monopoly powers be strengthened in the quest for profits. That is

why BL's merchant bank, Hill Samuel, should be found negotiating a takeover of Austin-Rover that would have given Ford over 44 per cent of the British car market.

Thatcher's prating nonsense about competition is eye-wash. Her back-bench MPs and cabinet colleagues know that Ford's monopoly would mean the final tearing up of Austin-Rover and destruction of many of its suppliers. They forced Thatcher to shelve the Ford negotiations. European truck manufacture is operating at 40 per cent over market capacity: a General Motors takeover means the closure of either the Bedford or Leyland Vehicles plants. British bus and coach production has shrunk by 75 per cent in four years: a Laird Group or Volvo takeover will further slice output down to its most profitable core.

Like a Midas, everything Thatcher and her City cronies touch turns to gold. Everything they have and see must be turned into money. The worth of physical assets like factories is perishing in the stagnant and overcrowded market place. To turn those assets into money so that they can make more money, that is Thatcher's compulsion. When Heseltine complains in *The Guardian* (21 February 1986) 'Nowhere in government is there a regular sponsoring presence having regard to an industrial or commercial strategy' he is only sobering up from the anarchy that is the rule of financial capital over Thatcher's court.

Trevor Rayne

The price of GLC abolition

Ratepayers in many London boroughs are in for a shock this year. The London Residuary Body has announced plans for financing the myriad of 'successor bodies' which will replace the GLC. And the ratepayers will have to cough up more for these new bodies than they did for the GLC, despite the Tories' claims that abolition would save money. In fact, the main effects will be to reduce and disrupt services, and destroy jobs.

On 1 April, 3-4,000 GLC jobs (perhaps 15% of the total) will disappear, though many are already vacant, or covered by staff taking



Who pays for abolition?

voluntary redundancy. With only a few weeks to go, nobody knows which staff will be joining the dole queues, and even those who stay on have no guarantee of security. The LRB's job is to dispose of the remains of the GLC within five years, so thousands more jobs will go after 1 April.

The trade unions have been content to negotiate the terms of surrender, apart from a couple of small confrontations when NALGO members refused to cooperate with the authorities which were abolishing their jobs. The wishful thinking and individualism of most of the members has made it easy for the new authorities to divide, confuse and dishearten them. At the same time, the unions have failed to provide an alternative direction or prepare their members for a fight. They are paying the price now for allowing Ken Livingstone to dictate the response to abolition for the last two years.

Livingstone's anti-abolition campaign, like his anti-racist and anti-apartheid ones, has been a deceitful series of vote-winning stunts. He has splashed his slogans all over London, and lobbied Tory peers in a vain attempt to embarrass Thatcher by a backbench rebellion, but he was never prepared to fight a real battle. As soon as the abolition bill was passed and he had secured the Labour nomination for a safe seat in Parliament, Ken Livingstone dropped the abolition issue like a hot potato. Suddenly it was more important to save his respectability than the jobs of thousands of GLC staff or the services of millions of Londoners. Those workers now facing the sack are learning from bitter experience how little the fine words of the Labour left are worth.

Dave Hunter

Mass protest at Molesworth

FRFI joined over 5,000 demonstrators on a mass blockade of the US cruise missile base at Molesworth. We were there to oppose the siting of 64 cruise missiles at the base. The blockade was planned in order to stop contractors entering the base.

Despite appalling weather conditions - snow and sub-zero temperatures, demonstrators arrived from all over the country for the protest which lasted from dawn to dusk. All four entrance gates were successfully obstructed - at 6am the main contractors' gate in Cockbrook Lane was completely blocked by 2,000 people sitting in the road. The base was forced to close.

No doubt aware that mass arrests would mean major publicity, the police did not attempt to arrest any

of the blockaders. It was not until towards the end of the demonstration that they arrested 7 people for entering the base. They also did their best to deter protestors (with little success). Coaches and cars were forced to park miles from the perimeter of the base, meaning long walks in the freezing temperatures. No doubt this contributed to the fact that four people collapsed with hypothermia. However, spirits were kept up through singing, soup, and the warmth from fires lit.

People from many walks of life were represented - MPs, Christians, miners' wives and many students and young people were there. They showed that there is still a body of people prepared to take a stand and oppose the massive build-up of nuclear weapons in this country.

Susanna Lloyd

PTA renewed

On 19 February the anti-Irish, racist, Prevention of Terrorism Act was renewed intact by the House of Commons.

Whilst in 1985 only 35 MPs voted against renewal this year 109 did. Although this is a welcome improvement, the Labour leadership is clearly not committed to the official Labour Party policy of repealing the Act and Kinnock did not bother to vote at all. The recommendation of the government's own official review, that exclusion powers of the Act should be scrapped, was rejected by the Home Secretary Douglas Hurd. The numbers of those detained under the PTA is growing: last year 266 were held, 66 more than in 1984. Since the Act was introduced in 1974 over 6200 have been detained.

Pauline Sellars

JOIN THE RCG

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

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

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

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

Help us build a revolutionary anti-imperialist alternative. Work with us in our anti-racist, Irish solidarity, anti-apartheid and other struggles - Join the RCG!

I wish to join/receive more information about the RCG

Name _____

Address _____

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

Cooking up dirty deals at Wapping

On Friday 28 February TUC General Secretary Norman Willis began seeking talks with Rupert Murdoch's News International to end the present dispute in which 6,000 printworkers have been sacked. As we go to press it is not clear whether these talks will come to anything, but that they are aimed at betraying the sacked workers and basic trade union principles is beyond doubt.

The scab EETPU has agreed to join the talks with the other four unions involved: NGA, SOGAT, NUJ and AUEW. These talks are to be based on the original NGA/SOGAT offer made prior to the strike. At the heart of this sweetheart deal was a procedure for binding arbitration which could be triggered by either side. Accompanied by no-disruption clauses and compulsory balloting, this amounts to a no-strike agreement. The Willis talks are also aimed at securing redundancy terms - selling jobs. The conduct of the dispute so far gives no ground for supposing that anything other than a sell-out is being planned.

The News International dispute has seen the most intense judicial onslaught on trade union rights. Murdoch's astute manipulation of Tory anti-union laws has created a stream of court rulings criminalising: attempts to boycott work on *Times* supplements not printed at Wapping or Glasgow; attempts to enforce TGWU instructions to TNT drivers not to scab; attempts by UCW members to boycott deliveries of *Sun* bingo cards; solidarity action by SOGAT workers in London wholesalers. These are only some of the rulings. SOGAT has had its £17 million assets sequestered and has already paid a £25,000 fine. The NGA too has been fined £25,000 and faces sequestration. Indeed so complete has been this criminalisation process that even some government supporters have become nervous of the consequences of so clear an exposure of the class character of British law.

The police have loyally played their part as Murdoch's front line troops. On Saturday 15 February mounted police, supported by riot squads, attacked a 5,000 strong mass picket outside the Wapping plant. Just under 50 picketers were arrest-

'demanded' that the EETPU cease recruiting scabs (recruitment having already finished), inform the scabs working at Wapping and Glasgow that they are doing other workers' jobs and agree to a joint approach



'Outsiders' on the Wapping picket line

ed. Every time the pickets have shown any signs of life the police have moved in, attacked picketers and made arrests. At least 150 arrests have so far taken place. The mounted police attack took place just 3 days after a Newman-inspired media visit to the Metropolitan Police's newest London riot training centre. The 15 February attack was accompanied by the now standard propaganda about 'outside agitators', and production of 'weapons' 'seized' from picketers.

As during the miners' strike, organised scabbing has played a crucial role in the dispute. The EETPU has gone a stage further than the scab miners: Hammond & Co actually recruited Murdoch's scab printers. The TUC, however, have refused to expel the EETPU. Instead they

to Murdoch. Having murdered trade union rights, the EETPU agreed not to abuse the corpse. Similarly the NUJ NEC has repeatedly refused to take any action against NUJ scabs working for Murdoch and continues to recognise the scab chapels at Murdoch's newspapers.

Judicial attacks, sequestration, police violence, widespread scabbing and TUC treachery - these were all features of the miners strike - and will be in all significant strikes from now on. But despite such attacks, the miners' militant strike was maintained for a whole year. The crucial elements were Scargill's leadership and the fact that the struggle was determined by the majority of miners and their families most under threat.

What a contrast the News Interna-

tional dispute makes. When women blocked the road outside Murdoch's plant on Saturday 9 February (some 600 of the sacked workers are women) union officials used the police public address system to order them off the road. Brenda Dean (SOGAT) and Tony Dubbins (NGA) have repeatedly condemned 'outsiders' being involved in the pickets. London NGA official and Morning Star supporter Mike Hicks said they did not want 'the nutter crew turning up throwing bricks'. When SOGAT's funds were sequestered by Justice Michael Davies on 10 February and a £25,000 fine imposed, Dean declared that SOGAT would break the law if necessary. On 20 February SOGAT paid the fine. The emphasis now,

from Willis, Dean, Dubbins and Harry Conroy (NUJ) is on reaching an 'honourable' settlement - ie selling 4,000 jobs.

The print workers' dispute, as presently conducted, is heading for a shabby defeat. The miners' strike and the News International dispute represent two different paths for trade unionists. One opens the way to a new fighting movement, drawing together all sections of the working class in a common resistance to unemployment and poverty. The other remains locked in the past, putting the preservation of the privileges of a section of the working class before the interests of workers as a whole. In the battles ahead, all trade unionists will have to choose between these two paths.

Terry O'Halloran
(NUJ London Freelance Branch)

Japanese banks go onto the offensive

The growing strength of Japanese imperialism received dramatic confirmation in the latest statistics put out by the Bank for International Settlements. Japanese banks have overtaken the US banks to become the largest holders of international banking assets, far outstripping their US rivals.

International lending by Japanese banks reached a massive \$639.6bn at the end of September 1985 whereas that of the US banks was \$580.3bn. Together Japanese and US imperialist banks account for nearly 50 per cent of the overall international banking market with France, Britain and West Germany very far behind. Japanese banking operations are however much more heavily concentrated in the inter-bank market than their US rivals. This accounts for \$284.8bn (44.5 per cent) of their international lending compared to \$172.4bn (29.7 per cent) for the US. In terms of total lending to final non-bank customers Japanese banks lead the US banks by only \$10bn. Japan has a huge trade surplus with the imperialist countries. This together with the gradual slowdown of its economy during the world economic crisis has created enormous amounts of excess capital searching for profitable outlets. Last year net capital outflows, largely capital seeking higher interest rates abroad, reached a massive \$50bn turning Japan into the world's largest creditor nation, displacing Britain.

A large proportion of Japanese banking assets are concentrated in London, which is still by far the largest centre of international banking with some 25 per cent of the market. Japanese banks hold over 23 per cent of all banking assets in Britain. And this is only slightly less than the assets held in Britain by the large UK clearing banks. However, the Japanese share is rising and the British is falling, so Japanese banks are very likely to become the largest single force in the British banking market later on this year. A very serious challenge to British imperialism is taking place on its own ground, right at its centre.

This dramatic expansion of Japanese banking assets is aided by Japanese banking regulations. While most imperialist banks are required to have about \$1 of capital for every \$20 assets, the Japanese need only \$1 for

\$40 under their regulations. This reduces Japanese banking costs and allows them to expand less constrained by rates of return on capital. Japanese banks are in fact much less profitable than their British and US rivals. While Japanese banks made a net return on equity of only 3.4 per cent in 1984, UK banks made 6.8 per cent and US banks 12.8 per cent.

The Japanese challenge has a lot further to go. Large Japanese banks still have only about one quarter to a third of their assets abroad, compared to a half for a typical large Western imperialist bank. So the expansion of Japanese banking through an even greater penetration of all the major banking centres will continue to surge ahead and pose an ever more serious threat to US and European imperialism.

David Reed

	International assets by bank nationality \$bn	% share
Japan	639.6	26.0
US*	580.3	23.4
France	221.0	8.9
Britain	182.5	7.4
West Germany	164.9	6.7

* US share is overstated as it includes offshore branches

	International assets of banks: claims on non-banks \$bn	% share
Japan	179.1	23.0
US	169.1	21.7
Britain	69.2	8.9
France	63.9	8.2
West Germany	62.9	8.1

EMERGENCY LAWS TO CURB PUBLIC SPENDING

Last month in 'Planning for our poverty' (Politics of Profit, FRFI 56) it was pointed out that government spending targets are regularly overshoot and that even the Tories under Thatcher will not manage to cut public spending overall. In February the government admitted that the Treasury has seriously underestimated in forecasting spending levels for the next three years. Higher expenditure is almost certain by local authorities. There will be the inevitable increase in social security expenditure as unemployment continues to rise. And finally subsidies to the nationalised industries will increase as those industries fail to achieve the high targets set them by the government.

In its increasingly desperate efforts to curb this rise and make most people's lives even more miserable, the government is planning to introduce emergency legislation to control public expenditure. A bill to control local authorities' gross capital expenditure will be put to parliament after Easter. Once again this government, which supposedly worships 'free market' forces, is proving to be the most interventionist government seen in this country for decades.

ASSET SALES LINE POCKETS OF RICH

After six years of the Tory government's privatisation programme it has become clear that far from benefiting all taxpayers, these sales have lined the pockets of the rich. The

Bid to remove jury challenge

When Clive Ponting was acquitted last year there were the usual disgruntled noises in the Tory political background, crying out that the jury system was being 'abused'. The jury (or 'petty jury' to give it its correct name) originated after the abolition of 'trial by ordeal' in 1215. At that time both the Crown and defence were allowed to challenge potential jurors without showing cause - the so called 'Peremptory Challenge'. However, following Crown abuses of this right, it was removed from them by the Challenge of Jurors Act 1305 - though they managed to retain the right to 'Stand by' a juror which in reality is the same thing under a different label.

Until 1948, the defence retained the right to 'Challenge' as many jurors as they wished. However, following the war several prominent cases were delayed because defendants exercised their right to challenge and the result of this was that \$35(£) of the Criminal Justice Act 1948 reduced the number of defence challenges to seven. The Crown retained their unlimited right to 'Stand by' as many as they wished. In the mid 1970s following the so-called 'Bombers' trials, the right wing press was full of 'jury abuse' allegations and the result was that \$43 of the Criminal Law Act 1977 reduced the defence challenge from seven to three - the crown again retained their right to 'Stand by'. Now, following Ponting and, more recently the Cyprus spy case, we learn the Peremptory Challenge is to be scrapped altogether as far as the defence is concerned, because, it is said, it is being 'abused'.

To claim the challenge system is being abused is a contradiction of terms. If a person is given a statutory right to do a certain act, then it cannot be logically argued that by exercising that right, he or she is abusing it.

The real reason why the Peremptory Challenge system for the defence is being scrapped - a system which has for the last 770 years conferred on Defence Counsel the statutory right to weed out jurors who are, or appear to be, prejudiced against the defendant - is not due to any so called 'abuse', (for a right, unlike a discretion, cannot be abused). It is due solely to the fact that, as Terry O'Halloran neatly puts it in FRFI 56, 'The jury is the one element in a trial that the government cannot be certain of'. By exercising their right to challenge jurors, some media prominent defendants have managed to obtain impartial juries and thus secure acquittals - which have in turn resulted in furious Tory MPs tabling Parliamentary Questions that caused red faces throughout Whitehall.

The Peremptory Challenge system is as much a basic principle of English Criminal Law as the very juries themselves and we should all actively fight to secure its retention. If we lose it, then we begin the descent down the slippery legal slope that can only end in greater reception of Diplock 'juryless' courts on this side of the Irish sea. This, to some, may appear far fetched, but a brief glimpse at the recent 'Roskill Report' which advocates juryless courts in England and Wales for fraud cases will show that far from being a fiction of the future it is rapidly becoming a fact of the present.

Mark Leech
HMP Lewes

Welfare state an unpaid ransom

The central and contradictory position of welfare in capitalist societies has long been understood. Marx showed how the state can limit capitalist exploitation in the long-term interest of capital as a whole. In 1885 Joseph Chamberlain, late Secretary of State for the Colonies, described welfare as 'The ransom paid by property for the privilege it enjoys'.

The current crisis makes payment of this 'ransom' ever more essential for the survival of the ruling class - yet increasingly expensive and unacceptable to them. Thatcherism is trying to restore the rate of profit by recreating the conditions of a century ago: a particularly vicious response to a contradiction that traps all pro-capitalist governments.

While attacking trade unions, Thatcher has undermined workers' basic rights. The Wages Bill removes wages council protection for workers under 21. Despite the decrease in pay for this group in recent years Tories claim wages councils 'price youth out of a job'. Although serious industrial accidents rose by 24% from 1981-4, with 7,000 killed or seriously injured, a white paper plans to relax health and safety rules. Employment Secretary Lord Young calls these rules 'a burden which government imposes upon business.' Of those injured at work, 90% will lose rights to compensation under new government proposals. The DHSS plans abolition of disablement benefit for those less than '15% disabled'. Workers who lose fingers or toes, suffer back injury, or from an occupational disease, could lose all benefit. The Tories even want to abolish industrial death benefit for the families of those killed at work.

The DHSS is further attacking the right to strike. The Social Security Bill plans to replace Family Income Supplement (FIS) with 'Family Credit'. This, paid to low-income families through the (largely male) pay packet, will be stopped immediately in the event of a strike. This will also entail loss of free school meals. The DoE has told officers to reject claims by printers sacked by Rupert Murdoch.

The DHSS makes local offices assess extra fuel payments in severe weather. One day this freezing February only 6 offices in the South East felt it cold enough to pay anything. No payments have been made in Scotland. Benefits are now inadequate to keep many old people alive. Literally thousands of old people are dying of hypothermia in this barbarous country because they can't afford to pay fuel bills. The latest benefit rises, to take effect from July 1986, are derisory and will only serve to bring about increased poverty and deprivation. A single pensioner will get just 40p a week more - at 1.1% just a quarter of the annual inflation rate; child benefit rises by a meagre 10p a week; a single unemployed person will get just 35p more.

As the Tories cut back benefits and abolish laws which hinder the power of capital to exploit workers, they are forced to conceal the results. The government has changed the way it calculates unemployment figures some 15 times since 1979; reducing the total by 500,000. After record figures in December and January, the Tories plan to delay monthly figures by 2 weeks, to produce an artificial reduction of 40-90,000. Their 'Victorian values' cannot include honesty.

Dave Burton

government has managed to underprice a large number of the assets it has sold so far. The share prices of most of the companies sold off have risen much faster than the FT index over the same period. An analysis of seven major sales from British Aerospace in 1981 to British Telecom in 1984 shows that while they produced £4,976m they were undervalued by

some 28 per cent or £1,412m. So almost £1 1/2bn has been lost on seven transactions alone. Such an amount would enable expenditure on roads, sewers and housing to increase by about 14 per cent this year. Instead it has simply gone into shareholders' pockets: yet another case of this government giving handouts to the rich.

David Reed

People organise for power

Over the last month the greatest blow to the apartheid regime has been the struggle of black people in South Africa which continues unabated after eighteen months of continuous militancy and seven months of the State of Emergency. Botha delivered yet another duplicitous speech which impressed no-one, least of all the mass of people who are now organising People's committees and courts. On the streets the people are fighting and in the prisons young detainees are on hunger strike.

On 13 February, an indefinite hunger-strike was started by 50 detainees held under the State of Emergency in Diepkloof Prison, Johannesburg. 12 of those on hungerstrike are secondary school pupils, and one is a primary school pupil. The hunger strikers are demanding the immediate release of all detainees, the lifting of the State of Emergency and the withdrawal of troops from the black townships. It is estimated that two thirds of those detained are under the age of 25. Even according to apartheid figures (gross underestimates) out of the 7,777 black people detained since July 1985, 2,016 are under the age of 16.

There are many accounts of the horrific torture of detainees, and especially of children. 11 year old, Fanie Kuduka, from Alexandra township, was detained for 57 days. Two bail applications were rejected, and he was only released when acquitted of his public violence charge. His nightmare goes on; because of police harassment Fanie has been driven into hiding. Amos Khubeka, who is 8 years old, was refused bail when he appeared in court, crying for his parents and with a huge bruise on his head.

An even tinier little bit

Thatcher's 'tiny little bit' turned out to be even tinier than any of us ever imagined. Last October Thatcher promised that imports of Krugerrands – the South African gold coin – would be banned. This was the main concession that Thatcher made at the Heads of State Commonwealth Conference in the Bahamas in the face of demands for sanctions. Thatcher later boasted that she had conceded 'only a tiny little bit'.

How right she was! It turns out that the British government has taken no steps whatsoever to end the imports and NatWest and Standard Chartered banks continue to trade in apartheid gold. Another demonstration of how Britain backs apartheid come what may!

Release Nelson Mandela

The people of South Africa are waiting for the release of their leader, Nelson Mandela. For the first time since he was imprisoned over 23 years ago, the question is not whether Mandela will be free but when and on whose terms he will be freed.

The apartheid regime is squirming on the hook: they need to free Mandela but they want to free him on their terms and not on his or the people's terms. In prison, Mandela is a constant reminder to the world of the fact that South Africa is itself a giant prison for all black people. No cosmetic reform of apartheid can carry conviction while the acknowledged leader of the majority of the population is imprisoned. The struggle in South Africa has reached such a height that his release is unavoidable. The regime is afraid of what would be the effect of his release – what could contain the struggle for freedom if Mandela was released in South Africa?

It is this dilemma which has prompted the regime to offer Mandela release on the condition that he goes into exile in

Zambia. But, as Winnie Mandela said on 9 February when she relayed Nelson's refusal to accept such a condition on his freedom, 'I think that the Cabinet has got big problems!' Mandela has already turned down an earlier offer of release on the condition that he renounced the armed struggle. From trying to make at least a propaganda victory over Mandela out of this 'offer' the regime quickly found that it was Mandela, the ANC and the struggle as a whole which won the victory over them. Mandela's defiant rejection of their deal was greeted with jubilation by the people of South Africa, and his stand won him even greater international support and acclaim.



**City of London
Anti-Apartheid Group**

**Non-Stop picket
outside the South
African Embassy**

Trafalgar Square
Starts 19 April

**Release Nelson Mandela
and all political prisoners
End the State of
Emergency
Close the South African
Embassy**

Phone 01-837-6050 for details

1986 is a critical year for freedom in Southern Africa. Despite a series of hypocritical statements, the imperialist

students at the Izipathele High School in Clermont have locked out their principal and his deputy. They say that there is no place for these old reactionaries!! The sign outside their school now reads Oliver Tambo High School!

Black communities fight-back

Mass resistance to apartheid terror continues to sweep through the townships of South Africa. The townships around Krugersdorp have seen some of the fiercest fighting. On 29 January, over 3,000 black women marched onto Krugersdorp Police Station to protest at the constant harassment of their children. As they approached the outskirts of Munsieville, the police opened fire. No-one was allowed near the wounded and the



Top left: City Group 'Walking for Winnie'. Above: Children demonstrating against harassment of Winnie Mandela at Kagiso. Below: youth on the march at an Atteridgeville funeral



powers, especially Britain, have not shifted their position of support for the regime, they have just covered it up. Now is the time for people in Britain to stand in solidarity with Nelson Mandela, his fellow prisoners and the courageous masses fighting for freedom. And now is the time to expose Thatcher's lying cover up for apartheid.

City of London Anti-Apartheid Group has decided to hold a non-stop picket outside the South African Embassy in Trafalgar Square calling for the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners, an end to the State of Emergency and the closure of the South African Embassy. The picket will start on Saturday 19 April and will be preceded by a demonstration. We will be supporting the non-stop picket at the 'point of maximum pain' in Britain for Botha and Thatcher – outside the South African Embassy. Join us there!

Maggie Mellon

police refused to call for ambulances.

On 15 February, police fired teargas and live ammunition into a crowd of mourners at a funeral service in Alexandra township. There followed four days of pitched battles with the police – barricades of blazing cars were erected, and petrol-bombs hurled at police and army vehicles. A black policeman was set on fire, and another shot dead by the people. At least 5 factories in a nearby industrial area were damaged in fire-bomb attacks. The official death toll remains at 19, though the residents of Alexandra township say that at least 80 people have been killed, with around 200 wounded.

Journalists have been barred from entering the township and 20 photographers and members of TV crews were detained. The police have imposed further restrictions on media coverage – no cameras could be carried or notes written within 'telephone' range of the township!

One of the biggest fears for the racists is that the fighting will spill into the adjoining luxury white residential area of Sandton. Alexandra township has now been sealed off, and roadblocks have been set up. Heavily armoured police vehicles patrol the streets, and the

Apartheid's backers meet

On 8 March another meeting of leading British, US and South African companies will take place at Leeds Castle, Kent. Among those invited are General Motors, Mobil Oil, Goodyear International from the USA; Barclays, Shell UK and Rio Tinto from Britain; and Anglo Vaal, Barlow Rand and Premier Group from South Africa. Edward Heath, former Tory Prime Minister, will chair the meeting. The meeting is ostensibly tinged with liberalism – acknowledging the 'slow pace of political reform' in South Africa. But the reality is that at the top of the agenda for this meeting of some of the biggest exploiters of black workers will be the subject of profits and how to preserve them in the face of the uprising. These bloodsuckers' notion of a 'caring apartheid' is as unconvincing and as improbable as Heselstine's 'caring capitalism'.

arrests continue, particularly of the youth, as the police continue to carry out house-to-house raids.

But the people of Alexandra township refuse to submit to this latest onslaught on their community. In the past few months, 18 Street Committees have been set up. Every household votes for their Street Representative or, as they have become known, their Comrade. It is envisaged that there will soon be a Comrade for every 44 blocks. These committees are the people's alternative to the puppet black town councillors; the rents withheld from these apartheid stooges are being collected to organise funerals etc. The purpose of the committees was explained by one of Alexandra's Comrades:

'When we have conscientised them all, then a word from us, can stop all these factories with a strike or cripple the shops with a consumer boycott, and that is how the struggle is going to be fought.'

Many other townships are organising street committees. In the Eastern Cape the success of the consumer boycott of white businesses is attributed to the organisation of these committees.

Power to the People!

Ruby Khan

HANDS OFF Winnie Mandela

In Kagiso township on Friday 14 February, the Release Nelson Mandela Committee launched a campaign against the police harassment of Winnie Mandela, wife of imprisoned ANC leader Nelson Mandela. On 19 February, the regime announced that the charges against Winnie Mandela would be held in abeyance pending a decision by the high court. Mrs Mandela is charged with breaking her banning order. The very next day, the apartheid state continued the harassment by raiding Winnie Mandela's home in Soweto. The campaign to defend Mrs Mandela is now a vital focal point for the struggle.

In recent weeks City of London Anti-Apartheid Group has been campaigning on the streets of London in solidarity with Winnie and to raise money both for her defence and for the communities she works in. The slogan of the campaign is *Hands off Winnie Mandela!*

Ban South African Airways – Not Winnie Mandela!

For three Saturdays on the run, City Group has issued a banning order on South African Airways at Oxford Circus, and each time they have been forced to close their doors to the public. Of course the British police took exception to this harsh treatment of their allies. Eight protestors were arrested and at one picket, police dogs were brought out. Nevertheless hundreds of shoppers took leaflets, signed the petition, and some joined the picket.

'I shall never lose hope'

This was the title of the film shown to an audience of 70 people on 17 February featuring Winnie Mandela. Norma Kitson, wife of ex South African political prisoner David Kitson, and one of Britain's foremost anti-apartheid campaigners talked of the demands and burdens placed on the wives of political prisoners. She gave tribute to Winnie Mandela who has always played a leading role in the struggle to overthrow apartheid despite police brutality and harassment. Inspired by the courage of Winnie Mandela and

those fighting the racist regime, everyone at the meeting gave their commitment to the Hands Off Winnie Mandela campaign and the non stop picket demanding the release of Nelson Mandela due to start on 19 April.

We say Hands Off Winnie Mandela! Police say Hands Off the Embassy!

The special picket for Winnie Mandela on 21 February attracted more than 100 people in freezing weather. The picket and the sponsored walk on the following day raised hundreds of pounds for Winnie and for the people of Soweto and Brandfort.

During the special picket, pictures of Winnie Mandela and of the struggle in South Africa were projected onto the embassy walls. The Met police were quick to get into the act and placed a constable in the way. For 15 minutes the slides were screened onto the uniform of policemen – very effectively! True to fashion the police threatened to arrest the person operating the projector but we showed all the slides anyway. Later on flowers and pictures were laid at the Embassy gates in support of Winnie Mandela and also in support of the 50 detainees – many of them school children – currently on hunger strike in South Africa.

Over thirty people took part in the 'Walk for Winnie' on the following day. They walked 23 times between the South African embassy and Downing Street – each lap representing a year of Nelson Mandela's imprisonment. Simultaneously a street meeting was held outside the Embassy where we erected a large wooden replica of Winnie Mandela's house in Brandfort where she has been exiled since 1976. The police didn't like this either. Nevertheless it stayed up for two hours. Then the police claimed that our collection was illegal – we had to inform them that collections at open air street meetings are perfectly legal. The public disregarded the petty action of the police by giving us lots of money to send to Winnie, to add to the hundreds of pounds raised by the walkers.

Susanna Lloyd

AAM NATIONAL COMMITTEE -

The AAM National Committee after the AGM had to consider the motions which the AGM had been unable to debate. One of these was a motion submitted by the Proletarian sect - ostensibly on the issue of public order but tying this question to the demand that the AAM expel the RCG!

We have been told the National Committee did not discuss the motion and that it has therefore fallen. However, the AAM national office workers refused to let us have the minutes of the meeting of the NC. Why? Because even though the RCG is affiliated to the AAM, and the NC is an elected committee accountable to the membership, their minutes are secret unless permission is sought in writing. (The NC has never replied to any of the letters which the RCG have sent so we have little optimism about getting results from this course of action!).

Having already imposed a Group Areas Act on the membership (used to justify the expulsion of City AA from the movement), the AAMNC now seem to have adopted an Official Secrets Act to prevent any process of accountability to the membership. *Maggie Mellon*

NO PLATFORM FOR RACISTS

The CPGB-run Edinburgh AA group presided over a major embarrassment at a large public meeting which they organised, with the sponsorship of Lothian Regional Council, on Monday 19 February. The Council has a Tory administration but the other parties taken together have a majority of the votes. All the political parties represented on the Council were invited to speak at the meeting, where the guest speakers were Denis Goldberg of the ANC, and a representative of SWAPO.

FRFI had questioned the invitation to the Tories at an AA Group's meeting but had been dismissed with the statement that they wouldn't come anyway.

Over 130 people attended the meeting and listened to SNP, Liberal and Labour representatives give various commitments to ending British collaboration with apartheid. But, surprise, surprise, Tony Lester a well-known racist Tory Councillor appeared as well, taking up the AAM's kind offer. Predictably, he launched into a tirade, attacking the AAM, announcing his support for 'the Afrikaans race', and denouncing the ANC as 'a terrorist organisation'. No move was made to stop him by either the chair of the meeting or by the AA Group's speaker, CPGB member John McKinnan. FRFI supporters and most of the rest of the audience walked out in protest. Lester carried on to finish his speech. As the meeting resumed, Lester was allowed to interrupt and heckle the SWAPO speaker still without being asked to leave.

FRFI supporters raised this outrage at the AA Group meeting the following night - only to be attacked themselves. John McKinnan of the CPGB, who is Secretary of the group, said that our chanting from the foyer in support of the ANC and SWAPO had 'wasted time', and meant that discussion was restricted. The obvious fact that they gave a platform to racist apartheid-loving Lester which was a waste of time didn't seem to have crossed his mind.

Edinburgh FRFI

ACTIVIST IN PRISON

JAMES COWPERTHWAIT was sentenced on Tuesday 18 February to 63 days imprisonment in Pentonville, after being found guilty of three counts of assault on the police and one of threatening behaviour. These 'assaults', perpetrated during the 2 November Anti-Apartheid demonstration were committed not with sticks or stones or fists, but with party-foam! What seemed at the time to be a non-violent way of showing contempt for the police who stood between the demonstration and the true object of our anger, the South African Embassy, was obviously too much of a blow to their dignity. Please send cards and letters to James Cowperthwaite, N84704, HMP Pentonville, Caledonian Road, London N7

NICARAGUA

A letter from a comrade

Saturday 18 January 1986

Companeros y Companeras

Most of the time I've been here has been spent on the UPE (state farm - literally 'unit of state production')... The campesinos who pick coffee etc are the poorest sector in the country. They get 60c for each lata (tin) of coffee they pick (about 10kg) and they were averaging about 3-4 a day where we were...

At present I'm sitting in a hotel on the beach at Casares, about 2 hours from Managua, having a 'weekend off' before going back to help with some building work on a school in Managua... The sun is going down over the pacific, the hotel - a cross between something out of Somerset Maugham and a Brighton changing hut - is totally occupied by Finnish, Danish and other internationalists. It's very weird. But as Mao Tse Tung said, without contradictions there is no life. So I had my first lobster for supper, fresh with garlic and fried banana etc - wonderful.

... My first impressions were of the poverty, especially some of the houses, rough wooden shacks with earth floors, no windows, single room. Then, perhaps in the next block, rich middle class houses, glass windows, a car. In the country, away from villages, things are pretty grim by our standards. In a place where it rains heavily for months in the wet season... I saw houses made without nails, wattle and daub walls, very rough thatched or banana leaf roofs, earth floors. No chimneys as a rule, so the cooking fire inside fills the house with smoke, which seeps out under the roof... So, coming from South East England, quite an eye opener. Also no experience of other poor countries to compare it with. But after the first shocks, and when I talk to people, I find many many good and positive things. Mostly everyone looks healthy, although I haven't actually seen many older people, say over 50. Half of the population is under 15, I think. There is enough food, for campesinos the staple is red beans, rice, tortillas. We ate that 3 times a day (with coffee) every day on the UPE... Most of the time it was really well cooked and I loved it, getting over expectations of variety. Towards the end the shop on the farm got tinned sardines and corned beef from the Soviet Union in.

Saturday 25 January

... Where to begin? Practically everything here is different and fascinating. The revolution and the present situation means that people come up to me and talk about imperialism with the understanding of direct experience. The US embargo and cost of the war (about 50% of the government's revenue) leads to some shortages that are dealt with without fuss. Examples are glass. When

pepsi (or rum) is sold on the street, you can't take the bottle away with you, but a plastic bag is half filled with ice, the coke poured in and it's tied up - bite the corner off to drink. The buses here are unbelievably crowded and some have no windscreens etc, but they are very frequent, and although you're really crammed together, there is much less tension and grimness than rush hour in London. Taxis drive around with no doors. Trucks in the country with no batteries or lights, perhaps a torch after dark. Life goes on, a lot better here than at 'home'.

... The news on the (Sandinista) TV is introduced by a montage of film clips of police and army repression throughout the world - including South Africa and the UK miners' strike - and closes with one of Hitler, Reagan, Thatcher and Somoza!

The Frente feel they don't have the resources... to take on the private sector. The economy has three main sectors, of comparable size, state-controlled (most agriculture, some factories, government workers), private capital (factories, some farms) and the 'informal' sector (street and market traders and peasants and self employed etc). To ensure the private capitalists keep producing - both goods for internal use and commodities for export (coffee, cotton, cattle)... the government guarantees them high profits of 30-40% thus there is a thriving bourgeoisie here, which is also able to pay its workers more than in the state sector. To compensate for this... the government has introduced some methods to control prices, particularly for workers in the state sector, as well as indexing wages. On 1 January this year all wages in the state controlled sector went up: for example, for managers by 220% and for skilled/technical waged workers by 370% (inflation was 300%).

Some basic commodities - maize, rice etc were sold at 'official' - ie low prices, but what happened was that they were quickly all bought up by speculators and resold in the uncontrolled markets at a higher price. (The speculators ranging from single people - families upwards). So in the last two years a different system is being tried with some success. Six basic items - beans, rice, cooking oil, sugar, salt and soap - are distributed through shops etc chosen by the local CDS, which gives out (ration) cards with the entitlement depending on the number of people in each house. So distribution is controlled by the CDS/state, but administered by the private sector. Necessary in the short term as there are not enough state resources to administer and control all distribution.

Also to keep workers in the (lower paid) state sector... items are sold at controlled prices through shops in state, owned factories, state farms etc (shoes, clothes, toilet paper etc).



Agrarian Reform - In the first two years after the revolution Somocista property was declared APP - Areas of Peoples' Property - and organised into UPEs. Then pressure from campesinos (peasants) led to the FSLN giving land to co-operatives. (Most co-ops grow some produce together for sale and have individual plots as well). Recently, land titles have been given to individual peasant families. Last year land given to individual peasants came partly from state farms rationalised to make better units, and partly from capitalists - either bought or exchanged for other land. (Most agree, but in a test case a right wing politician had land compulsorily purchased). These moves are both to ensure the political support of the campesinos and the continued production of rice, beans etc. It also indicates a tougher line with capitalists in the agricultural sector. A recent photo in *Barricada* showed Daniel Ortega giving a campesino a land title with one hand and an AK47 with the other - a gesture both symbolic and very practical. (The army here is getting much more capable and better equipped, but local militias and the armed people are the real defence against invasion/counter revolution).

Investment - Little new private investment (one exception, a large sugar and rum factory chain, helped by the government). Most new investment by the state, in energy and agriculture. But right now all development projects have been frozen until the war ends, and the government is limiting itself to something of a survival economy. Even so, by comparison with other regional economies, Nicaragua is doing very well.

Foreign investment - One of the things that surprised me when I first arrived were the petrol stations with their Shell, Esso, Texaco etc signs. Apparently US multinationals are opposed to the embargo - for obvious reasons - and ship oil in via Canada and other countries. One of them - Shell I think - has a large refinery in Nicaragua which they keep operating.

Exchange Rate - Confusing at first to find two exchange rates - the official rate set this year at 28 cordobas to the dollar, and the unofficial but legal rate of 750c to the dollar, but all has been explained. The state earns hard currency - dollars - by selling its export commodities, especially coffee. No-one in the world money markets wants to buy cordobas so there is no demand set rate. The state sets the rate in order to apportion the dollars it earns between the various sectors of the economy to import the things they need - oil, trucks, arms, technology etc - (which can only be bought with dollars). In fact the rates to different ministries can vary as a way of prioritising some sectors.

Alongside this there is a demand for dollars from the bourgeoisie and middle

class. Some private capitalists may get part paid in dollars for the coffee (say) they sell to the state. Others just earn huge amounts of cordobas, and want dollars to buy things like cars, TVs etc. Thus they create a demand that was previously met by black market trading. So, partly to retain some control and head off speculators, and partly both to encourage visitors and keep the middle class here happy, the government set the 750c to the dollar rate, lower than the previous black market rate, but high enough to get us to use it...

I'm living and working in Managua, helping to build pre-school units at a school near the lake, on the edge of the earthquake zone...

Working at the school is great. Most of the time it's just me and 3 or 4 young Nicaraguan lads and some of the teachers, parents and local kids, so I'm teaching them carpentry and learning Spanish at the same time... Breakfast is yogurt and a pastry at a corner stall, squeeze into a bus, work 7.30 - 5, stroll back through the big new park - basketball courts, playgrounds, more food and drink stalls... You wouldn't know there was a war on here, except for the wall slogans, and the numbers of soldiers around. But both here and in the country, our UPE had armed patrols in the area, the soldiers and local militia are totally at ease with the people. Very different from Britain... At the UPE on Christmas Eve, the major celebration, the guard duty was all done by women UPE members, the men having hit the rum. Midnight was signalled by a burst of AK fire over the farm.

Writing this at Lake Jiloa, a volcanic crater lake, 20 minute bus ride from Managua (at 1 1/2 p). Used to be a small Somoza-owned playground for his friends, but now it's huge, state run and open to everyone at a nominal entrance fee. It's a bit like a huge Club Mediterranée place. Hundreds of palm frond sheltered tables on the edge of the lake, swimming, bars, cafés and continuous stream of traders with sweets, cakes, food, drinks. Used by many ordinary Managuans, and some of the richer ones too. That's another strange thing about Managua... You can be walking along a street with professionals' houses, notices that a lawyer, or doctor works there, cars in the drive/garage. Then you'll come on a shack with a pig in the yard...

We joined the weekly pickets of the US embassy here last Thursday, about 250 internationalistas there as there were quite a few brigades in town. The US embassy is a real fortress. Directly opposite the gate the Frente have erected a huge bill-board - a facsimile of the telegram sent by Sandino to the commander of the US marines in 1926, saying he wasn't surrendering and was waiting for them. A very imaginative way to make the point...

See you in March. **Charles**

Mass Public Meeting

VIRAJ MENDIS MUST STAY!

Wednesday 26 March, 7pm
The Reception Room
Manchester Town Hall, Albert Square

Speakers include
Viraj Mendis
Anwar Ditta

To contact the VMDC write to
VMDC, c/o North Hulme Centre, Johnson Crescent, Hulme,
Manchester M15 5AL

Viraj Mendis appeal rejected

continued from page 1

Patey went a step further and argued that Viraj deliberately invented his support for the Tamils in order to avoid deportation and said his 'claim to asylum cannot be permitted to succeed'. While refusing to accept Viraj's involvement with the RCG - which has always supported the Tamil struggle - as any proof, the Home Office attacked him nevertheless for his support of an 'extreme' left wing group. It demanded to know whether 'you think Britain is a democracy'. Clearly the Home Office was intent on prosecuting a political case. Viraj replied, during the appeal, that in Britain there was no democracy for the poor and for black people.

The way forward

Viraj's case was evidently of importance to the Home Office and the Foreign Office, the latter also being present at the hearing. Clearly they did not want any verdict which could imply a criticism of the Sri Lankan regime. After all Thatcher was there in 1985 as a gesture of support to Jayewardene with whose regime Britain maintains close economic and military ties. Additionally Viraj, as an activist in numerous victorious anti-

deportation campaigns, would be a thorn in the side of the racist Home Office if he won his appeal. In these circumstances Patey felt bound to circumscribe his support for the Home Office.

Viraj Mendis must not be deported. The Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign succeeded in restoring Viraj's benefit when the DHSS cut it in 1984. In 1985 it succeeded in pulling together many anti-deportation campaigns for a major national demonstration. It succeeded in forcing the police to drop 'breach of the peace' charges against him in 1985 when he was arrested and strip-searched. Now the campaign is planning a massive political response to the challenge laid down by the Home Office.

Viraj has already applied for leave to appeal against the decision. But clearly, a political campaign for his right to stay is more important than ever.

If you live in or near Manchester, please attend the mass public meeting advertised above. If you live outside please write enclosing a donation and indicate if you wish to help us in any way you can.

Chris Procter and Viraj Mendis

Kelly was murdered

In November 1985, young Kalbinder Kaur Hayre ('Kelly') was violently crushed against a wall outside Dartford by a van deliberately driven into her. She died two weeks later. One friend with her was injured; another was treated for shock.

The five white youths in the van then abandoned it and ran away. Later that day, full of confidence in their racist thuggery, they gave themselves up. They were not disappointed. Their concocted story - that a passenger pulled the driver's arm and knocked the steering wheel - was accepted by the police. To date, the van driver has not been charged. Indeed, only after intense campaigning by the defence committee was one of the passengers, Martin James Avery charged - and then with the lesser charge of manslaughter - a month after Kalbinder's murder.

Yet the police criticise those who call for justice. In a letter to *Asian Times*, Assistant Chief Constable Edward Crew states that exposure of police inaction:

'... saddened me... the only way (justice) will be achieved is by painstaking police investigation (sic!) and not by public posturing...'

He went on to accuse the campaigners of 'suspicion, emotion and rhetoric.'

It is not 'suspicion, emotion or rhetoric' that eye witnesses confirm that Kalbinder's killer did not use the brake but drove deliberately into her, and that the police took over 3 months to begin interviewing witnesses. Nor is it 'suspicion emotion or rhetoric' that Martin Avery is widely regarded as a racist by the black community in Kent.

In the last two years there have been three unsolved racist murders of Asians in Kent. Now the Asian community is organising to fight for justice. On 24 February, a 200 strong picket of Martin Avery's committal hearing and a demonstration organised by the Justice for Kelly campaign demanded, minimally, that the driver and front passenger of the van be charged with murder.

FRFI extends solidarity to the Justice for Kelly Campaign. We urge all readers to support the Campaign, which can be contacted at: Justice for Kelly Campaign, 1st Floor, Sandy Hill Road, London SE18, tel: (Amarjit) 01 854 4587

Keinde Olawale

'A conspiracy of bastards'

In August 1983 5 youths, 3 black, 2 white, were savagely beaten by eight uniformed police officers in Holloway, North London. The two black youths were hospitalised. There were 16 police witnesses to this attack, yet the Police Complaints Investigation Board could not discover which officers were responsible for the assault, and therefore no disciplinary action was taken. Home Secretary Douglas Hurd ruled out further investigation.

However, this case so shocked the 'liberal' sections of the middle class that even the *Guardian* was moved to write a leader condemning the police action. Initially, the police responded in typically brutish fashion: Les Curtis, Chair of the Police Federation, accused the *Guardian* of 'burning hatred of the British police' and defended the 'integrity' of the thugs involved. Still the clamour mounted; police credibility was being severely damaged and had to be regained. Thus began the saga of the 'Bad Apple Eight'.

Under the headline 'A conspiracy of bastards', the *Police Review* magazine ran an editorial attempting to salvage the 'good name' of the police. 'The most damaging consequence of this senseless attack,' it said, was 'the enormous harm done to the reputation of the Force'. Kenneth Newman, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, made statements about 'cleaning out the Force', and Gerald Kaufmann, Shadow Home Secretary, spoke of the need 'to clear the good name of the police'. The officers involved in the Holloway incident were being presented as a case of a few 'bad apples'. Black and oppressed people who are on the receiving end of police brutality know this to be rubbish.

Police attack follows Kinnock walkabout

continued from page 1

Deputy Assistant Commissioner and several assorted Chief Superintendents and had assured the residents that he would talk to 'the officer in charge' a few hours before.

The arrest rate in the last three weeks has been as high as at any time in the four months since the uprising - and police have told many people that they want another 100 arrests. The sheer physical brutality of the latest arrests is designed to fill the community with terror and extract confessions. As one father said, 'My son was kidnapped by the police out of my house and kept in custody for two months and they beat him up'. Another told of a forced confession got from his son who was 'kicked out of bed and told, "You black bastard. If you don't do what we tell you, we will arrest your family and girlfriend".'

Together with this physical onslaught other intimidation has been used. Defendants have been told not to contact the Broadwater Farm Defence Committee 'or there'll be trouble'. Yet others have been told by local employers that they won't get their wages if they attend 'certain meetings'. Teachers at three local schools have been included in the network of harassment also. Mr Jones, Chair of Haringey Education Committee has given authority, on the request of the police, for teachers and pupils from three local schools to be fingerprinted. The conditions under which teachers from Broadwater Junior, Moselle and William Hargrave Schools have been asked to cooperate are: 1. that fingerprinting is voluntary; 2. it be done at a convenient time; 3. that prints will be destroyed in the future.

The police have now extended the arrests of 'targetted' individuals far beyond Broadwater Farm and the Tottenham area. Throughout North London, from Chingford to Islington they are detaining black and white youth who they regard as subversive in any way. They have even travelled over 80 miles outside of London to arrest the relatives of those who live on the estate.

Such arbitrary violence is, of course, part and parcel of British policing. In Islington, where the Holloway incident occurred, 300 police assaults on the public occur each year. The vast majority of these are unmentioned in the bourgeois press, and the thugs responsible for attacks against mainly black people are given carte blanche to continue their reign of terror.

But as a result of this outcry, four police officers were arrested and charged with 'conspiracy to assault' the Holloway youth and, after six months of campaigning by anti-racists, Inspector Lovelock has been arrested on a charge of 'unlawfully wounding' Cherry Groce. Newman is offering sacrificial lambs to appease the middle classes and divert attention from the systematic, organised and calculated use of violence against the working class and oppressed.

FRFI has repeatedly analysed Newman's policing strategy. A major part of that strategy is aimed at isolating 'the genuine subversive element' - that is, effective opposition - whilst associating 'as many prominent members of the population, especially those who may have been engaged in non-violent action, with the government'.

Since his appointment, Newman has steadily cultivated links with 'moder-

Many of those charged recently have been detained for over 48 hours - often in solitary, even juveniles, without access to solicitors or family, and it has needed a constant barrage of telephone calls to get in to see them at all. 18 year old Mark Braithwaite who is the sixth person to be charged with the murder of PC Blakelock, was kept in solitary for 60 hours and interviewed seven times before seeing his solicitor. On the third day of his detention he was rushed to hospital with severe stomach cramps. On visiting him his family found him to be in a state of shock and disorientation. During his heavy interrogation Mark, like so many others, had signed a document which states in the small print that he does not wish to see a solicitor.

However, political organisation in defence of those arrested is beginning to develop. On 24 February a successful public meeting was held by the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign. Earlier that day, Council workers from the estate called a one day strike and joined a 250-strong picket of Tottenham Magistrates Court to protest at the arrest and beating up of a black carpenter on the estate. The defendant's charges were dropped and he was offered compensation - no doubt as a result of this strong protest.

Inhuman treatment, forced confessions, intimidation and harassment are not being used without some fight-back. One young defendant told his solicitor that he retracted his statement made to the police which implicates and names others because of the conditions under which it was extracted from him.

Kinnock's visit was not designed to confront this burden of oppression. While at Broadwater Farm he had the gall to pledge that a future Labour government would repeal the proposed Conservative Public Order Act. Black people, working class people, the youth, the unemployed and the poor don't want empty promises from the Labour Party. We demand ACTION NOW.

Susan Davidson and Ken Hughes



Standard attacks the 'bad apples'

ates' and 'community leaders' by means of Police Consultative Bodies, Neighbourhood Watch schemes, and so-called community policing. These links not only associate 'prominent members of the population... with the government' but enable Newman to gather the 'low grade information' necessary in order to identify and isolate 'the genuine subversive elements'. For these links to be maintained, a favourable image of the police must be projected. This strategy is undermined by public outcries such as arose over the 'Holloway van' incident.

Newman's cynical pretence at weeding out 'bad apples' stands in stark contrast to the reality of British policing. After 18 months of 'failing' to discover the culprits, within four days of Newman's decision to respond to the outcry over the 'Holloway van', four arrests were made. Yet the family of Blair Peach, murdered by police on an anti-fascist demonstration in 1979, have fought for 7 years simply to obtain the police documents relating to his case! The facts surrounding the deaths of Colin Roach - and many more - in police custody are still not known. And while sacrificial lambs are offered to appease the liberal middle classes, Newman directs the systematic onslaught against Broadwater Farm.

In the midst of the 'Bad Apple Eight' saga, Douglas Hurd announced an increase in the Police Grant of £52 million. Police are being trained in the use of plastic and rubber bullets, CS Gas and other forms of 'crowd control' - stocks of these are now kept in most British cities.

As the ruling class intensifies its onslaught on the oppressed, now more than ever consistent, political organisation is vital if we are not to be defeated.

Charine James

BAKULA AND HASMUKHBHAI

Bakula Chaudhari and Has Mukhbhai have recently lost their final legal attempt to remain in this country as a married couple. Has Mukh's appeal against the 'primary purpose' rule has been rejected. They and the Manchester Immigration Wives and Fiances Campaign are calling for the widest possible support to turn back this attack. Letters of protest should be sent to the above campaign at 593 Stockport Road, Manchester M12. As part of her campaign Bakula is organising a picket of the Home Office on 5 March which will be supported by FRFI. As she says 'If I fail with my campaign, then who knows how many others will follow. If you believe in equality then Fight racism! Unite to fight against racist immigration laws, fight against this racist government!'

'APARTHEID - BRITISH STYLE'

On 20 February, the West Midlands County Council sponsored inquiry published its report on the Handsworth uprisings of last September.

This report simply confirms what FRFI and other progressives have said all along: that the uprisings were a direct result of the discrimination black people are subjected to. The report calls Birmingham 'The capital of racial discrimination' - 'the DHSS exchange files with police to check on black people who sign on the dole, thereby creating an apartheid system' - and states that 'the extent of social deprivation, racial disadvantage... and harsh policing... make life intolerable'.

The response of Geoffrey Dear, Chief Constable of the West Midlands, is typical of the British police: he has called for plastic bullets and blames 'drug barons' for 'inciting' the uprising!

Charine James

PEOPLE AND POLITICS



Louis Farrakhan

The lost legacy of Malcom X

When the Home Secretary banned American Black Muslim leader Farrakhan from Britain earlier this year, a debate began in the black community and on the left. What does Farrakhan, a major black leader and an anti-semitic, represent? Susan Davidson looks at the issues and compares Farrakhan with assassinated black leader Malcolm X.

Early this year, the British Home Secretary banned Black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan from coming to Britain. The outright racist character of the ban was impossible to conceal. Farrakhan's organisation in the United States, the Nation of Islam has an enormous following among impoverished black workers. Following so soon after the 1985 risings in Tottenham and Brixton, the British ruling class was not prepared to allow a prominent and successful black leader in, lest his words inspire black people in Britain to organise. Such organisation is a threat. And if to prevent it requires even denying the right of black people in Britain to listen to pro-capitalist Farrakhan, then so be it. This is not the first time that black American leaders have been excluded. Last year, the then Home Secretary banned Kwame Toure, a black socialist leader from the USA from coming to Britain.

Farrakhan however is as removed from socialism as capitalism itself. He first attracted wide attention last year when he campaigned on behalf of Jesse Jackson's US presidential bid. Since then he has concentrated on publicising and promoting his organisation's economic plan for black capitalism. The People Organised and Working for Economic Rebirth (POWER) aims to establish a national

network of black owned companies providing home-services and manufacturing personal care items such as soap and toothpaste for the Afro-American market.

Farrakhan is of course far more notorious for his anti-semitic pronouncements. His vision of black economic independence is the main thrust behind his attacks on the American Jewish community. Farrakhan argues that Jewish people in the US have escaped the worst excesses of racist oppression by creating a wealthy middle-class. Today, proponents of black capitalism see in this class an obstacle and competitor to their own advancement and are therefore quite ready to whip up anti-semitic prejudice. Such reactionary populism does not point a way forward for the impoverished black masses in the USA. To put forward the fantasy of a self-sufficient black capitalism meeting the demands of all black people is a cruel deception and to harness anti-semitic sentiment is an easy and reactionary con-trick.

While defending capitalism in the USA, Farrakhan has sought to project an anti-imperialist image for himself with blazing attacks on the Zionist state of Israel. These attacks are of no value when he simultaneously describes Judaism as a 'dirty religion'. Such anti-semitism cov-



Malcolm X

ers up the real role of Israel as a tool of American capitalism and imperialism in the Middle East.

Farrakhan's success in building support for his reactionary programme among impoverished black workers, is a direct result of the fact that in the mid-sixties and early '70s, the US ruling class ruthlessly wiped out and murdered figures such as Malcolm X and George Jackson. They were the left-wing, revolutionary representatives of black people seeking to organise a revolutionary working class movement.

Malcolm X himself was initially a Black Muslim but by the end of this life confron-

ted Farrakhan as an antagonist. 21 years ago, on 21 February 1965, Malcolm X was shot dead by 3 men while speaking in Harlem, New York. The assassins now seem more likely to have been FBI agents than the Black Muslims who were suspected at the time. The man was silenced. He was killed at a time when the uprisings of the black people were shaking the American racist state from within, and the Vietnamese war against American imperialism was attacking it from without. Malcolm was stopped just because he realised in his last two years of hectic political activity that American capitalism was the source of impoverishment for millions of oppressed people at home and abroad. He had travelled along a painful road during his 40 years to come to this revolutionary position which was to cost him his life.

In his political activities Malcolm criticised many people and rejected many ideas. He turned away from the Black Muslims whose separatism is based on skin colour, but whose economics is entirely American. He said, 'You can't operate a capitalistic system unless you are vulturistic: you have to have someone else's blood to suck to be a capitalist. You show me a capitalist, I'll show you a blood sucker.'

He questioned how the Southern Civil Rights movement, with its demands for integration and the vote would further the conditions of life for the majority of people living in the black ghettos of the Northern cities. Knowing as he did the poorest of the poor, the lowest orders of American society, he did not see how their 'human rights' could be advanced by respectable leaders making constitutional demands.

He travelled to the newly independent countries of Egypt, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya and Uganda to build his Organisation of Afro-American Unity. At all times he denounced the racist American state as a warning of the imperialism that would swallow up the independence of the newly liberated countries.

He argued for the people to be armed in the inevitable violent resistance to injustice that would break out in cities all over the USA. We will fight, he said, with the ballot or the bullet, with whatever means are necessary to defend our communities.

Nor was Malcolm X a voice in the wilderness. Twenty-two thousand people queued for hours to view his body and pay their respects. For he and not Farrakhan spoke with the authentic voice of the oppressed.

Susan Davidson

Police File



● The 'independent' Police Complaints Authority, which couldn't find a bent cop if it was kicked in the groin by one, is having 'transit' trouble again, this time in Northampton. It has still failed to identify officers responsible for an assault on three youths after a football match last September. Ten policemen including an inspector and a sergeant were looking the other way at the time.

● Police Review, commenting on the Holloway transit assaults before the recent, belated arrests, declared that 'there are five bastards in the Met'. While we recognise that this is an independent and liberally minded journal, we are concerned about the disparity between this and our own respected estimate, which puts the figure at some 20,000 bastards. (This column should remind readers that Sir Kenneth Newman has again made an impassioned plea on LBC radio that 'the community should ignore all dedicated denigrators of the police'.)

● A trial at St Albans crown court was halted when detective constable Graham Ball was discovered in the witness box to be consulting the empty pages of a notebook. We believe that if forced to resign DC Ball intends to make a career in the theatrical profession.

● Young William Tebbit (yes, his son) and 11 other Young Tories, have been cleared of financial irregularities by a students union tribunal. (£11,700 worth of dance tickets were mislaid.) Young William, a nice boy with his father's qualities, failed to appear to put his case due to a bad hangover after a rugby match.

● Unfortunate judicial decision of the month: a woman who when stopped by policemen always responds by kicking them in the shins has been ordered to undergo hypnosis to cure her of the habit.

● Susan Sainsbury, wife of Conservative MP Tim, and a couple of insane aristocrats have revealed a bizarre and hitherto unknown tendency within the British ruling class: its grasping criminality is accompanied by a reckless generosity. At the farcical satanic rites trial at Maidstone crown court, Mrs Sainsbury told the jury she had given almost £80,000 to a man she had never met - alleged conman Derry Knight - who cleverly claimed he was possessed by the devil and needed the money to buy satanic regalia to free himself. Not to be outdone the Earl of March handed over a tidy sum, and Viscount Hampden bought Knight a white Rolls Royce, 'to keep up appearances'.

● No action is to be taken against the Chief Constable of Wiltshire, Donald Smith, who gave permission for illegal after-hours drinking in his force's own social club. On discovering he had no power to do this Mr Smith did the Right Thing and turned himself in. The Director of Public Prosecutions was so impressed by this act of civic duty that he decided not to take out legal proceedings. Lucky Mr Smith.

Red Wedge

Red Wedge is receiving a great deal of media coverage and attracting large numbers to its concerts. Lorna Morgan went to the Red Wedge concert in Edinburgh.

From James Dean the 'Rebel without a cause' to Red Wedge 'Rebels with a cause' youth culture has moved from rebelling against your parents to rebelling against the state. Without the buffer of the post war boom youth culture of the 80s is regarded as more aggressive than that of their parents in the 50s and 60s. With no hopes of further education unless you're rich, no jobs and no future, young people are beginning to question the promised fruits of capitalism and look for an alternative. Red Wedge is a broad left alliance set up by young artists, musicians, actors and writers. Their stated objective is to have young people better informed about politics and about the issues which particularly affect them.

'Young people are generally beginning to realise that it is in our own hands to do something. It's very positive.' Paul Weller, singer with The Style Council and member of Red Wedge.

On 30 January Red Wedge played to 3,000 young people at a sell out concert at Edinburgh's Playhouse.

'This is not a political rally. We are here to entertain you,' announced Billy Bragg, the first of seven acts to play that night. The performances aimed to des-

cribe life in Britain under Thatcher from Lorna Gee, a black female toaster, singing about her giro being three weeks late to Jimmy Somerville of the Communards singing about Breadline Britain. Junior Giscombe's song about racial unity had the audience cheering in support. A blown up projected image of Margaret Thatcher was the back drop to The Style Council's drummer Steve White's solo.

As an exercise in making young people aware about politics and issues affecting them the Red Wedge tour was a refreshing, imaginative venture. However, the clear message of the tour was that the Labour Party is the best alternative for young people today.

The Labour Party's 'Charter for Young People' was launched by the Scottish Council of the Labour Party on 30 January by the secretary, Helen Liddell. It is maintained in the Charter that 'unless our society can create jobs for young people and help them to prepare for work through the right education and training, we are denying opportunities to a whole generation.' Helen Liddell and her colleagues are keen to stress that they want young people themselves to have a say in the policies of the Labour Party. I and other FRFI comrades went along



to take part in the event. We took leaflets and newspapers. We soon experienced the reality of Labour Party democracy when a party hack threatened to throw us out for handing out leaflets. He backed down when we accused him of stifling debate. The gigs before and after the main event were organised and run mostly by Militant and sponsored by the District Council. Despite the publicity no debate was held on Red Wedge and very few councillors turned up for people to ask questions. Militant were openly hostile when we were handing out our leaflets. They clearly thought they had a franchise on the 3,000 young people who attended the concert. Nothing was to interfere with the real purpose of the event - to get young people to vote Labour.

Yet the Labour Party's record on defending the rights of young people to education, jobs and rights makes a mockery of the objectives of the Charter. The Labour Party has failed to mount any real opposition to youth unemployment.

Kinnock said of the hundreds of young people who demonstrated against the YTS last year that they were led by 'dafties'. Young people forced into homelessness because of cuts in the DHSS have yet to have their case taken up by any representative of the Labour Party. It is members of the same Labour Party who have joined the CPGB in condemning the hundreds of black and white youth who have regularly picketed outside the South African embassy in London. Black youth who rose up against police racism and violence were quickly condemned by Kinnock whose major concern at the moment is to prove he is a better defender of British 'law and order' than Thatcher.

A party which supports the police against the democratic rights of the working-class and oppressed cannot be trusted to implement any policies in favour of work, housing and democratic rights for young people. The alternative for young people in Britain is not to place your trust in a future Labour government but to build anew. A new movement against British racism and imperialism, a movement that defends the rights of the working-class to organise against state repression, a movement that confronts the opportunism of the bourgeois Labour Party, is the only alternative for young people who want change in Britain. Slowly but surely more and more people are being forced into political life to defend their rights and living standards in Thatcher's Britain. An anti-imperialist movement will unite all those struggles into a powerful force that can seriously challenge unemployment, poverty, racism and police violence. The choice for youth is clear - the treachery and scabbing of Kinnock and his party or a movement against racism and imperialism.

Lorna Morgan

On 8 March FRFI celebrates International Women's Day in recognition of the leading role women play in the struggle against imperialism and oppression.

- We hold hands with women all over the world, in Nicaragua, Palestine, El Salvador, in Angola, Mozambique and Ireland, in Lebanon, the Philippines, and all countries where women fight alongside men against imperialism.
- We salute Winnie Mandela and the women of Southern Africa who have spearheaded the fight against apartheid. We remember Teresa Ramashamole who is incarcerated in a condemned cell in an apartheid gaol for her part in the struggle.
- We send our solidarity to all women in prison, especially Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer who are being strip-searched in Brixton prison.
- We stand with black women in Britain facing oppression, exploitation and the threat of deportation.
- We remember Mrs Jarrett of Broadwater Farm, killed by racist police harassment, and Mrs Cherry Groce of Brixton, paralysed from the waist down by a police bullet.

We celebrate International Women's Day on these pages with

- an interview with Maire O'Shea who stood by her support for Irish liberation and continued to campaign even though she faced trial under the conspiracy laws and the PTA. She was acquitted of all charges early in February this year.
- An account of the 'trial' of Wendy Savage accused because she stands up for women's rights for better treatment under the NHS.
- An interview with the wife of a striking miner, one year after the end of the courageous fight which changed the lives of many women in Britain's mining communities.
- A report on Britain's Filipino community most of whom are women working in the NHS and in hotels and catering, many under threat of deportation - Britain's hidden workforce.

WOMEN AND THE MINERS' STRIKE

The emergence of working class women as an organised political force in the miners' strike was one of the strike's most important developments. The women of the Womens Support Groups were the backbone of the strike. At the end of the strike many of the women pledged to stay together and continue fighting for the working class. In FRFI 56, we reviewed *Shifting Horizons*, a book on the experience of the strike and the effect it had had on two women, Doreen and Pauline, from the village of Blidworth in Nottinghamshire.

One year after the end of the strike, FRFI went up to Blidworth to talk to Doreen Humber about the political struggles she is involved in now.

During the strike, Doreen gave up her job in order to work full-time for the strike. Recently she started work at a clothing factory. Doreen describes the conditions there:

'There were women working there 25 hours a day for £1.20 an hour. We were working in a room with no heating, just fan-heaters at your feet here and there. We were working Saturdays and Sundays with no overtime. Sometimes women weren't paid at all. One woman was paid for three weeks by cheque and every cheque bounced - £240 in all.'

Doreen said that before the strike she might have put up with these conditions,

'Probably I'd have thought "well, it's a few extra quid", but now I know it's wrong. Through the strike I realised that women have fought for years, and what women's rights are. So I didn't just sit there and take it.'

She tried, but failed, to get a union established, although she did succeed in getting the workers out on strike one day over conditions. Rather than accept intolerable conditions, she gave up the job.

Doreen is one of many women who saw the Labour Party as the only way they could carry on political activity. In Blidworth, Doreen told us that the women from the Action Group now control the local branch. In Nottingham, the big issue for the Labour Party is the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (UDM). The Blidworth branch passed a motion to refuse membership to the UDM. County Councillor Les Jones is a UDM member and was responsible dur-

ing the strike for blocking the strikers getting the use of a local hall for use as a strike centre.

'It's a fight', she said, 'you take up your little rule book and see what the rules say, and they try to say you're illiterate and the rules don't mean what they say.'

Doreen stood as Parish councillor and got 440 votes - 400 more than she expected! But before the election she agreed to appear on TV to talk about the police. Willie Back, the Labour Party parliamentary candidate, attacked her for what she said on TV on the grounds that she was standing for election: 'We've got to get people to vote for you.' Doreen's reply was that she was only telling the truth. 'They say that if you tell the truth you'll lose votes', but her response is that you have to do what you believe in, whether you lose votes or not.

As the next election approaches, the pressure on women like Doreen to bow to the electoral demands of Kinnock will grow. As happened with Bernie Grant 'telling the truth' is increasingly an offence in Kinnock's Labour Party.

Doreen herself said about today's Labour Party:

'I was brought up to believe that the Labour Party were for the working class. And I can see that the Labour Party isn't working for the working class.'

Like a lot of people trying to change things today, Doreen can see no alternative to the Labour Party:

'I keep thinking about joining other political groups, but I can never see them getting anywhere. I agree with their politics, but there's none of them strong enough to lead the country. Even though I'm disgusted with the Labour Party, I still feel I should fight within the Labour Party.'

There is no doubt that the experience of the strike transformed Doreen's and countless other women's lives.

'It was the worst year of my life, but also the best year of my life. I wouldn't not have lived it.'

She pointed to the development of solidarity in the striking communities and throughout the country.

'Thatcher claimed that the miners had no support. How did Thatcher think we got fed? The TUC didn't support us, no, but ordinary people did.'

'It was a year when we learned something different every day. Even if we forget it for a moment, something will spark it off again. It's still there. Now when I look at the printers, it's not just the printers that's got a dispute, it's us. It's all one big struggle.'

Maggie Mellon and Terry O'Halloran

BRITAIN'S HIDDEN WORKFORCE

The people of the Philippines have taken the first steps on the road to liberation with the overthrow of the Marcos regime. But Filipino workers in Britain - there are about 20,000 and 88% of them are women - face not just the oppressive laws of the Marcos regime, but also Britain's racist and sexist immigration laws. Migrant, immigrant and refugee women come to Britain from most of the oppressed countries in the world. The Filipino migrant community is a microcosm of the problems which face Britain's hidden workforce.

Unemployment in the Philippines currently stands at almost 50%. During the years of the Marcos regime 80% of the population has lived below the poverty line; 70% have been malnourished, including 80% of the children. In the early 1970s the corrupt regime devised the novel solution of exporting unemploy-

ment. So, whereas 62 out of 100 Filipinos die without medical attention, 880 towns have no health centre and 46% of the hospital beds are in Manila where only 12% of the population lives, the Philippines is the world's largest exporter of nurses and the second largest exporter of doctors.

Furthermore, the exiled workforce is a major source of foreign exchange. With a foreign debt currently standing at US\$30 billion the extortion of taxes from these workers became vital to the Marcos regime. In the early 1970s government and private agencies encouraged emigration on a large scale. By 1983 the migrant workers had become the largest dollar earner for the Philippines dictator following the enactment of Executive Order 857 which forces migrants to send 50-70% of their earnings home. This order is not enforced in Britain only because the Filipino community campaigned vigorously against it.

The recruitment agencies for migrant workers reflected the corruption of the regime itself. Initially they charge about US\$40 for their services. When a job is found they demand a further US\$3,000-5,000 in advance. Desperate to escape poverty, the workers and their families go into debt to raise the money. But in

the early 1970s they came to Britain with the expectation of well paid jobs which would allow them to repay the debts and improve their living standards when they returned to the Philippines. Reality was, however, starkly different.

Most Filipino workers entered Britain under the work permit system as a result of the 1971 Immigration Act. Whereas this racist Act was intended to drastically reduce immigration from the 'New Commonwealth' the work permit system allowed unskilled and semi-skilled workers to enter as cheap labour in certain industries - mainly hotels and catering, and as domestics in private homes and in the NHS.

Work permits should more accurately have been termed 'slave permits' for they gave employers immense powers over their workers and deprived the migrants of any civil rights in Britain. Visas were issued only for a particular job and had to be renewed every year for four years. Department of Employment permission was needed to change jobs; resident domestic workers could only get permits if they had no children under the age of 16. These rules led to wide-scale abuse not only in the Philippines where corrupt recruiting agencies were set up, but also in Britain - where, for instance, one sweatshop clothing fac-



Winnie Mandela



Maire O'Shea

- Women are 1/2 the world's population, perform 2/3 of its work hours, receive 1/10 of the world's income and own less than 1/100 of the world's property.

- Women do almost all of the world's domestic work - this means that many women work a double day.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WOMEN FIGHT

THE TRIAL OF WENDY SAVAGE

Wendy Savage, the obstetrician facing 'trial' in a Tower Hamlets Health Authority inquiry, is very rare type of consultant. Firstly, she is a woman practising obstetrics, which is rare enough. Secondly, she believes that the women she cares for should have some say in the way that they give birth to their children. Thirdly, she takes no private patients - in this she is unique amongst the consultants at the London Hospital where she was employed until suspended last year.

While her time was spent in providing NHS ante-natal care at the hospital and at GP's surgeries, her accusers combined their contractual NHS duties with lucrative private practice.

Wendy Savage's aim was to improve the low take-up of ante-natal services among the poor communities of the area, taking her ante-natal clinics out to GP surgeries to save the women fares and long and tiring waits in the hospital clinic. Meanwhile, her Head of Department was touting for support for a £100,000 test-tube baby unit which would serve primarily private patients and be a profitable enterprise. Two of Wendy Savage's main opponents and accusers are Freemasons - a body known more for their backscratching business deals than their social ethics.

Wendy Savage was opposed to the centralisation of maternity services, and a firm supporter of the day care abortion unit at the London Hospital.

Despite her very good record in both maternal and infant mortality, which is at least as good if not better than that of her accusers, her 'trial' was concerned only with five cases out of the thousands which she has dealt with. Of these five cases, only one has led to a complaint by the patient against her handling of the case. One family, whose baby died 8 days

after the birth have lodged a complaint, although they refused a post-mortem at the time which could have revealed whether it was faulty care during delivery which caused the death. Only that mother is to be allowed to give evidence. The other four whose medical records have been used against Mrs Savage, and the thousands of women who support her have been given no voice.

All five cases were chosen to 'prove' that Wendy Savage's reluctance to opt automatically for Caesarian delivery, in any case where there is the slightest doubt that natural birth will be possible, is bad practice.

Birth by Caesarian Section is higher in Britain than in any other Western European country. Although the predominantly male majority of obstetricians insist that their opting for Caesarian Section in more than one birth in ten in Britain last year was based solely on concern for the good health of the mother and child, the figures tell a different story. Women are most likely to have Caesarian inflicted on them on Thursdays and Fridays - that is before

tory in 1974 was exposed for its maltreatment of young Filipino women who were forced to live in appalling hostels and were 'bonded' to their employer in order to pay back their air fare over a period of two years.

Between 1970 and 1973 work permits issued to Filipinos rose four fold. In 1973 56.6% of these permits were for resident domestics with private families and hospitals. In 1974 94.1% were for the hotel and catering industry. Additionally the British government was up to its racist tricks. In 1973-1976 7,278 long term work permits were issued for the Philippines compared with 1,772 for the whole of India. The immigration of entitled dependents from the Indian subcontinent was actively blocked, whilst cheap labour, intended to be temporary, from the Philippines was actively encouraged.

In Britain, Filipino workers face oppression and racism. Despite the fact that 90% of Filipino workers in Britain have 2 years higher education, they have been forced into the lowest paid jobs with the worst conditions. Almost half of them are forced to have more than one job - some of them three jobs. The life of a hospital domestic usually consists of starting work at 7am, working through to 1pm and then returning

to work at 5pm for an evening session. Many Filipino women workers have cleaning jobs in the afternoon, but at the end of the week their pay is still a miserable pittance.

The majority of Filipino workers also live in tied accommodation. This usually means single rooms in hostels with kitchens, bathrooms and toilets shared by many. For workers in the NHS, the cuts and threatened privatisation not only worsen conditions and put jobs at risk they also threaten homelessness for the many domestics who live in such hostels.

By 1978 Britain no longer needed the cheap labour of migrant workers. One of the consequences of the change of policy which ended work permits for semi-skilled and unskilled migrant workers, was that during 1978-80 400 Filipino workers were threatened with deportation. Most of these women workers had been in Britain since the early 1970s and were applying to have their husbands and children join them. Suddenly the British government discovered that false information had been given when the work permits and visas were applied for. When cheap labour was needed scant attention had been paid to references, which, unknown to the migrant workers, had

been forged by the Philippine recruitment agencies. Similarly most of these Filipinas had not been asked if they had children when they were interviewed at the British embassy in Manila. Britain was, in fact, applying the rules in retrospect when it no longer needed the cheap labour. As a result of these deportation threats many Filipino women now live in fear of deportation because of regulations they knew nothing about before they came to Britain.

For the Filipino community as a whole the overthrow of Marcos will be welcome news. Over the years they have had to pay not only British taxes, but also 1-3% of their income to the Philippine dictatorship. The Philippines also had one of the highest fees in the world for passport renewal every two years as another means of taxing migrant workers. A major complaint of the community was their treatment at the hands of the Philippine embassy in Britain which enforced fines for late renewal of passports and intimidated even the unemployed into paying taxes. They are well rid of one corrupt dictator, Marcos. Now we have to fight together to rid ourselves of the racism and corruption of Thatcher's Britain.

Carol Brickley

● **Women are nearly 1/4 the world's labour force but are the most low paid. The average earnings of women who work full time are 62% of men's.**

Constance Markievicz (1868-1927) fought in the Easter Rising 1916



Women's militia, Nicaragua

● **Women grow half of the world's food but own very little of the land.**

Rosa Luxemburg



WOMEN'S

their labour takes them into the consultant's weekend. Caesarians are rarely performed at weekends, and hardly ever on Sundays. Ironically the highest rate of Caesarians are carried out in private hospitals - medical insurance will pay for an operation but not for a normal birth.

Wendy Savage believes, where possible and where the mother wishes it, that natural labour should be tried. Caesarian Section is a major operation which can have serious consequences for a woman's future child-bearing and health. Caesarians are sometimes absolutely necessary but the fact that they are carried out more often in Britain than in other West European countries shows that many must be done for consultants' convenience and not for the overall health of the woman and child. The high rate of inductions and Caesarians in Britain have made giving birth a high tech' torture in some hospitals. The delivery of women's babies is made to fit into a 9-to-5, Monday to Friday, week. Many women experience a total lack of consultation and human feeling

from the consultants in charge of their deliveries. The community support for Wendy Savage, herself a mother of four children, indicates the much higher quality of care which she offered her patients. GPs, Health Visitors and parents united in her support when she was suspended.

Just after her suspension last year, many of the women she cared for mounted a demonstration to the hospital in protest. As the march of mainly women and children neared the hospital, one of the London Hospital's top professors said 'I never thought that I would live to see the day that a rabble would descend on my hospital'. Wendy Savage replied, 'they are not a rabble, they are your patients.'

In these two viewpoints lies the root of the attack on Wendy Savage and on patient-centred medicine. The reactionary attack on Wendy Savage is part of the much larger assault on women's rights: it is part of the drive to once again make women; their work, their sexual and maternal needs, totally subservient to the needs of capitalism.

Sitting through part of the inquiry it was very plain to see what is at stake. A defeat for Wendy Savage would be a defeat for all women fighting for decent care for themselves and their families against an NHS childbirth provision which is increasingly dictated to by Government cuts and consultants' greed.

Even as the inquiry draws to a conclusion another woman consultant, Pauline Bousquet, who works in East London, is under attack by her male colleagues. She, like Wendy Savage, is committed to close contact with her patients, to non-intervention, and is reluctant, in most cases, to opt for Caesarian delivery as a first option.

Yet again her health authority, the City and Hackney Health Authority, are colluding with the witch-hunting of a committed NHS woman consultant by a male-dominated profession concerned with its own interests rather than the patients.

Maggie Mellon and Pauline Sellars

AN INTERVIEW WITH MAIRE O'SHEA

Following her tremendous victory in February (see back page) FRFI talked to Maire O'Shea about her experiences: her arrest, imprisonment and subsequent trial. This courageous woman has spent her life fighting for justice both as a campaigner in Irish politics and as a psychiatrist. Now, in her sixty-sixth year, she has delivered a telling blow against Britain's attempts to criminalise the Irish community.

'Personally my acquittal was a great relief to me but my main concern is that my case should be used to help abolish the PTA and use of conspiracy laws for political purposes. I've been hoping ever since I found that my case was getting so much publicity and support, that it could be used in this way. Since the trial ended I've been available to speak on the case and on the PTA and conspiracy laws...but unfortunately the media don't seem interested. They were chasing me up before the trial wanting to interview me... Since the trial ended I haven't had any approaches from them.'

Maire was in Ireland when she heard that her friend had been arrested and her house had been searched by the Special Branch, who went through confidential psychiatric files. She made the decision to return to England to help get her friend released. She was in her Birmingham home when she was arrested. 'A knock came and I went to the door. There were these five burly characters, overdressed with all new-looking clothes, and a shine on their shoes that would blind you. They swaggered in, a woman with them, and they flashed a warrant at me - they never let you look at it. "We've come to arrest you under the PTA."

She was taken to Aycock police station and from there to the Bridewell in Liverpool. Her treatment was of the kind we are now very familiar with in PTA cases. 'I was taken up to the cell. The cell was roasting hot and I suspected they had turned it up when they saw I had warm clothes on. The cell was very depressing. The walls were painted black to two-thirds of the way up. The rest was a dirty cream. Stone flags on the floor and a wooden bench two feet wide attached to the wall to lie on... They took my watch away I suppose to disorientate me.'

Maire was also subjected to other forms of harassment - denial of reading material, medical neglect and poor food. But because of the support she had her case was already getting publicity and it worked.

'One of the Special Branch men said to me, "I've just heard on the radio that we're not treating you properly, what do you want?" So I gave him a list: something I can eat, fruit, a wash, some newspapers. And within half an hour I got them all!'

Asked what her advice would be to others facing arrest under the PTA or conspiracy laws Maire said:

'... I would advise them to do something that I didn't know I could do at the time and that is to answer no questions. Only give them your name and address, age and say that they are not prepared to answer any questions unless their solicitor is present. Because I found out that by answering any question, even if the answers don't seem to be incriminating, they can be incriminating... the police don't tell you before they ask the questions what they are alleging against you. So they can ask you a question that sounds quite innocent, like when they asked me if I had taken Grimes to Hereford, I said yes. I didn't know they would be using that as evidence against me because they were alleging that I had taken him to Hereford on a reconnaissance trip... Your own statements can be taken in evidence against you.'

After being charged she was taken to Risley and was there for five weeks before getting bail.

'I was Category A and that enabled them to think up new rules all the time... Whenever they came out with some new rule I would say "that's not in the Rule Book" and they would say "Ah but you're Category A"... For instance I wasn't allowed to have my slip-

pers in the cell one night... the screw said "It's the rule... you might escape". I had to change cells about two or three times a week and they go through all your property and read your letters... I was strip searched going to and coming back from Court... you had to take off the dressing gown, hold your hands up and twirl round... they'd stick their fingers in my mouth and ears and pull my hair and rub the soles of my feet'

Did she think that her trial was political?

'Definitely! I was playing a leading part in the IBRG. They were looking for an opportunity to discredit the IBRG by demonstrating that it had been infiltrated by people who supported violence. And I was working on the Birmingham Six case... The prosecution said that I was a fanatic and an extremist because I referred to the situation in the North of Ireland as a war, and to Irish prisoners in British jails as prisoners of war. The excessively high level of security was all aimed at conveying to the jury that they were dealing with terrorists. The police obviously wanted to hold the trial in camera, so they didn't want the public to know what was being done.'

How important did she think her acquittal was?

'It was a very significant victory. There have been very few Irish people acquitted on conspiracy charges. I was the first to have a strong political campaign. It must have got it across both to the judge and the jury that they were dealing with somebody who had the support to fight back. If I was convicted without any evidence there would be a fightback. I advise (other PTA victims) to encourage and ask for a political campaign. They should accept the offers of help and be willing to cooperate with the campaign. Maire's campaign had been notable for involving many different groups in the support committee on a democratically organised basis. We asked her what importance she attached to this.'

'I thought that the broadest campaign possible would be the most effective one. And the different kinds of activity were useful. Different groups favour and are experienced in different kinds of activity. The Labour Committee on Ireland work only inside the labour movement. That is useful - up to a point - but it's not the whole of it. Others go in for street activity - meetings, leafleting and picketing - and that is very useful. Some people believe in demonstrating and some people don't. But when you get a consensus of the ideas of different groups you get the best possible value from the campaign. As long as they don't go off and do things without consulting the defendant or their lawyer. As well as campaigning on the Irish question Maire has spent thirty years in England working in the NHS, in which time she has fought many battles: she has opposed hospital closures; she pioneered the concept of therapeutic communities in psychiatric health care and set up a unique service at the Connolly in Birmingham where the day centre aimed at providing a better psychiatric service for the Asian and Afro-Caribbean community; she has campaigned against the abuse of psychiatry in prisons and the widespread drugging of prisoners and has done a lot of work representing prisoners and patients on Mental Health Tribunals.'

'When I went to Birmingham I found myself faced with having to provide a psychiatric service for a large Asian population and many of the women did not speak English well enough to discuss their psychiatric problems... I found they were getting a very inadequate service and thought "this will not do, I have to do something"... I managed to get a special service started up (aided by Asian nurses)... A lot of the women were getting depressed because they were isolated at home during the day... A therapy group was developed and I had a special clinic every week... We used to get a lot of referrals from local maternity hospitals. Asian women having babies felt alienated and didn't know what was going on if they didn't speak English... Say the baby was put in intensive care and it wasn't explained to them why, they would think it had been taken away... They would react with what looked like a psychosis... but very often it stopped when things were explained to them and they were re-assured.'

This service, the first of its kind, proved so popular that it attracted people from all over the country. Despite this popularity the service was run on a shoestring by the Health Authority, who made it clear that they attached little importance to it. Maire's fight on this and other issues did not endear her to the health authorities

'... people have said that some of my medical political activities must have had something to do with me being charged, because there were a number of people who would have liked to be rid of me...'

Oil: on brink of collapse

Over the last few months the oil price has plunged from \$30 to \$15 a barrel. Such a dramatic change in the price of one of the world's most vital commodities will throw the economic programmes and plans of many countries into turmoil. The anarchy of the capitalist system of production asserts itself with a new vengeance as it destroys at a stroke the livelihood of millions of people and forces many countries, primarily oil producers already facing enormous debts, to the point of bankruptcy.

The oil price has fallen in the face of the continuing world capitalist recession and the inability of the oil producers to come to an agreement to limit their losses by cutting back production in a controlled process. As Marx long ago pointed out:

as soon as it is no longer a question of sharing profits, but of sharing losses, everyone tries to reduce his own share to a minimum and load as much as possible upon the shoulders of some other competitor... competition then transforms itself into a fight of hostile brothers.

One of the most intransigent opponents of an agreement to cut back production has been the Thatcher government, which desperately needs oil revenues to prop up the crisis-ridden British economy. OPEC, led by Saudi Arabia, has retaliated against Britain by increasing production. So the oil price has fallen suddenly and dramatically.

In theory a fall in the oil price should reduce inflation and give some impetus to world economic growth and international trade. In practice it is not so simple. As always under the capitalist system there must be winners and losers. The rich and powerful imperialist nations, with the exception of Britain, will all grow richer and stronger. Japan, Germany and the US will benefit most. Japan, in particular, as an importer of raw materials and exporter of manufactured goods will increase its already massive trade surplus with the rest of the world, further increase its domination of the Asian region and the Asian oil trade and pose an even greater economic threat to US imperialism.

On the other side the oil producing oppressed nations are now facing bankruptcy. A \$15 per barrel oil price means a net loss on the Venezuelan balance of payments of over \$6bn, the Mexican a loss of \$6bn and the Nigerian a loss of nearly \$5bn. There is no way that these countries can repay their foreign debts after a loss of between a quarter and a third of export earnings following the oil price fall. They are in effect technically bankrupt. This poses quite a serious threat to the largest nine US imperialist banks. Their outstanding loans to the biggest four oil debtors alone were \$24.4bn in June 1985 or some 62 per cent of the capital they must rely on to meet loan losses.



Britain

Oil accounts for about a fifth of Britain's merchandise exports and oil revenues last year represented some 10 per cent of the total budget revenues. The dramatic oil price fall means that revenues from North Sea Oil will crash from an original forecast of £11.5bn to £5.6bn. The loss of export earnings – a fall of over 30 per cent from what was expected – will mean last year's £3.5bn balance of payments surplus being almost wiped out and growing deficits and balance of payments problems from 1987 onwards. In terms of revenues the fall in the oil price has plunged the economy into a position not expected for another five or six years when oil production would be in decline (see 'Politics of Profit' FRF/54). The Tory economic policy is now in tatters. Any tax cuts at the next budget can now only be achieved by even more drastic cutbacks in public expenditure at the expense of the unemployed, the poor, the old and the sick.

Mexico

On Friday 21 February 1986, President Miguel de la Madrid of Mexico told the international banks and governments that his country was no longer in a position to service its \$97bn debt – the second largest in the world. Mexico has been relying on oil for three quarters of its foreign exchange earnings and half its tax revenues. The fall in the oil price will mean a loss of government tax revenues of \$7bn and a balance of payments loss of some \$6bn. Mexico's debt repayments of \$11.5bn now due cannot be paid.

If the oil price remains at around \$15 per barrel then Mexico will need up to \$9bn in foreign finance to get through this year ('new money'). The US is offering only \$6bn and then only if more severe austerity measures are introduced, and steps are taken to halt the capital flight out of Mexico of some \$1bn a month. The US is also demanding that more effort is made to open up the Mexican economy to foreign direct

Speculators spill blood!

As the oil price collapsed so panic hit the markets which trade in oil. The forward market in North Sea Brent Oil – last year it generated deals worth £100bn – disintegrated into a morass of defaults and threatened legal action. This market allows traders (speculators and oil companies) to 'sell short', that is, trade a future entitlement to a cargo of oil some time ahead in the expectation of obtaining it more cheaply at a later date. A cargo is sold many times before someone has to take delivery. These sales are known as 'daisy chains' and recently one had 160 links with the same company appearing 14 times as buyer or seller. Companies hedge against being stuck with high price crude and also use the market to reduce their tax payments to the government. Eventually someone has to take delivery and give 15 days notice before the oil's loading date. It's okay if you are an oil major but for a trader left with a cargo it could be the end. In February, five 'daisy chains' ended up in the hands of someone who did not want to take delivery. Hence the law suits – often useless because the trading companies are registered in places like the Bahamas and Cayman Islands. There are millions at stake. A total of 300 Brent deals were reported for March delivery of \$21.15. The mid-February March price was \$16.75. So short sellers of Brent could make some £800 million. Others would lose a fortune. As one trader put it 'There will be so much blood on the floor by the end of March...'

investment. It also wants Mexico to make use of provisions in its last rescheduling agreement with the banks which permit private sector debt (30% of the total debt) to be swapped into equity – that is, ownership of Mexican industry and commercial institutions. US imperialism wants to use the Mexican people's economic misery to gain even greater control, ownership and domination of the Mexican economy.

The US is treading on very dangerous ground. Enormous hardships have been endured by the Mexican people to satisfy the conditions for rescheduling debt laid down by the IMF and the rapacious banks. Real wages over the last four years have fallen by nearly half. Only 50 per cent of the 25 million workforce is fully employed. The further public spending cuts and the removal of many subsidies to the Mexican poor demanded by the IMF and US banks could be answered by an explosion of social unrest. The Mexican government is now selling off a further 80 public companies in addition to the 236 companies put up for sale last year, in a desperate bid to raise funds – around \$1bn. Remaining restrictions on foreign investments are to be eased. Mexico will also call for a reduction in the effective rate of interest that it pays on its debts to the banks to not more than 6 per cent. At present it pays around 10 per cent. The lower rate would bring a saving of \$3.54bn but nowhere near sufficient to bridge the gap opened by the oil price collapse.

President de la Madrid recognises that unless concessions are made by the US government, his administration is very vulnerable. He knows he cannot cut public expenditure much further without risking economic chaos and social unrest. The US is also aware of the effects a Mexican financial crisis would have on the US economy. Mexico is the US's third largest trading partner after Japan and Canada and US corporate direct investment in Mexico is \$15bn. Mexico is also the largest US supplier of oil and US banks hold about \$25bn of the \$72bn Mexican bank debt. As one economic commentator recently put it 'a Mexican economic collapse would cause disruption in the US economy and the entire western financial world' (*Financial Times* 19 February 1986). The oil crisis is, essentially, a political matter – the balance of class forces will determine the outcome.

David Reed



Demonstrators carry a coffin for Jean-Claude Duvalier

Haiti

Baby Doc overthrown

28 years of brutal rule by the Duvalier family in Haiti, one of the poorest nations in the world, came to an end on 10 February when a US military plane flew Jean-Claude Duvalier into exile.

Haiti is a small French-speaking country in the Caribbean, with a population of 6 million people. Average unemployment is 50%, life expectancy is 45 years, and 80% of the population is illiterate. 3 out of every 4 Haitians earn less than \$150 a year. 220 US companies have investments in Haiti taking advantage of such appalling conditions. The end of the Duvalier regime is the first step along the path of destroying total imperialist influence in Haiti.

The Duvalier regime fell after two months of popular protest which began in November 1985. On 27 November students demonstrated in commemoration of trade unionists, journalists and human rights activists who had been arrested in 1980. Four students were killed. This led to further protests the following day, and a memorial mass of 5,000 people in early December. This democratic movement grew rapidly, supported by the Roman Catholic church and parts of the business community. In December and January protests and demonstrations took place in all the major towns in Haiti and students boycotted schools. Several more people were killed as Duvalier used the Tonton Macoutes (official name Volunteers for National Security) and the army against the people. Sometimes the army refused to intervene.

The Tonton Macoutes were Duvalier's private militia, and numbered 15,000 men and women. The army only numbers 8,000. They provided themselves with a good standard of living by extorting money and goods from the general population. Throughout the 28 years of the Duvaliers' rule the Tonton Macoutes have been responsible for thousands of murders, abductions, rapes and cases of torture. During the mass unrest the people lost their fear of the Tontons and although heavily armed at least 50 of them are believed to have been killed after the flight of Duvalier.

The fate of the Duvaliers was sealed after a weekend of mass protests on 25 and 26 January. Further demonstrations also took place on the 27th. These actions were brutally repressed and many observers believe that as many as 400 people were killed. Reporters saw hundreds of bodies laid out in hospitals, and mounds of burnt bodies and charred bones at a site 10 miles outside the capital, Port-au-Prince. On 31 January Larry Speakes, a White House spokesman, announced the end of the Duvalier regime. Only a matter of hours later Duvalier appeared on Haitian television

announcing the continuation of his presidency and the imposition of a state of siege. On 3 February a general strike began with most businesses and shops remaining shut. 7 days later Duvalier fled to France to live on the £360 million that his family had stolen from the Haitian people.

Reagan's Caribbean basin initiative relies on authoritarian governments with a 'democratic' facade, which are anti-communist, pro-US, which can contain growing opposition and which receive small amounts of aid for 'stability'. Haiti and Jean Claude Duvalier did not fit this mould. The regime was based on corruption, extortion, and brutal repression and with many internal squabbles likely to lead to a crisis. As such it was an embarrassment to the US. Since Reagan has been in power the US has averaged \$50 million a year in aid to Haiti, a 500% increase over the Carter period. Such

sums are important in a country where 75% of the national budget comes from aid sources. However any attempt at reform which parts of the business community welcomed was blocked by the Tonton Macoutes and old hardline Duvalierists from the days of Papa Doc Duvalier. Hence the US, worried by the growing democratic movement, provided Duvalier with the means to escape. The attempt to stem the growth of the movement by moving out the Duvaliers has proved unsuccessful. The new six-man junta which includes five former Duvalierists is condemned by the people as Duvalierism without Duvalier. Popular demonstrations have continued, and students are still boycotting their classes. The new junta has defended the Tonton Macoutes against the wrath of the people, imposed curfews and used the army against demonstrators. In a country where it is a struggle to stay alive the masses are striking out along a path to create a better society for themselves.

Dale Evans

Reagan gives anti-abortion go-ahead

Anti-abortion activists are stepping up their attacks in cities throughout the US and their tactics are more vicious and reactionary than ever. In 1984 there were 30 cases of bombings of abortion clinics (see FRF/48) and last Autumn \$100,000 of damage was done to 3 clinics in Louisiana and North Carolina – one clinic was burnt to the ground. In December 1985, the Manhattan Women's Medical Office was bombed during working hours and four letter bombs were sent to abortion/family planning centres in Oregon. Fortunately no one was hurt in these incidents.

A manual written by Joseph Scheidler, one time Benedictine monk, now head of Chicago's Pro Life Action League, is now on sale in US bookshops, entitled 'Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion'. This gives guidance to would-be anti-abortion 'activists' from 'lobbying and sit-ins to tying up clinic phone lines' to harass and intimidate women and clinic workers. He urges pickets of clinics and describes with praise a gauntlet of picketers in front of a centre in Wisconsin where vicious abuse was hurled at doctors and women as they entered. 'Baby-killer', 'murderer' to the women; 'why don't you go back to the Philippines where you belong?' to a health worker, etc.

Scheidler sees the pro-life movement as grounded in Christianity with 'God sanctioning the movement's every action – even, perhaps, when violent'. He says, 'While we do not condone violence, we should not condemn without compassion and under-

standing those whose strong convictions may lead them to illegal activities... we admire the zeal that these actions manifest...'

Those in the pro-choice movement are described as people who 'appeal to selfish convenience, denial of biological fact, pandering to the lowest animal instincts... defense of illicit sex and human degradation...'

The hysteria is blessed by President Reagan who is currently working 'with Congress to overturn the tragedy of Roe v Wade (a case brought in 1973 which legalised abortion). He is also considering 'a pardon for all the pro-lifers who have been jailed because of clinic violence'.

Meanwhile conditions for working class women in the US are worsening by the day. 50% of black women supporting a family live below the poverty line. 28% of white. More than 18% of teenage mothers are homeless and 13.4 million children live in poverty.

Alexa Byrne

Uganda-NRM installs new junta in Kampala

As Ugandans remembered the seizure of power by Idi Amin on 25 January 1971 Uganda's capital, Kampala, fell to the National Resistance Movement and its army (NRM/NRA). Within days YK Museveni had made himself the 9th President of a war-torn country, in which various militarist war-lords were in control of 'their' areas. The NRM/NRA is in control of southern Uganda, Tito Okello's Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) controls Acholi and parts of Lango areas in north-central Uganda, the two ex-Amin forces - Major-General Isaac Lumago's Former Uganda National Army (FUNA) and Brigadier Moses Ali's Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) - control north-western territories and the north-east (Karamoja) is a no-man's-land.

The new NRM/NRA leadership lost no time in setting up a Junta in the form of a National Resistance Council (NRC), declaring that it will rule by decree, and banning all political party activities for four years while the NRM will monopolise the political scene. They also followed the Okello strategy of incorporating opportunists from the five political parties and from two 'southern/Bantu' armed factions, namely the Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM) of K Kagodo and AL Kayiira, and the Federal Democratic Movement (Fedemo) whose commander Nkwanga was killed during the battle for Kampala because of his defection to the NRM/NRA.

President Museveni has since told a London-based weekly that his preference is to set up a one-party system in Uganda, obviously under the control of the NRM/NRA. In short, a new dictatorship is in place in Uganda.

The NRM/NRA design to establish itself on the Ugandan political scene was not the work of the Ugandan people as such. It is common knowledge that during the battles that raged throughout the Nairobi talks, both sides were being armed and supported by an assortment of foreign powers. US imperialism and

British imperialism were caught giving support through various channels to both the NRM/NRA and the UNLA. For example, while Major General Anthony Pollard was 'advising' both sides at the Nairobi talks, the Westminster-based company, Defence Systems Ltd, was despatching 'former' SAS experts to arm and fly the UNLA's helicopter gunships. It is generally known that this kind of operation always takes place only with the approval of the relevant political and military circles.

Similarly we must view the connection between the London-Rhodesia Company (LONRHO) and the NRM/NRA. In addition, an odd assortment of mercenaries and fortune-hunters were also pouring in from such countries as Egypt, Zaire, Rwanda, Sudan and from West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Canada and others. As for Tanzania, she decided to support the NRM/NRA under the pretext that the ex-Amin forces must not be involved in Ugandan affairs. This has therefore created a very delicate and intricate situation for Uganda's democratic and patriotic forces, which requires a reassessment. A new approach is needed in order to tackle the situation.

In the south, the masses are definitely happy that an atrocious band of murderers and looters has been removed from their backs. In the north, the masses see the NRM/NRA as an 'outside' force that is bent on destroying them. This is due to the divisive politics propagated by the NRM/NRA according to which the Ugandan problem has been one of the 'primitive northern fascists' (Obote, Amin and Okello) subjugating enlightened and civilised southern/Bantu under their own leadership.

Britain continues to meddle

The British government has not been idle in all these schemes. Major-General Pollard was already in Nairobi busy cultivating personal friendships with the new leaders-to-be during the four months of talks between the UNLA and the NRM/NRA. He moved to Kampala shortly after the signing of the Nairobi agreement under the cover of 'observing' the implementation of the Agreement. And as soon as Museveni was in Kampala, the British military officer was very active in the arrangements for the swearing-in of the new President.

Mrs Lynda Chalker, who only just recently replaced Malcolm Rifkin in the Foreign Office as Minister in charge of African affairs, was in East Africa in time to be one of the very first political leaders from abroad to meet the NRM/NRA leadership in power. Rubbing the wounds in the hearts of the Ugandan people, she justified Britain's polishing of the Obote and Okello terror machine during the last five years - instead of apologising - by stating that Britain's military training programme had 'reduced' more deaths! What is particu-

larly revealing is that far from dressing her down for that shameful role, the new NRM/NRA government has already come to an understanding with the British government on military and economic matters. It is reported that Major-General Pollard will 'assist' in determining the size, composition, equipment, and even deployment of the 'national' Army to be reconstituted from the already factional NRA. British officers are to 'advise' Uganda's General Staff, and NCOs are to continue training. In short, British military involvement in Uganda is to be massively expanded when Whitehall is fully aware the fundamental causes of the Ugandan crisis still prevail. Instead of democratic participation by the masses we have a new Junta ruling by decree. Instead of national unity, we have a factional and sectional force at war with others. Instead of national independence, Ugandans will be watching for the pound of flesh to be given to those who 'invested' in the NRM. And the war cannot help bring about economic progress or social justice.

Mrs Chalker is understood to have promised £5 million for rehabilitating ex-fighters, £6 million annual programme, and £10 million for the Owen Falls hydro-electric project, which some western European interests were also vying for. And worst of all, it is understood that the British government is urging the NRM/NRA that 'peace can be secured only by military means' in order to set up a 'strong government' which obviously can alone secure British and imperialist interests in general. The Ugandan people are watching all these developments with great unease. The Uganda National Liberation Front (Anti-Dictatorship) will not be found lacking in helping develop the Ugandan people's struggle to carry on from where the NRM/NRA have abandoned the people. This alone will ensure genuine peace and democracy which safeguards our freedom to determine the nature of the society we shall live in.

Uganda National Liberation Front (A - D)

Revolt in Egypt

Against the background of an acutely worsening economic crisis conscripts from the Egyptian security police broke camp and targeted luxury tourist hotels on the outskirts of Cairo. Their revolt, which began on the evening of 25 February, brought a swift response from the poor and unemployed in Cairo itself. President Mubarak declared a curfew, closed Cairo's schools and universities and called the army out onto the streets. By 28 February unofficial reports claimed 100 people, mainly civilians, killed, 3,000 security police arrested and over 700 civilians.

Significantly, the revolt in Cairo triggered fighting in four other Egyptian cities. It followed the arrest on 9 February of 111 textile workers in a town to the north of Cairo for agitating for higher wages.

The immediate trigger to the conscript police force's revolt was a rumour that they would be required to serve four instead of three years' duty. Recruited from the youth of the rural poor these conscripts suffer the poverty and indignities that are heaped on the mass of Egyptians. Paid the equivalent of £1 a week and two meals a day, they have not shared in the \$2 billion a year US aid which is the price imperialism has paid Sadat and Mubarak for taking a pro-Israeli stance. This money has been used to maintain the loyalty of the Egyptian army. The conscript police like the urban and rural poor are the ones who are being made to pay for the \$5 billion a year that Egypt needs to service its \$32 billion foreign debt.

Trevor Rayne

A face of Arab reaction - President Assad

In the second half of February, Israeli troops, tanks and armoured cars swept through south Lebanese villages searching for 2 of their soldiers kidnapped by the nationalist resistance. In the battles that followed 14 Lebanese and 2 Israelis died. Within days, the United Nations force in Lebanon was compelled to report numerous cases of torture inflicted on civilian villagers with barbed wire, electric coils, stoves and cigarette butts.

These incidents once again brought to attention the unbroken nationalist resistance and Zionist repression in the small portion of Lebanese territory still remaining under Israeli rule as its so-called 'security zone'. Despite its tenacity, this phase of anti-Zionist resistance does not have the same revolutionary potential, and occurs in much more adverse conditions than the historic 1983-85 battles led by the Lebanese National Resistance Front (LNRF) which expelled Israel from most of south Lebanon.

Lebanese secular-democratic forces, particularly communists, and the left-wing of the PLO, played a critical role in the LNRF armed struggle against the Israeli occupation. Its successes brought the democratic forces back to the centre-stages of Lebanese politics following the 1982 Israeli invasion and created conditions for their ascendancy in the country. This process was halted by the Syrian regime's machinations in alliance with the Muslim bourgeois Amal led by Nabih Berri. A growing alliance between Lebanese communists and the left-wing Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) was destroyed after the vicious May 1985 Syrian/Amal war against Palestinian camps in Sabra, Chatilla and Bourj al-Barajneh. And in newly liberated south Lebanon, Amal militias proceeded with efforts to disarm Palestinians in Sidon, Tyre and elsewhere.

Confident that the Lebanese and Palestinian left had thus been sufficiently weakened, President Assad of Syria



Israeli torture victim sponsored the 28 December 1985 'deal' between Lebanon's main bourgeois sectarian forces - the Muslim Amal and Druze, the latter led by Walid Jumblatt and the Phalangists led by the 1982 butcher of Sabra and Chatilla, Elie Hobeika. At the time, the deal was widely publicised as 'definitive' and proclaimed as a major political reform of the sectarian Lebanese state. In fact it was no more than the outcome of haggling for privilege between bourgeois factions in which the Christians were forced to make concessions to Amal and the Druze for the sake of restoring an element of bourgeois stability in the country. The secular forces, communists and the Palestinians were excluded from any say in this deal. It was judged so damaging to the democratic movement that the PFLP, despite its alignment with Syria, felt it necessary to criticise the deal. Though it is floundering upon the resistance of

petit-bourgeois Phalangists unwilling to make any concessions to the Muslims, the deal signified the current ascendancy in Lebanon of sectarian bourgeois forces.

The south Lebanese anti-Zionist resistance today takes place in the context of an emboldened Amal reaction persistently attacking Palestinian camps and Lebanese communists. Indeed shortly before the Israeli sweep, Amal rounded up 80 Lebanese Communist Party (LCP) members in South Lebanon. In Beirut Muslim fundamentalists murdered a leading Politbureau member after the Israeli sweep.

Syrian strategy in Lebanon remains as consistent as ever - to weaken and marginalise the revolutionary democratic forces primarily by suppressing the Palestinian resistance which has acted as the vanguard of revolution in Lebanon. In so doing it hopes to foist on the Lebanese masses a reformed sectarian solution acceptable to imperialism and all sectors of the Lebanese ruling classes and simultaneously prevent the left-wing of the PLO using Lebanon as a back-up base for the mounting revolutionary struggle in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and indeed 'Israel' itself. It functions thus to hold back the anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist struggle in the Middle East.

In the occupied territories, the burden of repression is falling upon left-wing PLO activists. The majority of militants suffering 'administrative detention' and deportation at the hands of the Israeli occupiers are members of the PFLP and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The Syrian conspiracy in Lebanon aids and abets this process and thus acts to strengthen the collaborationist forces in the occupied territories (see FRFI 56). Despite its nationalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric, the Syrian role in the Palestinian struggle is complementary to that of Jordan under King Hussein.

● As we go to press, Mr Masri, leading collaborator and Mayor of Nablus of the West Bank, has been executed.

Eddie Abrahams

End of Marcos era

continued from page 1

Minister, Jaime Ongpin is a Harvard trained business executive who heads the country's biggest mining concern.

Aquino on becoming President immediately assured the US that its vital Subic and Clark military bases in the Philippines would remain untouched. Thus is abandoned all pretence at securing Philippine sovereignty. Indeed, the President's new Cabinet, planned even before Marcos fled, includes many of his former cronies. West Point trained Ramos was appointed Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces and Brigadier General Ramon Farolan, another Marcos man, was named Chief of the Airforce. With US assistance they will attempt to gear the armed forces to defeat the CPP and the NPA. Ramos has already ordered the police to prevent the people from exacting revenge against their exploiters.

It was only to diffuse the continued agitation by the masses that Aquino consented to release large numbers of political prisoners. A released communist summed up the bourgeois character of the new Cabinet:

'... the same old faces. I couldn't find any faces from the militant workers, from the students, from the peasants.'


The NPA has issued a declaration stating:

'Of course the armed struggle will go on. Basically, the same problems of the US-Marcos dictatorship are still there, except Marcos is no longer around.'

When the honeymoon is over

Aquino's undoubted popularity has won imperialism a lull in the gathering storm of the class struggle of workers and peasants against their local and foreign exploiters. As the momentary exuberance of victory expires, however, the logic of capitalism and imperialism will reveal that nothing fundamental has changed for the oppressed. Only a breathing space has been created for the major classes to prepare for future battles.

Eddie Abrahams and Trevor Rayne



UNDERSTANDING MARXISM

■ Marx's Critique of Political Economy
2 Money

'Money is the root of all evil' according to a popular expression. And given the overbearing influence of money in our lives it is not surprising that many utopian socialists have argued for the abolition of money or the abolition of banks as a way of ridding us of the evils of the capitalist system. Yet others have argued that the capitalist system doesn't even need money any more and modern computer technology will do away with it. But capitalism without money is not possible and would be equivalent, as Marx once commented, to Catholicism without the Pope.

Marx began his analysis in *Capital* with the commodity and examined exchange-value, or the exchange relation of commodity to commodity, in order to get at the value that lies hidden behind it. He showed that the value of commodities has a purely social reality and that they acquire this reality in so far as they are expressions or embodiments of one identical social substance, that is, abstract human labour (see FRFI 56). Further exchange-value is the only form in which the value of commodities can be expressed. The value of a commodity can only manifest itself in the social relation of commodity to commodity.

Marx then goes on to develop the expression of value implied in the value-relation of commodities in order to trace the genesis of the money form of value. The creation of money proceeds logically and historically from the contradiction between the particular nature of the commodity as a use-value and its general nature as exchange-value. Marx shows this through an examination of the relation between two commodities in what he calls the 'accidental' or 'elementary' form of value; 20 yards of linen = one coat. This relates to an underdeveloped form of commodity production.

In the relation 20 yards of linen = one coat the value of the linen appears in relative form and the coat acts as equivalent, or appears in equivalent form. The value of the linen is expressed only relatively, that is, by the bodily form of the commodity coat, the value of one by the use-value of the other. (In this relation which commodity appears in relative and which in equivalent form is purely accidental.) Marx then goes on to examine the equivalent form of value. He points to three 'peculiarities' of the equivalent form:

- 1 the use value becomes the form of manifestation, the phenomenal form of its opposite, value;
- 2 concrete labour becomes the form under which its opposite, abstract human labour, manifests itself;
- 3 the labour of private individuals takes the form of its opposite, labour directly social in form.

With the further development of capitalism the accidental form leads to the total or expanded form of value. This is given by '20 yards of linen = one coat or = 10lbs of tea or = 40lbs of coffee... or = etc, etc'. In this the accidental relation between two commodity owners disappears. 'It becomes plain that it is not the exchange of commodities which regulates the magnitude of their value, but, on the contrary, that it is the magnitude of their value which controls their exchange proportions'. However, this expanded form suffers from 'defects' in that it is still incomplete. The creation of every new commodity lengthens the chain and furnishes the material for a further expression of value.

This is overcome with the emergence of the 'General' form of value, that is, one coat, 10lbs of tea, 40lbs of coffee... etc = 20yds of linen and results from the 'joint action of the whole world of commodities'. It paves the way for the emergence of the money form of value. This is identical with the General form except that gold replaces the linen of the above example: 20 yds of linen, 1 coat, 10lbs of tea, 40lbs of coffee etc... = 2 ounces of gold. A single commodity has been excluded from the rest and is made to play the universal equivalent. It is an exclusion that has to have social validity. The particular commodity with whose bodily form the equivalent form is thus socially identified, now becomes the money commodity, and gold has historically played this role. 'Money as a measure of value, is the phenomenal form that must of necessity be assumed by that measure of value, which is immanent in commodities, labour-time'. David Reed.

INSIDE NEWS



Fightback in Peterhead

Two prisoners, Robert Varey and Gary McMenamin, organised a major prison protest and escape plan at Peterhead jail, Scotland in November last year. Both men are on life sentences and had been locked in solitary confinement for long periods. Gary McMenamin has been in solitary ever since he was imprisoned in 1982. They have repeatedly asked for transfers to different prisons. Varey, who has no family in Scotland requested a transfer to an English jail so he could have a visitor. McMenamin has been persistently victimised at Peterhead. Though not in 'normal circulation' during the January '84 protest, he was badly beaten up for going as a defence witness in the Peterhead showtrial of 22 June 1984 (see *Lift the Lid!* FRFI Scottish prison pamphlet). Later that year he had to have stitches in his head when hit by a prison officer wielding a pair of handcuffs. Their requests have been continually denied.

On 2 November, Varey took 7 prison officers hostage using an imitation gun. He locked them in his cell and released other prisoners on the wing including McMenamin. All the prisoners carried tables and furniture to the outer wall and Varey succeeded in getting over before prison officers in riot gear arrived. The other prisoners succeeded in barricading themselves on the wing (still holding the hostages) and demanded improvements in their conditions and treatment. No notice was taken of their demands and riot clad officers broke up the protest. All 7 hostages were released uninjured.

Both men have received vicious sentences. Varey, who was eventually recaptured, has been given an additional 9 years to begin at the end of the 20 years he is already serving; Gary McMenamin an additional 7 years.

Please write letters of solidarity to them at HMP Peterhead, Aberdeen, AB4 6YY; and letters of protest to Malcolm Rifkind, Scottish Secretary, New St Andrews House, St James Centre, Edinburgh.

Alexa Byrne and Paul McKinlay

Portlaoise Hunger Strike

The condition of POW Henry Doherty, who went on hunger strike in Portlaoise prison on 13 January, is deteriorating as we go to press. He is demanding an end to closed visits and compensation for the destruction of his belongings by prison officers after the unsuccessful escape by POWs. Republican POWs began a visits strike on 4 February in protest at closed visits and the escalating strip searches of prisoners. FRFI sends support and solidarity to Hugh Doherty and all POWs in Portlaoise.

Pauline Sellars

POWs: NEWS AND GREETINGS

Our warmest congratulations to Tommy Quigley, Irish POW, and Geraldine Bailey who were married in Albany Prison on 31 January. The wedding had been delayed five weeks by Tommy being put in solitary on Rule 43 for no reason. It went ahead amidst further vindictive acts of harassment. Nevertheless our very best wishes to them both.

There have been several moves again in the past few weeks. Paul Norrey was moved from Hull to Strangeways, Manchester on 28 days. So, too, Vince Donnelly from Frankland to Durham. Bobby Campbell has been transferred from Hull to Gartree and Paul Hill, having been ghosted to Lincoln from Gartree, has now been moved to Hull. This move breaks an undertaking given to him, following his being beaten up by prison officers in the Hull Riot of 1976, that he would never be located there again. Our solidarity to all these comrades.

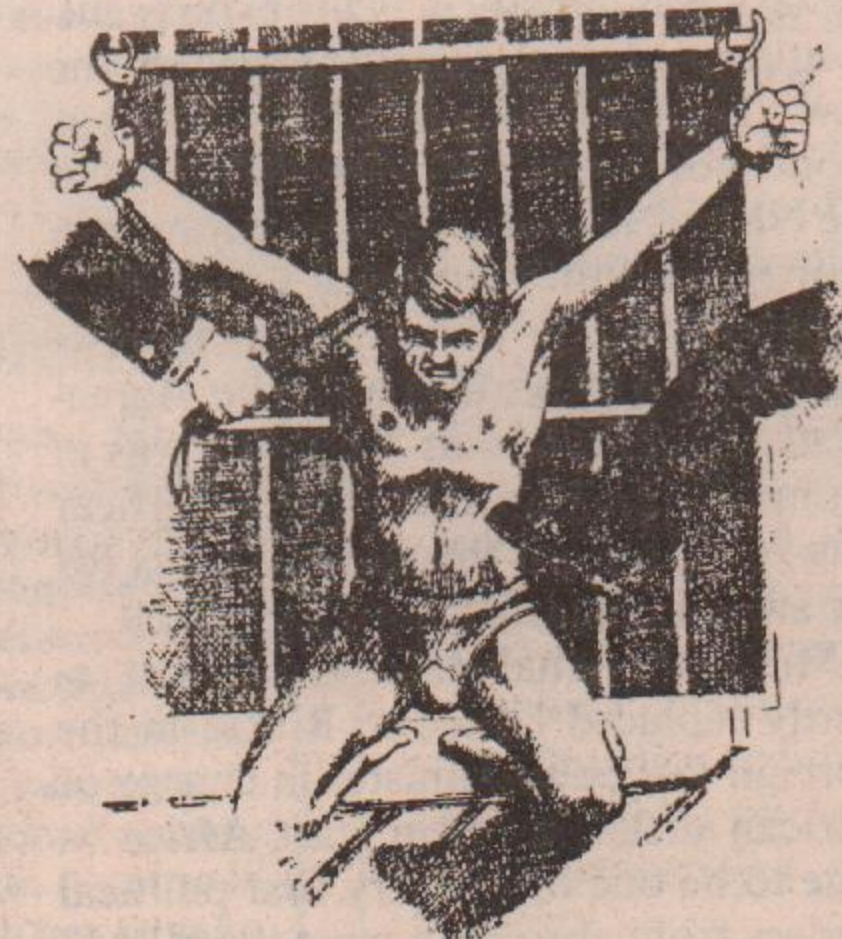
Our greetings also to the two POWs whose birthdays come soon. We ask our readers to send cards, preferably recorded delivery to ensure their arrival: Patrick Mulryan, 461575, HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcestershire, WR11 5TZ. 23 March. Gerry Cunningham, 132016, also Long Lartin, 24 March.

Tony Sheridan

Screw brutality - Home Office cover up

In February and March 1985 Danny Grimes was severely beaten on three occasions by 7-10 prison officers in Albany jail. He is currently battling with a Home Office cover-up which has cleared the officers of these attacks and, not surprisingly, finds himself on 11 trumped up charges of assault.

Danny's injuries included bruising to the upper arms, pelvis, chest, thigh, toes, a black eye, a knife wound to his pelvis and fractured nose which has left him with breathing problems.



After one of these beatings, the officers dragged Danny along a corridor using a leather strap tied round his neck which has left a permanent scar. He was then held naked in a body belt for 2 or 3 days.

Medical evidence has confirmed these injuries, particularly the knife-wound, the scar at the back of his neck and a badly swollen muscle in his left thigh caused by kicking.

All comrades at FRFI/RCG send warmest greetings to Danny and solidarity in his fight for justice and to expose the barbarity of the thugs in Albany prison.

Please send letters of solidarity to Danny (D81279, HMP Blundeston, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 5BG).

Alexa Byrne

More prisons but more overcrowding...

Visiting Saughton Prison (Edinburgh) on 7 February, Scottish Prisons Minister, John McKay said he had no 'short term solution' for overcrowding.

Government figures in November 1985 gave Scotland's prison population to be 5,697. In a total population of about 5 million people that means 1 person in 878 is in prison. Little wonder there's overcrowding. Official figures show there are 10% too many prisoners for the accommodation available and in Saughton nearly 50% too many - 817 inmates in a prison designed for 547. In Saughton, Barlinnie, Inverness and Longriggend Remand Institution prisoners are being crammed in 2 or 3 to a cell.

Another 2 prisons are to be opened in Scotland by the Government this year - Greenock and Shotts. McKay says he's considering keeping Low Moss, a former RAF camp, for another 10 years and he's casting around for buildings to convert. Of course with the number of empty factories, pits, schools and hospitals all looking like prisons, he'll soon be able to cram in half the population of Scotland.

Paul McKinlay

Medical abuse in prisons

The National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) published a report last month which shows that prison hospital officers have 'less than a quarter of the training of their NHS counterparts'. Prison officers with only 24 weeks training are administering drugs and taking x-rays, jobs that require a minimum of 2 years experience in NHS hospitals. NACRO says that this leads to 'radiation hazards and the chances of incorrect diagnosis'.

The report exposes the fact that there are no channels open to prisoners to complain about their treatment. Also that prisoners held in prison psychiatric wings receive no adequate therapy or care.

Alexa Byrne

Fightback in Holland

On Monday 13 January 1986 prisoners on the A-wing of Scheveningen prison in Den Haag erupted and destroyed several thousand pounds of prison property. The incident, which involved the wing being held by the prisoners for over an hour, came about following a brutal attack on a prisoner (Jan de Rijke) by a screw named Bal. After negotiations with the prison governors by a team of prisoners, the 'riot' ended peaceably.

Jan de Rijke was thrown from the third landing by Bal; slow reactions by fellow prisoners enabled the screw to leave the wing with no more than a bloody eye. Several minutes later, immediately after Jan had been removed to the office of the prison nurse, there was a spontaneous outburst of prisoners' anger: the governor and all the screws ran, panic-stricken, from the wing, leaving the prisoners in control. We managed to make immediate telephone contact with people outside the prison, sending details of the incident with Bal plus information over our response.

On instructions from the Ministry of Justice, a police investigation was undertaken; two prisoners were called as eyewitnesses, but the many others who voluntarily risked reprisals by stepping forward were ignored. On Friday 24 January, we heard that the Prosecutor had

decided to ignore the evidence and not proceed with charges against Bal. In the interval, after a two day stay in the prison hospital for treatment to his wounds, which included severe concussion, Jan de Rijke was transferred to the isolation unit in Maastricht prison where he remains.

Although, through a 'friendly' MP, we have raised questions in the Dutch Parliament, we have recognised that this round, too, has been taken by the enemy. But the struggle continues.

Alan Reeve

A Vleugel
Strafgevangenis de Den Haag
Pompstationsweg 14, 2497 JW, Den Haag, Holland

Send cards and messages of solidarity to Jan de Rijke at Paviljoen 8, HvB Maastricht, Holland

John Bowden fighting for representation

John Bowden has once again come under attack from the prison authorities, this time as a result of a Board of Visitors' decision to deny him legal representation in a case against him on 7 February. At the first hearing John argued that the complexity of his defence necessitated legal help, and the case was postponed for a fortnight. John wrote to his solicitors asking them to begin an application for judicial review on his behalf but received a negative response.

John tells us that since the 1983 High Court ruling granting prisoners the right to ask for representation, BOVs have 'progressively undermined and weakened' this right by deciding themselves whether a prisoner can or cannot be legally represented. 'What once appeared as a significant legal victory for prisoners has now been destroyed by the arbitrary power of discretion still vested in BOVs'. Furthermore, the courts are ruling in favour of BOVs whenever their refusal to grant legal representation is challenged by judicial review. John points out '... all this only illustrates the fact that prisoners and any oppressed group, can never expect any real or lasting legal protection from a bourgeois judiciary and legal system so fundamental to the system of class oppression generally...'

John went before the BOV on 7 Feb-

ruary and defended himself and was doing well until provoked. He was then beaten in the face by prison officers and locked in the strong box. The BOV convicted him in his absence and shouted his sentence through the strong box door - 112 days total loss of all 'privileges'.

Having spent over 3 years in solitary on Rule 43b, this 'official' punishment makes little difference to his condition - solitary confinement, no possessions, continual brutality.

FRFI comrades salute John's determined resistance to the oppression and corruption of the British prison system and ask all readers to send letters of protest to the Home Office and letters of solidarity and support to John.

Alexa Byrne
John Bowden, B41173, HMP Welford Road, Leicester, LE2 7AJ



SCOTTISH PRISONS - LIFT THE LID

Paul McKinlay and his comrades are to be congratulated on producing a readable, attractive and cheap pamphlet on Scottish prisons. *Scottish Prisons - Lift the Lid!* was produced by Paul and

other RCG members in Scotland. It draws on material from FRFI's Prisoners Fightback page.

The British left has little to say about prisons in general. About Scottish prisons it is completely silent. Yet it is in Scotland that some of the most barbaric features of the British prison system are to be found. This pamphlet certainly does lift the lid on this barbarism from the Inverness cages to the Glenochil death camp.

From reports on the Peterhead protests and show trials to interviews with ex-prisoners, this pamphlet builds up to a powerful condemnation of the Scottish prison system. Anyone concerned with the rights of prisoners, and democratic rights in general, should buy it, read it and spread its message. Terry O'Halloran
Scottish Prisons - Lift the Lid! 50p plus 25p p&p from Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London, WC1N 3XX.

Public Meeting: Scottish Prisons - Lift the Lid
Thursday 3 April 7pm
McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street Glasgow
Speakers: FRFI, Les Robertson (Labour councillor), SCCL, ex-prisoners.

HANDS OFF IRELAND!

Loyalist strike raises the stakes

Despite various concessions offered by the British government at talks between the Unionists and Thatcher, the Six Counties' loyalists are stepping up their campaign against the Anglo-Irish Agreement. On 25 February the Unionists announced that they would be organising a one-day strike on 3 March and withdrawing all consent from the government.

Initially, Unionist leaders Paisley and Molyneux had reacted favourably to Thatcher's offer of round-table talks (involving all political parties except Sinn Fein) on devolved government for Northern Ireland. However this reaction swiftly changed in the face of furious opposition from their followers and, as well as the strike, loyalist actions now include defiance of a court order for Belfast City Council to set a rate. This opens them up to legal actions and financial penalties hitherto reserved for left Labour Councils.

Undoubtedly Thatcher & Co want to avoid a head on clash with the loyalists, the strongest prop of British imperialism in Ireland. But they are also aware of the benefits already obtained for the Anglo-Irish Agreement. In particular there is now much greater cooperation between the Twenty Six Counties and Britain on anti-Republican repression.

FitzGerald has also now signed the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism which will make extradition of Republicans from the South to the North much easier. The Agreement has the added effect of bolstering the fading SDLP to the point that it won a seat in the January Westminster by-election. To strengthen this impotent form of constitutional nationalism as an alternative to revolutionary Republicanism is the wish of both governments.

It is because of these political benefits of the Agreement, which both the governments hope will lead to the undermining of the Republican movement, that Thatcher has refused to give way to loyalist demands for its scrapping. However, if the one-day loyalist strike is successful and loyalist protest grows, Thatcher & Co will have to carefully weigh the effects of a continuing breach with the loyalists.

One factor which must be giving the British ruling class cause for concern, is the reliability of the loyalist dominated Royal Ulster Constabulary and Ulster Defence Regiment in this situation. Off duty RUC officers have taken part in loyalist demonstrations and some are threatening to resign. This worry is reflected in the decision to send a further 600 British troops to the Six Counties which with the 550 sent last month takes British Army numbers to over 10,000.

In the coming months, news from the Six Counties will be dominated by the loyalist campaign. (Not much will be said about its 'unofficial' manifestations: sectarian loyalist outrages which claimed two Catholic lives in recent weeks and a mounting toll of injuries.) But while the contest claims attention, it is vital to recall that all three parties to the dispute—British imperialism, the neo-colonial Twenty Six Counties and the loyalists—share the common aim of defeating the Republican movement and suppressing all nationalist resistance. Whatever tactics these reactionaries employ, the Irish people will fight on for national liberation and freedom.

Maxine Williams

if all those committed to the struggle work together, then we can force an end to the torture of these brave Irish women.

Sian Bond

Stop Strip-Searches!
Victory to Ella and Martina!

DEMONSTRATION

Called by ISM
Assemble 11.30am
Saturday 5 April
Kennington Park
(Opposite Oval tube)

International Women's Day
Saturday 8 March
ISM Street Meeting, 11-1pm
outside Prince of Wales Pub,
Brixton, SW2. All welcome

Join the ISM picket of Brixton Prison
1-2pm, Brixton Prison, Jebb Avenue.
All women welcome.

Support the 24-hour picket, 8pm Friday
7 March - 8pm Saturday 8 March,
called by TOM Women and Irish
Prisoners Appeal (women only)

Support the pickets of Brixton Prison
called by the Irish Prisoners Appeal:
Saturday 15 March 11.30-1.30pm
Saturday 22 March 11.30-1.30pm
Join the ISM contingent

Step up fight to stop strip searches

Support continues to grow for the two Irish women, Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer who are being subjected to frequent degrading strip searches in Brixton prison. Activities in support of the women have now forced the case into the public eye and revealed the grim catalogue of abuse taking place behind Brixton prison's walls. Frequent, sometimes twice daily, strip searches are accompanied by cell changes and other forms of harassment designed to try and break the women's spirit.

Their lawyers are taking an action to the High Court in an effort to get the strip searches declared illegal and inhumane. (This alone will cost £40,000). Over the past month the campaign in support of Ella and Martina has also included: an early day motion against the strip searches which has been signed by 91 MPs; regular street meetings, lobbying and petitioning organised by South London Irish Solidarity Committee; weekly picketing of the prison has now started, organised by the Irish Prisoners Appeal and on 19 February, 4 women staged a protest in the House of Commons while the PTA renewal debate was going on. 60 prisoners from Lewes prison have sent a stirring message of solidarity to the women via FRFI (see Letters

Page) which tells them 'Be assured sisters you are not alone...'

Only by stepping up the campaign now can the authorities be prevented from continuing this systematic brutality until the women's trial begins in May. Plans now include major solidarity action on International Womens Day including a one hour picket called by the ISM and a 24 hour picket called by TOM women and the IPA. Much more is needed however and the ISM has initiated a call for the organisation of a local demonstration in London to march to the prison on 5 April. This is a call which we are hoping will be supported by the widest range of organisations. If we keep up the pressure, if we march, picket, publicise and lobby and

British terror

On Tuesday 18 February a shoot-to-kill squad of undercover British soldiers murdered 20 year old nationalist Francis Bradley. The RUC claimed that Francis Bradley was one of three armed men, that the two others were captured with two loaded weapons. The truth was that Bradley was unarmed and was shot in the back of the head as he lay on the ground. The two men arrested were Colum Walls, a local car-dealer, and Barney McLarnon who had stopped at a local cafe, both potential witnesses to the murder. Another man, Terry McVey, who owns the local cafe, was dragged out, handcuffed and forced to lie on the ground for two hours. The RUC story was an attempt to cover-up the latest shoot-to-kill operation by British forces.

Between July 1981 and February 1984 at least 20 unarmed nationalists were victims of Britain's shoot-to-kill policy in

the Six Counties. Mounting public pressure appeared to have forced the abandonment of this policy. However the

murder of Francis Bradley coming only three weeks after a UDR patrol had shot at four nationalists leaving their local pub by car indicates that shoot-to-kill is once again being used.

This latest shoot-to-kill came only days after the Stalker report, into three shoot-to-kill operations in 1982, was passed to the Director of Public Prosecutions after the RUC had spent six months 'studying' it. The report, by John Stalker deputy chief constable of Greater Manchester, recommends the prosecution of three RUC implicated in the cover-up of three of the murders that took place in 1982 and is highly critical of the RUC's SAS-trained undercover unit E4A.

Yet such recommendations mean little to the nationalist community who know the reality of British justice - that in 1984 four RUC were acquitted of

Poverty and discrimination

Despite the Anglo-Irish Agreement's hot air about tackling unemployment and discrimination, the reality of life in the Six Counties is one of growing unemployment, poverty and social deprivation. These problems are suffered most acutely by the oppressed nationalist minority in a statelet based on sectarianism and loyalist privilege.

Recent studies (in particular 'On the Edge' - a Child Poverty Action Group publication) indicate the depth of the problem. The CPAG found that the Six Counties is the poorest region in the



EEC, with the sole exception of Calabria in Southern Italy. One quarter of the population is dependent on Supplementary or Family Income Supplement. A staggering 32% of households exist on less than £75 a week - this despite the fact that the cost of living is 13% higher in the Six Counties than in Britain. Part of this cost is made up of huge fuel costs with families needing to spend 40% more than in Britain to obtain the same benefit. Indeed one fifth of poor families' income and a quarter of pensioners' income is spent on fuel alone.

charges of murder in two of the shoot-to-kill operations in the Stalker report; that three of those RUC were commended by the judge for bringing the unarmed IRA Volunteers they murdered 'to the final court of justice'; that only one British soldier has ever been convicted of the murder of a nationalist and one for manslaughter.

British rule in the Six Counties is nothing more than the continued oppression of the Irish people through terror and murder. British terror for the McShane family of Crossmaglen meant an invasion and search of their home by British troops on 17 February, a second invasion and search just half an hour later by the RUC, a third invasion at dawn the next day by the RUC resulting in fear and terror as they arrested a son of the family and left behind havoc.

Pauline Sellars

In the face of this poverty the British Government has created a legal framework which further penalises the poor. The Payment of Debts Act (first introduced to try to break the anti-internment rent and rates strike by the nationalist community) and other laws allow for the deduction of rent arrears and fuel debts directly from the wages of public employees and the benefits of those on Social Security. In one recent case, £54.81 was deducted from an employee's wage of £61.19! In these conditions the poor are forced to eliminate expenditure on necessities. Thus in the CPAG's survey more than one third of women said they did without one main meal a day. Small wonder that health - both physical and mental - suffers and 25% of these women were having medical treatment for illness directly related to their poverty. Infant mortality in the Six Counties is higher than in any part of Britain.

As a result of sectarian discrimination the nationalist minority bears the heaviest burden of poverty and unemployment. 21% of the Six County population is unemployed but the highest rates are in the nationalist areas of Strabane, Cookstown, Newry and Mourne. In Strabane 50% of males are unemployed and in Cookstown 41%. Overall unemployment amongst Catholic males is 35% whereas for Protestants it is 17%. In a region where public sector employment accounts for almost half of those employed and much of new factory building is government funded, discrimination against the nationalist minority is part and parcel of government practice.

The Fair Employment Agency, a toothless government body, was set up in 1976 supposedly to rectify this situation. It has produced many reports and no action. Yet even the FEA said of the Civil Service for example that discrimination existed and that:

'... the projections carried out do not suggest that Roman Catholics will be adequately represented in the most senior grades in the short term.'

So pathetic is the FEA that between 1976 and 1982 it found only 13 cases of unlawful discrimination of which four were overturned by the courts. The FEA opposes positive discrimination and in 1980 found a local government body guilty of discrimination when it attempted to reverse previous policies and employ more Catholics! The most telling case is that of Short Bros, traditionally a Protestant stronghold. Since the FEA sponsored a programme of affirmative action there, the number of Catholics employed has actually fallen to 2.6%.

The nationalist people know that the discrimination and poverty they suffer is the responsibility of British imperialism. No tame reforms, no token references to 'justice' can alter the fact that the Six Counties is a sectarian statelet and exists only because of continued British rule. The only road which leads to justice is that which also leads to driving British imperialism out of Ireland.

Maxine Williams

Sources: On the Edge - CPAG and Cosmetic on a Cancer - Fair Employment Trust report on the FEA

Haiti: Family Business, Latin American Bureau, London 1985, 86pp, £3.50.

When Christopher Columbus made the first European landing in the Americas on Haiti on 5 December 1492 he found the native Taino people 'loveable, tractable, peace-

ers and soldiers, and a small merchant, commercial mulatto elite. This balance remained, with the military successively intervening to adjust the scales, until the US occupation which lasted from 1915 to 1934. US racism elevated the status of the paler mulattoes within the state bureaucracy and provoked a middle class black nationalist res-



Above: Jean-Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc) with his mother Simone. Right: Haitian sugarcane cutter close to starvation

able and praiseworthy'. Within fifty years their population of perhaps half a million was reduced to less than 500 souls: their 'tractable' lives had been expended in the Spanish quest for gold and replaced from the 1520s onwards by African slaves. This bloody Haitian nightmare heralded the bright dawn of European capitalism.

This short book charts the fate of the generations who succeeded the survivors from slave galleys and plantations. Generations pressed down into the worst poverty in the Western hemisphere, where the infant mortality rate is 130 per 1,000 (compared to 14 in neighbouring Cuba) where 80 per cent of the population are illiterate, 80 per cent of children under six have malaria and the 1985 budget allotted just \$3.44 on health care for each of the nation's 5.1 million people. A land where disease was the engine that generated the flourishing export trade in blood: 5 tons of it shipped every month to US and European laboratories run by such corporations as Dow Chemicals and Armour Pharmaceuticals; for the blood supply of the surviving Haitians was uncommonly rich in antibodies. The author, Rod Prince, has written a factual and valuable guide for anyone wishing to know more about the Duvalier dynasty.

By the end of the 17th century France had supplanted Spain as the master of what was then Saint-Domingue. It was said of their plantations that the French had made 'a mill for crushing negroes as much as for crushing sugar cane'. In 1791 during the French Revolution many of the 480,000 slaves rose up. Under the brilliant leadership of ex-slave and now people's general Toussaint l'Ouverture they fought to victory. A massive French counter-attack was eventually defeated and on 1 January 1804 Jean-Jacques Dessalines declared Haiti an independent state. Land was parcelled out among the ex-slaves to be farmed and remnants of the white plantocracy hunted down and killed.

Control of Haiti's government steadily fell to an uneasy balance between the aspiring black middle class, drawn from among landown-

ers and soldiers, and a small merchant, commercial mulatto elite. This balance remained, with the military successively intervening to adjust the scales, until the US occupation which lasted from 1915 to 1934. US racism elevated the status of the paler mulattoes within the state bureaucracy and provoked a middle class black nationalist res-

ponse. This was the impetus that François 'Papa Doc' Duvalier captured in the 1957 elections.

Presenting himself as a simple country doctor wishing for little more than honest government and a fair deal for the poor, Duvalier galvanised the support of the urban black middle-classes and medium-sized peasant landowners to easily win the first Haitian election ever held with universal adult suffrage. Duvalier set about neutralising all sources of potential opposition: the army, the Roman Catholic church, the mulatto commercial elite, trade unions and political parties. His chosen instrument was the Tonton Macoutes, a death squad recruited largely from the middle-sized peasant landowners who were paid no income but given license to extort and expropriate as a reward for overseeing the population. 'Papa Doc' thus welded a machine for exterminating rivals, an estimated 50,000 before his 1971 death.

From the late 1960s onwards a stream of US-run assembly plants, now numbering 240 firms, moved into the Port-au-Prince district taking advantage of the \$3 a day minimum wage, arrests and deportations of union leaders and the doubly oppressed female labour. In 1971 as 2 US warships stood guard, Jean-Claude 'Baby Doc' Duvalier inherited his father's power and fortune. Seeking to broaden support for the regime he strengthened the position of the still largely mulatto commercial elite. A shift in power was confirmed in 1980 by Jean-Claude's marriage to Michele Bennett. Her father was a cocoa and coffee merchant who doubled as the local BMW agent, and her brother a proven cocaine trafficker. The change in the power base of the Duvalier dynasty won it US approval but threatened its alliance with the black middle classes.

The Latin America Bureau have done well to produce this timely book, giving readers a well documented background to Duvalier's subsequent downfall.

Trevor Rayne

Haiti - from slavery to slave labour



Bitter Sugar by Maurice Lemoine, Zed Press, 308pp, £7.95.

'This book is dedicated to the memory of Millien Beaubrun, Haitian cane cutter, murdered on July 7, 1980, shot in the back with 15 bullets of an M-1 rifle, at the Palmajero military post on the Catarey sugar factory property in the Dominican Republic. His crime was unpardon-

able. He had refused to continue to work without pay. He said no to slavery.'

Bitter Sugar, published before Duvalier's fall, is a detailed account of the experience of thousands of Haitians who leave the starvation and poverty of Haiti to work in the Dominican Republic cutting sugar cane. Each page is a powerful indictment of the Guzman (Dominican Republic) and the now overthrown Duvalier (Haiti) regimes with the shadow of multinational corporations in the

background. Each page challenges barbaric exploitation, as the men suffering grinding oppression in the cane fields realise that their one time 'President for Life', Baby Doc Duvalier, has sold them like slaves.

Part One: A Season in Hell follows the journey of Estimé Mondestin leaving Haiti for the bateys. Each chapter opens with the 'official' articles of the cane cutters' contract and then goes on to describe the reality facing the Haitians: starvation, squalid living conditions in the bateys, no less than concentration camps in the middle of thousands of acres of cane. Their accommodation consists of filthy, shit-filled buildings with 'empty, windowless cells', no water and one toilet for 200 people. These were 'built in 1940 by Trujillo to shelter animals'. The men have to work from dawn to night and sometimes through the night, cutting cane on empty stomachs - the only sustenance during the day is water with sugar cane juice squeezed in. Hundreds are mutilated by the work, often carried out in the dark. Thumbs, hands, even feet are severed by the machetes and when exhausted from the work and starvation, the Haitians are left to die, thrown out in open ground.

They have to contend with the vicious racism of the Dominicans who oversee them, though Lemoine makes it clear that 'the Dominicans' in the bateys in no way represent the Dominican people as a whole.

Throughout, the narrative is interspersed with historical and political facts. The major role of the US from 1915 onwards in reducing Haiti to '... a reservoir of cheap labor for the exploitation of the plantations in neighboring territories...'; the terrorist racketeering of 'Papa Doc' Duvalier who, in 1967, sold Haitians to the Dominican Republic for \$1,380,000 - money never registered in the state budget.

There is, on the other side, the anger that fast grows amongst the Haitians, many of whom rebel, are

thrown into jails and later forced to work to death in other cane fields. Many are murdered - their bodies left to rot in the plantations. Lemoine describes how 40 Haitians armed with machetes walk for 3 days to Santo Domingo where they confront the corrupt Haitian ambassador in his beautiful house and demand to be returned home. He recounts the victorious Haitian anti-slavery revolution of the 1790s when the plantations were set ablaze and British and French colonialists were smashed by the people led by Toussaint l'Ouverture's Army of the Republic.

The suffering of Haitian women is crystallised in the life story of Belle Suzelle. As a girl in 1915 she was part of the 'Madame Saras', women who smuggled vital information about the occupying North American troops to the Haitian guerrillas. She left Haiti for pre-revolutionary Cuba and the promise of work 'washing bottles', which turned out to be prostitution. Degraded and brutalised, sold from one man to another, she ends up in the Dominican Republic where she survives the massacre ordered by President Trujillo in 1937. 20,000 Haitians were slaughtered in 36 hours, and by the end of the week the number dead was more than 40,000.

Section two charts the organisation of the Haitians in the bateys by the CGT (workers union). They begin to understand the class forces involved in their struggle; that Dominicans and Haitians have common enemies 'Guzman, Duvalier, Guzmán, the Americans' all with the same interests. Lemoine tells us that Dominicans and Haitians somewhere in the bateys, out of earshot of Tonton Macoutes 'are talking ... about Guzman and Duvalier ... about the hard labor and the repression ...'. Haitian cane-cutter, recognising the way forward to revolution in these vile camps, determines 'It's up to us to make the bread rise'.

Alexa Byrne

Death in the City, Melissa Benn and Ken Worpole, Canary Press, 1986, 122pp, pb £3.95

'We are going to have another situation where the Metropolitan Police are more dangerous than the terrorists.' (Editor of *Gun Review*, and former police superintendent, cited in *Death in the City* p51)

Death in the City exposes the extent to which the Metropolitan Police have developed into a highly-paid killer elite, virtually immune from the very laws they claim to uphold.

The police have moved from being low-to-medium paid state employees to being amongst the highest paid. From 1981/2 to 1984/5 average public sector pay rose by 0.1% compared with inflation. Police pay rose by 15.9% (NHS ancillaries' pay fell by 8.4%). The starting salary of an untrained 18½ year old police officer in London, £8,556, is higher than the salary of fully trained nurses (pp8/9). The priorities of the British ruling class could not be clearer.

The Met are not only highly-paid. They are also armed and dangerous. From 1970 to 1979 incidents of serious armed crime hovered at, or below, the 1,000 mark. In the same period gun issues to the Metropolitan Police rose 7-fold from 1,000 to 7,000. Given that in some 75% of the serious crimes involving 'guns', the 'guns' in question are airguns, the public is considerably more at risk from police guns than 'criminal' guns. Those police guns include the 9mm Heckler and Koch sub-machine gun designed to be fired in rapid bursts into a crowd, and the L39A1 high-velocity rifle rejected by the New York Police as 'too dangerous for use in cities' (pp50-52).

The authors examine the consequences of police gun law where people have been killed and maimed: from the slaughter of two young Pakistanis in the Indian High Commission in 1973 (they were 'armed

with knives, a sword and replica guns) to the shooting and pistol whipping of Stephen Waldorf in 1983 (this was an 'accident': the police were really trying to kill David Martin). (pp54-64)

The Metropolitan Police, however, do not need guns to kill. From 1970 to October 1984 21 police officers have been killed in road accidents in which the Metropolitan Police themselves were 'entirely or partly to blame'. From 1981 to October 1984 (3 years and 10 months) 21 civilians were killed in such accidents. By contrast, in 20 years up to 1980 only 20 police officers in the whole of England and Wales were killed in 'homicidal attacks'. In other words, many more police officers in London are killed in police accidents than by 'criminals'. The danger to civilians from police drivers is much greater than the danger to police from 'criminals'. The rate of police driving accidents has increased from 1 every 18,524 miles (1970) to 1 every 8,581 (1983) (pp65-77). At New Year police drivers ran down

two elderly women and then suppressed the news for more than 10 hours.

The authors estimate that since 1970 some 300 people have died in London either in custody or as a result of police activity (p6). The better known cases - such as those of Wilma Lucas, Richard Campbell, Aseta Sims and others - are detailed along with a number of less well known cases. In case after case, Benn and Worpole show how police racism, police brutality, police contempt for women, the poor and the unemployed, leads inexorably to people dying at their hands. The Metropolitan Police is, indeed, a highly-paid killer elite.

The authors' political conclusion covers the familiar ground of police accountability, changes in training and 'police culture', and are ignored. However, *Death in the City* is an important book, filled with powerful material which can, and should, be used to build opposition to the police killers.

Terry O'Halloran



Morning Star attacks Philippine's communists

The sectarianism of the Morning Star group, associated with the Com-

munist Party of Great Britain, is not confined to attacking genuine communists working with the Anti-Apartheid Movement; it reaches out to condemn those communists giving their lives to overthrow imperialism in the Philippines.

The 12 December 1985 issue of Morning Star contains a poisonous article by Communist Party of the USA acolyte, William Pomeroy. With acrobatic skills of deceit Pomeroy manages to portray Marcos as more a victim of US imperialism over the years than its accomplice, and to slander the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) with the tag of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. Marcos is depicted as a US scapegoat: 'a convenient way of deflecting the blame for the crisis away from US policies'. As if by means of magic we are told that Marcos can be progressive through his disagreements with the US: 'He would not behave from the standpoint of national-

democratic interests, but his contradictions with US imperialism on a reactionary level could rebound to the benefit of those interests.'

This twisted logic has its purpose. Pomeroy has been a willing propagandist for the old Philippines communist party (commonly referred to by the initials PKP) and advocate for its policies in international circles, faithfully following its trail behind the bourgeoisie in its collaboration with Marcos.

Founded in 1930 the PKP led armed struggles against the Japanese invaders and then the troops of the US puppet Quirino government. In 1950 the PKP launched a plan for military victory inside two years. Writing in his book *The Forest*, composed while in gaol, Pomeroy blames the people and not the leadership for the setbacks. In 1964 Pomeroy released *Guerrilla and Counter-Guerrilla Warfare* based upon his Philippine experiences. At the same

time as diminishing the role of armed struggle in overthrowing reactionary states Pomeroy down-plays the violent nature of imperialism, and, like Kautsky before him, peddles dreams of a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism, citing the British colonies as an example!

Pomeroy's reformism was put into practice by the PKP. By 1972 they were describing measures introduced by Marcos under Martial Law as 'progressive policies' and suggesting uniting forces with Marcos 'to annihilate' the CPP. They trapped and murdered dissenting elements within their own ranks, and, in 1974, in a nationally televised ceremony, after handing over their guns and ammunition, signed an 'Agreement of National Reconciliation' with Marcos, renouncing armed struggle and pledging him their cooperation. This surrender proved political suicide with the PKP shrinking to a discredited rump.

The PKP has described Marcos as a 'vacillator' between the Filipino people and the US who cleaves to the US only because the people are 'weak'. It has called on Marcos to initiate a 'Broad united front of anti-imperialist forces' for the removal of the US bases, and it has refused to pinpoint and condemn the Marcos regime for the murder of Benigno Aquino in 1983. In short, the PKP and Pomeroy have put their faith in Marcos and the middle-classes to bring about democratic reforms rather than the oppressed workers and peasants.

For all their fawning the PKP have never gained a voice in government. As their support has dwindled so that of the CPP has grown. Formed in 1968 by young cadres sick of PKP reformism and bureaucratic manoeuvrings against democratic debate, the CPP and its New People's Army are indisputably the leaders of the revolutionary movement in the Philip-

pines. When Pomeroy and the Morning Star slur the CPP with being akin to the Pol Pot gangsters in our breath and then in the next state that its mass support is due to 'radical liberation theology' Catholics who moved in and literally took over the CPP-NPA' we must ask why they are doing it. Such twaddle has long been derided by the workers, peasants and students who form the vanguard of the Philippines revolution, but in Britain and elsewhere it is dangerous poison delivered with the intention of preventing effective solidarity with the Filipino people being built. In the 28 February Morning Star Pomeroy returned, to cover his tracks; avoiding a direct attack on the CPP, but nowhere giving it credit for its central role in the movement that forced Marcos out. Instead, he persists in trying to bamboozle by presenting the PKP rump as the main force of the left which calls for 'unity'.

Trevor Rayne

Torturing our men

Dear Comrades

I am very sympathetic with the Irish women being psychologically raped under the guise of strip searches in the name of 'security'. While I have heard the arguments about it happening mostly to shy Catholic girls *not* in the habit of showing their bodies to strangers, and that women have other disadvantages like breasts and menstruation, the whole issue is becoming a strictly feminist one. Only women are invited to the Armagh and Brixton pickets although men do come, theirs is a supportive role, fetching tea and running errands. Yet we should *not* lose sight of the fact that *men* are also strip searched regularly and suffer deep humiliation too. The barbaric 'mirror test' reserved almost exclusively for the Nationalist Irishmen, where a naked prisoner—usually fighting every inch of the way—is made to stand, open legged over a mirror. This was an especial favourite used in the H blocks during the years of the blanket protest. Here in England, ordinary criminals have trembled during their visits for fear of the brutal fate that possibly awaits them, as they describe how, following my previous visit, they were grabbed leaving the visits room (Jimmy McCaig) and forcibly stripped and their most private parts (which they hardly had access to during their visit!) searched and probed 'for security'. This has even happened *during a visit*. Rob Brown was yanked out *during our visit* for a strip search, the visit was terminated and he had to suffer this undignified procedure.

So, while I support every action called by the Stop the Strip Searches Campaign, I would like to point out that the dirty perverted British State are also torturing our *men*.
Ainne Furry
Breakout! Collective

Militant's verbal gushings

Dear Comrades

Many thanks for this month's issue of FRFI which reached me safely yesterday afternoon—no problems with censorship or any of the other usual 'delays' such political literature is often subjected to—guess all the complaints to the 'Head Office for Class "war"' are having an effect!

Anyway, a few brief comments on some of the articles contained in the paper this month (56). Firstly, Trevor Rayne's 'Westland Ruling Class divide'. Whilst fully agreeing with the argument as presented—of the inherent corruption of imperialism—I would've thought more space could've been given to the consequences this has for the oppressed peoples rather than concentrating on the ins and outs of high finance skulduggery, ie let's build a revolutionary movement instead of giving detailed economic lessons. (A basic understanding of the issues at stake in the Westland affair are all that's required to make the necessary point concerning imperialism's rottenness—yet to relate how this rottenness affects the ordinary people we wish to reach, ie the most oppressed sections of society—requires greater effort). Comments please.

Secondly, the 'reply to a letter from a militant supporter' by Eddie A—again a first class reply but does this type of article really further the aim of building a movement in the most oppressed sections of our society? I mean, what does the ordinary kid fighting off the racist legalised thugs of Newman care whether Militant want to play word games—he's more concerned about the bloke who's willing to stand beside him and sling a few bricks too. Maybe being in jail my perception of the political advancement made on the streets in the last few years is distorted—however, wouldn't it have been better to ignore the Militant jibe altogether—I mean why lend them credibility by printing their verbal gushings anyway?
Jimmy Anderson
HMP Frankland

FRFI invites readers to comment on the important issues raised by Jimmy Anderson. What do you think of our coverage of the Westland saga? Should we use up space in the paper replying to Militant?

Execution in Iran

Dear Friend,

I am writing to inform you of the execution of Mohammad Reza Ghebraii, editor of 'Kar' (Labour), organ of the Central Committee of the Organisation of Iranian People's Fedaian (Majority).

Mr Ghebraii was called to the prosecution's office in Tehran for questioning, following the publication of a series of articles in 'Kar' (March 1982), exposing the criminal nature of the executions of political prisoners in Iran. He was then illegally arrested and taken to the Evin Prison (the same dungeon in which he underwent four years of torture for his socialist views during the Shah's rule in Iran). Aimed at extracting information about the OIPF (Majority) and with the purpose of breaking him to submit to the official 'Islamic views', once again the torture of Mr

Ghebraii began. For four years, the torturers in Evin prison grew more and more frustrated as they failed to undermine Mr Ghebraii's powerful commitment and total devotion to his beliefs. He was, eventually, condemned to death during a staged trial in a closed court, deprived of even the right to a defence lawyer. Mohammad Reza Ghebraii was executed in October 1985.

I am, therefore, asking you to publish the news of the execution of your fellow journalist, Mr Ghebraii, and, write a letter of protest to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Britain, condemning the virulent suppression of the freedom of the press and the brutal persecution of journalists in Iran.

Yours faithfully,
A Alaai
The Secretary
The Iranian People's Fedaian (Majority)—in Britain

Solidarity to sister comrades

Signed by 60 men in Lewes prison

A message of solidarity to our sisters in struggle in HM Prison Brixton. 24-1-86

Greetings! Sisters and loyal comrades in struggle. We send this message to you to express, and reassure you of, our unceasing determination, to fight to demolish to the last brick and bar this system which treats you in this disgusting and inhumanly degrading way.

Though you are in Brixton and we are in Lewes, it is through our common bond of incarceration that we are with you in struggle. Your problems are our problems, your happiness in better times will be our happiness. Side by side we march forward together, firm, solid and secure in the knowledge that when that certain day comes, and it will as sure as the sun sets and the moon

risers, Victory sisters will be ours.

There will be times comrades when you feel you are fighting alone, when the cell door closes and the walls and bars are your only companion, you will feel, as we do, that loneliness can be a depressing ordeal. But be assured sisters you are not alone, you are part of a new tomorrow and we welcome this chance to confirm our support for you. We will remain eternally vigilant, never failing to exploit to the full any crack in the armour of this evil, corrupt and opportunist system, that could, however remotely, bring about an end to your plight.

So let us all hold our heads high, march into the future as a solid force, growing in strength and bonded together in the common knowledge that no matter what conditions we face, irrespective of the injustices we are forced to bear, **WE WILL WIN.**

From your comrades at Lewes Prison FRFI

Which side are you on?

Havana, Wed 5 Feb

'Like it or not, the United States would have to come to terms with a revolutionary Cuba, live with it, and with a changed world.' *President Castro*

From a speech in which he blamed the US for the continuing conflicts in Central America, Southern Africa, the Middle East and Afghanistan.

Washington, Wed 5 Feb

While addressing what he called 'freedom fighters' throughout the world, Reagan promised 'America will support with moral and material assistance your right not just to fight and die for freedom, but to fight and win freedom—in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia and Nicaragua.'

Viva Cuba,
Death to US Imperialism
Andy
Edinburgh

Disproportionate value

Dear Comrades

... This letter is mainly just to thank you all at FRFI, RCG, ISM, SAEPC for all the reading material you've sent in over the past couple of years. It's been absolutely vital to me in reaching the understanding and perspective that I think I have now. It's very doubtful if I could have done it otherwise; not only for me but for the chain of people inside to whom the papers and books are passed on.

Also please pass on my thanks to everyone who sent in cards and messages of solidarity while I was on the receiving end of the system's stick. I would urge all readers to continue to send their messages to the courageous prisoners who are still subject to the fascists' attempts to isolate, intimidate and brutalise them. It's hard to express the seemingly disproportionate value of a couple of cards to a prisoner who's been dragged without warning from his or her cell on a 10/74 or whatever. The struggle continues.

We're outside for them!
They're inside for us!
In solidarity
Ronnie Menzies
HMP Blundeston

Alain Clavaud

Dear FRFI,

In January this year, Alain Clavaud, a worker at the French Dunlop factory at Montluçon, was interviewed by *L'Humanité*, the daily newspaper of the French Communist Party. Clavaud is not a member of the PCF although he does belong to the mainly Communist trade-union grouping, the CGT. The interview dealt with working conditions at Dunlop and to some extent with how those conditions are changing as Sumitomo, the Japanese multinational which now owns Dunlop, makes its presence felt.

The interview appeared in *L'Humanité* on Friday 24 January. On Monday 27 Alain Clavaud was sacked. He was told he was in breach of his obligation as an employee to exercise 'discretion' when discussing his work. He had signed no undertaking to this effect and, as for 'discretion', had given away no military or official secrets. Although Dunlop makes tyres for the army, it is very unlikely Clavaud would have been in possession of any classified information. He had merely talked of his aching back and of the hours allocated for coffee breaks.

L'Humanité has now taken up the call for Clavaud's reinstatement with a vengeance and has gleefully used the affair to expose the hypocrisy of the so-called Parti Socialiste. Whilst assuring everyone in sight that they favour neither censorship of the press, nor of the individual, the PS have, via the Minister of Labour, Michel Delebarre, washed their hands of the whole affair, implying that, as Sumitomo is a foreign company, they can do nothing to control its policies. A dangerous precedent! The PS has also ensured that, apart from 'L'Huma', there is very little media coverage. A TV interview with Clavaud was recorded but never shown; the bourgeois newspapers have made occasional noises on inside pages but have generally tended to ignore the incident. With Mitterrand increasingly worried about the impending Parliamentary elections and especially the challenge from the right-wing coalition, the last thing the PS wants is a confrontation such as this one.

L'Humanité and the PCF are to be applauded for letting neither the Socialists nor Sumitomo get away lightly with this gross infringement of civil liberties; however their progressive stance is marred somewhat by the implicit racism in much of their anti-Sumitomo propaganda. Several of 'L'Huma's' reports give the impression that it is the Japanese as a race, rather than capitalism as an ideology which is at fault. In the light of the rest of their good work on the topic, this is both sad and unnecessary.
Nicki
London

North London Irish Solidarity Committee Public Meeting and Video show: 'Just for being there' (shown on BBC2)

Monday 17 March, 7.30pm,

Red Rose Club, Seven Sisters Road, nearest tube Finsbury Park
NLISC Public meeting on how the Public Order Bill will affect our rights. Speaker Terry O'Halloran, NUJ and Campaign for the Right of Assembly and Dissent.

LETTERS

Write to FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

CROWD—the Campaign for the Right of Assembly and Dissent, formed to oppose the Public Order Bill currently going through Parliament—have issued a Declaration of Dissent. FRFI urges readers to get copies of the Declaration and persuade as many people as possible to sign them—especially MPs, councillors, lawyers etc. Copies can be obtained from *CROWD*, 35 Wellington Street, London, WC2.

A DECLARATION OF DISSENT

We, the undersigned, are totally opposed to proposals in the PUBLIC ORDER BILL which make it criminal:

To demonstrate or march without giving notice,
To disobey police orders on the routes of marches,
To disobey police orders banning marches,
To disobey police orders limiting the numbers present at a picket or static demonstration,
To disobey police orders relocating pickets or static demonstrations,
To fail to disperse when required to do so by the police.

We believe these proposals are a serious attack on fundamental civil liberties. They give the police total control over the exercise of these freedoms. We give notice that should these proposals become law we may have no alternative but to break them in order to defend our freedom.
Signed

Witnesses appeal

Witnesses are urgently needed for **GEORGE THORPE** who was arrested on the 2 November Anti-Apartheid Movement demonstration. George is currently on remand in Brixton Prison awaiting trial on 17 March on a charge of assault on the police. He carried the City AA banner from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square on the march. On arrival at the square he tried to go down the steps to hear the speeches. Jesse Jackson was speaking. It was at this point that he was arrested. Anybody who saw George's arrest, or who saw him around this time, is asked to contact his solicitor, Julia O'Brien, 284 Camden Road, London N7. Tel: 01-607 9811

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For information about your local group, or about areas where we hope to set up new groups soon, write to:

FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London, WC1N 3XX or 'phone 01 837 1688

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FRFI FUND DRIVE 1986: £891

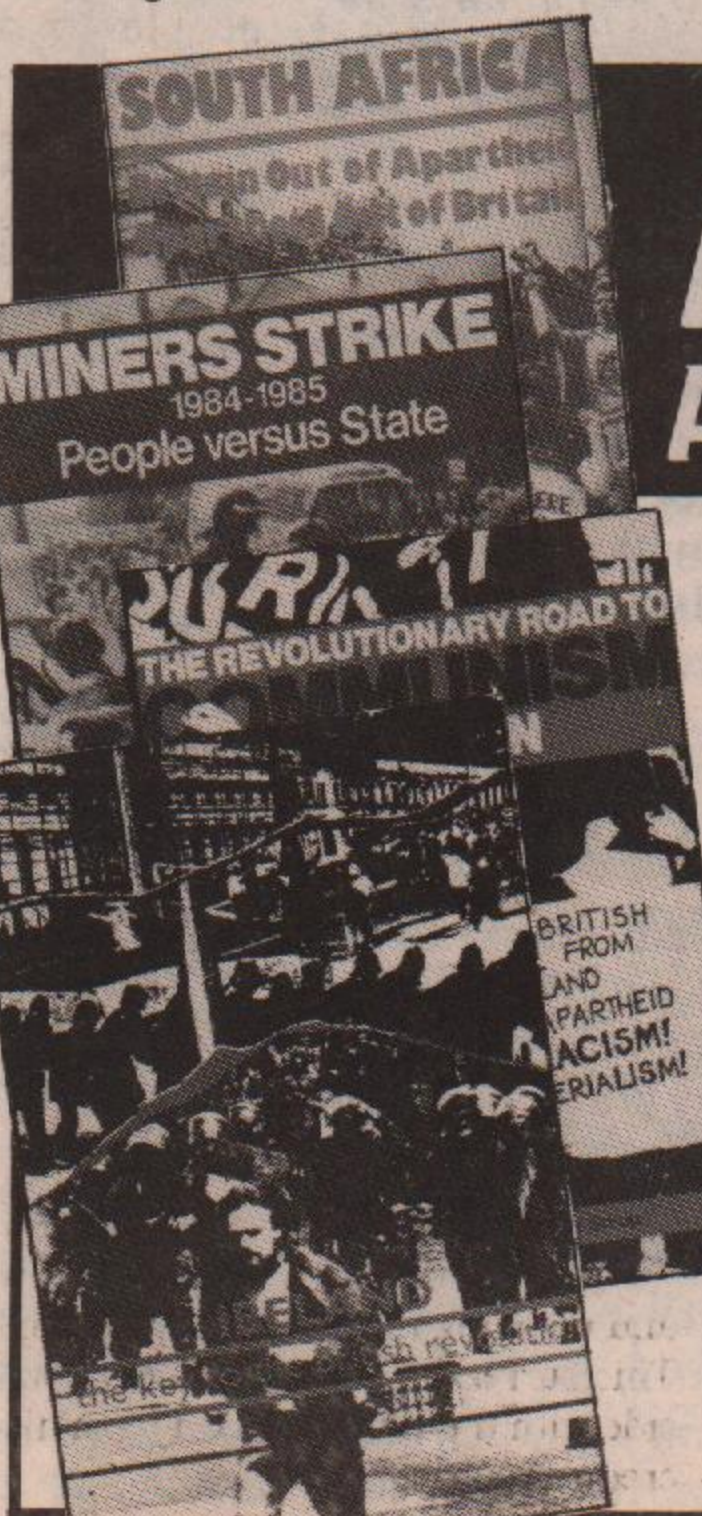
In the first 2 months of 1986 we raised £891, which leaves us £109 short of the £500 a month we need to subsidise the unwaged rate of FRFI. We hope you'll all help us make up for this in March.

The bulk of this money was raised by our FRFI Supporter Groups with bazaars, raffles, collections, benefits, socials. Why don't you join in this collective effort next month? Of the 1986 total, comrades in South London raised £382, in North London £178, Edinburgh £146, Liverpool £64, Manchester £59, Glasgow £19, Leeds £14, Dundee £10, Bradford £9. £10 was contributed by individual readers. Many thanks to you all.

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An Appeal to Readers and Supporters

£3,000 for a series of FRFI pamphlets in 1986/87!

We are reproducing as pamphlets some of the most important articles from FRFI going back to 1980. Back issues are fast vanishing. We want to preserve the best political material for those entering political struggle today.

Two pamphlets are nearly ready for publication: 'Kenneth Newman's police—the enemy in our midst', 'Communism and national liberation movements'.

To produce these, and others, we need your help to raise £3,000 in 3 months. We want the pamphlets to be cheap—no more than £1.50 at most!

South London FRFI comrades and supporters have made an excellent start raising **£165.41** in the last month. Have you made your contribution yet? Send your donation to: Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX (cheques and POs payable to Larkin Publications)

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FRFI

Anti-imperialist paper of the
Revolutionary Communist Group

Nuclear cover-up

While 1985 was the year of the aeroplane accident, 1986 is shaping up as the year of the nuclear accident. In the first two months of this year there have already been four leaks and a fire at British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) Sellafield (formerly Windscale) reprocessing plant and a leak from the CEBG's Trawsfynydd nuclear power station. At least 23 workers are admitted to have been directly contaminated.

In January 440 kilogrammes of uranium was 'normally discharged' from Sellafield into the Irish Sea - known as 'the most radioactive sea in the world'. The yearly limit is supposedly 2 tonnes. On 6 February 50 microcuries of plutonium nitrate were released into the atmosphere in a cloud of smoke. It took staff 2½ hours to find the source of the leak by which time 15 workers had already been contaminated, with at least one worker receiving the maximum possible yearly dose. Up to 40 workers stayed in the building until the end of their shift. The next week there was a 'small fire' and on 18 February 250 gallons of radiated water leaked from a broken pipe. On 1 March, a further serious leak occurred. This time, five workers were announced to have suffered 'external contamination' and are being tested for 'internal contamination.'

The nuclear bosses' contempt for their workforce was shown when, only 15 hours after the 6 February leak, normal working was resumed in the decaying plant where the 'accident' occurred, with workers having only face masks added to their standard overalls to protect them. The lack of information and adequate safety protection led to 800 construction workers going on strike at the end of that week. Sellafield workers have now been threatened with the Official Secrets Act if they talk to the press or public. Retiring BNFL boss Con Allday (real name!) assures us that being contaminated by radiation is no worse than getting yourself dirty washing the car (!) and just requires a hose down. Two Sellafield workers died of cancer in a single week this January. BNFL have already compensated 10 widows and many other claims are in the pipeline.

Following this chain of accidents comes the news that in 1983 BNFL rejected an engineers' report which said that the nuclear reactors at Sellafield and Chapel Cross have a serious design fault which could lead to the reactors' collapse in the event of a minor earth tremor - not an unusual occurrence. Such an event could cause the reactors to crash to the ground, causing an uncontrollable fire during which radioactivity would be discharged into the surrounding area. Yet another disclosure has revealed that uranium discharges in the 1950s were 40 times higher than admitted in evidence submitted to the Black Report on the high incidence of childhood cancer in the area surrounding Sellafield. (The rate is 10 times higher than the national average.) The amount of uranium now admitted to have escaped corresponds with the figure given by the National Radiological Protection Board as the amount necessary to produce an abnormal rate of cancers.

The continuing lies and cover-ups at Sellafield stem from the fact that nuclear power in Britain is big business. In 1983-84 Sellafield made a profit of £1.69

billion. The plant is Britain's biggest earner of yen and has present contracts totalling £2.7 billion. In addition to these huge profits is the export of plutonium (manufactured from the waste) to the US, supposedly for civil use, but actually for the manufacture of nuclear warheads. Due to the anti-nuclear lobby in the US, the use of US-manufactured 'civil' plutonium for military purposes is illegal. Britain has filled the gap. In 1983, a British government spokesman stated 'No plutonium

from the CEBG nuclear programmes has ever been exported for use in weapons'. This is a deliberate evasion. Both civil and military waste are reprocessed together at Sellafield and exported to the US where it comes under the control of the Department of Energy.

In a letter to Eric Hammond of the EETPU in November 1984, Richard Ottinger, chair of the US House of Representatives Committee on Energy, Conservation and Power, stated that

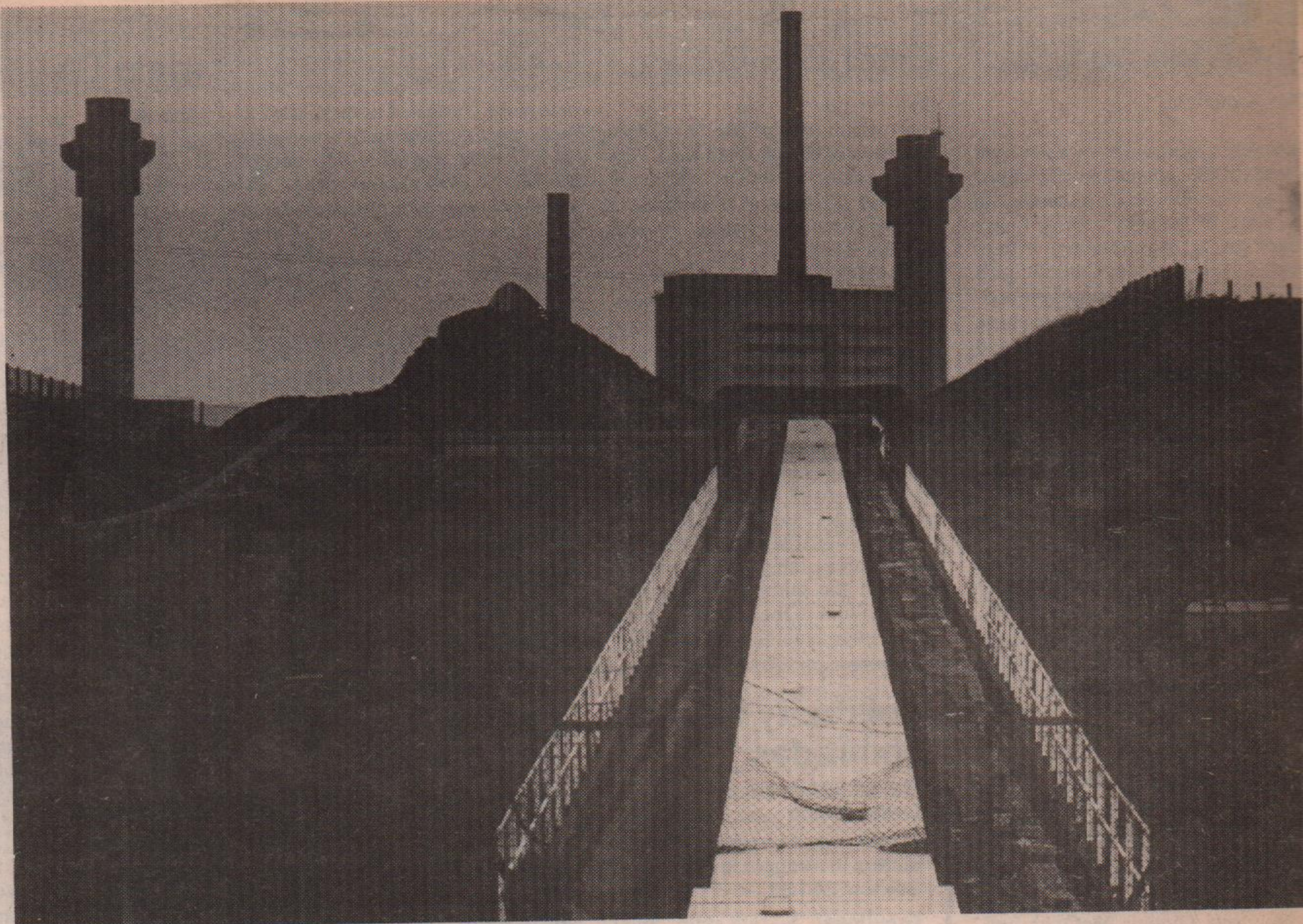
the Department 'has planned to transfer all of the plutonium in those civil energy facilities to the US nuclear weapons stockpile'.

The British government has finally succumbed to public demand and agreed to send its health and safety 'experts' to Sellafield, but has stopped short of the European Parliament's recommendation for work to stop at Sellafield at least until after the investigation.

When Dennis Skinner tried to interrupt parliamentary proceedings on 5 February to announce that a major accident had occurred at Sellafield, he was overruled by the Speaker. The business of the day - a debate on the proposed privatisation of the water industry, from which Thatcher's friends in the City will make millions - carried on as usual.

Olivia Adamson and Karl Nan

The rate of childhood cancer in the area around Sellafield is 10 times the national average



At an ISM public meeting in London on 24 February, over 80 people rose to salute the courage of Dr Maire O'Shea. Other speakers were: her lawyer Mike Mansfield, David Reed of the RCG, Joan Maynard MP, Tony Sheridan of the ISM and a speaker from the Irish Prisoners Appeal. Maire said the frame-up was attempted because she opposed British rule in Ireland. Her campaign had shown that the PTA can be beaten. She thanked all those who supported her and especially Tony Sheridan of the ISM for his consistent support and his pushing for public demonstrations by the campaign. The meeting also urged maximum support for the two Irish women in Brixton prison.

Stop Press

Loyalist Strike

The Loyalist Day of Action against the Anglo-Irish agreement went ahead on 3 March amidst reports of violence and threats by loyalist paramilitaries. The strike virtually shut Harland & Wolff and other concerns with mainly Protestant workforces. Power cuts followed a walk-out by Ballylumford Power Station engineers. Roads were blocked in many areas. At road blocks and pickets people were threatened and abused. In Lurgan workers had to be evacuated when a factory was set on fire.

Loyalist crowds used stones and petrol bombs against the RUC. In contrast to the methods used against nationalist protests, the RUC adopted a low profile; fraternising with pickets and ignoring intimidation. Had the strike been by republicans it would have been met with a full-scale government/media/police assault. The loyalists are threatening to organise further protests including a longer strike later this year. See page 13

MAIRE O'SHEA a victory for all

When Maire O'Shea appeared on the steps of Manchester Crown Court after her 18 day ordeal in the Irish conspiracy trial, it was a tremendous moment of victory over the British state. The verdict was a triumph: for Maire and her family, for all the Irish community in Britain and for all of us who have campaigned against her frame-up under the PTA and conspiracy laws. Despite spending £1 million on the trial and the extreme security measures that surrounded it (£20,000 a day for the helicopter!), the state's attempt to criminalise yet another Irish activist was defeated. Her acquittal is the first for some time in an Irish show trial in Britain and the victory was made all the more complete by the acquittal of co-defendant Patrick Brazil.

The other three defendants had pleaded guilty. Peter Jordan was sentenced to fourteen years for conspiracy to cause an explosion; William Grimes to ten years for conspiracy and ten years concurrent for possession of explosives. FRFI sends out greetings to these two political prisoners who now swell the ranks of POWs in British jails. Peter Lynch pleaded guilty to withholding information, an offence under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), and was sentenced to 400 days. He was immediately freed having spent that period imprisoned on remand.

Following the three guilty pleas, the remainder of the prosecution case centred on Maire O'Shea. The prosecutor, Rhys Davis, set out to criminalise her political activities and nationalist beliefs in order to persuade the jury to convict her on what was otherwise merely circumstantial evidence. 'This is not a political trial', he argued. 'But what is said about someone's political views may assist you!'

Yet just as Maire had refused to be criminalised for her beliefs throughout the year-long campaign, so too in court she turned the tables by bravely defending the right to hold a principled anti-imperialist standpoint. She explained to the jury how the Civil Rights Movement had protested against the discrimination suffered by nationalists in the North of Ireland; how internment was when Britain waged war against the nationalist

people; how it was fact, not opinion, that the British Army SAS 'mount a number of under-cover operations and are involved in the murder of innocent civilians'.

She compared Ireland under British rule with the Nazi occupation of Europe and to the situation in South Africa. She supported 'the right of an oppressed people to defend themselves because their country was occupied by foreign troops.' There was no other way for nationalists in the North to defend themselves. Having stood by her political beliefs, she strongly denied any knowledge of the alleged conspiracy. The defence also fought back against the prosecution contention that Maire must have known of the conspiracy from the extra-cautiously worded correspondence she had received from an old acquaintance. Calling journalists as expert witnesses, defence barrister Mike Mansfield showed how there was such fear of Special Branch surveillance in the Irish community in Britain that most people politically active on Ireland assumed that their phones were tapped and letters opened.

It is this background of fear that makes the O'Shea campaign so important. The usual anti-Irish, prejudicial media coverage of the arrests over Christmas and New Year 1984-85, was countered by public opposition to the arrest and to the PTA and conspiracy

laws. This led up to the fight for and winning of bail for Maire. Maire went on to speak at scores of meetings around the country and the campaign mounted pickets, days of action, a national petition, public meetings and a national demonstration.

The state was faced with a strong campaign and the risk of setting in motion an even bigger campaign against the PTA and conspiracy laws if they were to convict Maire. When it came to Judge Manning's summing up it became evident that the long campaign and meticulous legal defence had paid off, as he all but directed the jury to acquit her. The six men and six women threw out the charges and in so doing they were rejecting the police attempt to frame her. Having acquitted her, it then became possible that they free Patrick Brazil too. Like Maire he had denied knowledge of any conspiracy. To complete the victory, Maire was awarded £40,000 costs, having been refused legal aid.

Maire's liberty is proof that there is only one way to win against the anti-Irish racism, the secrecy and intimidation of the PTA and conspiracy laws. That through organised public campaigning in this Maire O'Shea has set new standards in Irish solidarity work in Britain and she has shown that it is possible to fight back against the British state and to win victories. The O'Shea campaign welcomed all participants who wanted to work for her defence. From liberal to Labour Party activists, to communists - all were allowed to play a full and democratic role in the work. With sight set on victory, the urgency of unity of action ensured that different political standpoints worked together. The result was a campaign that won phenomenal support from a wide range of elected representatives, political groups, trade unions, (including Maire's own union ASTMS), Irish political and solidarity groups, black organisations, women's groups, miners and others.

FRFI and the ISM are proud of the part we played in getting sponsors for the campaign, holding public meetings and street leafletings, working on local support committees and pushing forward plans for the successful demonstration of over 1,000 which took place in Birmingham last November.

Tony Sheridan