

Davoren Defence Fund

ON January 12 Comrade E. M. Davoren, Secretary of the London Region Revolutionary Socialist Student Federation, was arrested in the demonstration outside South Africa House. Below we print part of a message which he sent to the London Conference of the RSSF when it met on January 17.

You will no doubt be aware of my arrest, assault, detention in hospital and imprisonment in Brixton Prison as a result of participating in last Sunday's demonstration against the fascist dictatorships of Smith and Vorster in Rhodesia and South Africa, respectively. Yesterday afternoon I was released from Brixton Prison on £1,000 bail. Furthermore, a condition of my release is that I undertake not to organise or take part in any demonstration anywhere and to report twice a week at a police station either at home or near my college.

I understand that during the past few days many comrades have been active in the defence of myself and other comrades, with leaflets being produced and funds being collected in preparation for very costly court cases. Of course, in these cases political principles concern all revolutionaries. Thus, funds must be gathered from all quarters.

Last evening my lawyer, Benedict Birnberg, made an official complaint to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis regarding the assault made upon me by several police officers, uniformed and plain-clothed. The question of prosecution of the officers is under active consideration.

Comrade Davoren has now been granted summonses against three members of the Special branch

and against two uniformed police officers for 'assault causing malicious injury and/or actual bodily harm' and in one case 'threat to kill.'

According to these summonses Davoren was, without warning set upon by a number of policemen in plain clothes and in uniform and punched, kicked and kneed continuously. He was flung on to the steps of a police coach and a police officer kicked him in the face, splitting his forehead. As a result of these assaults Davoren suffered serious injuries resulting in damage to one eye, continuous and severe headaches and dizziness. He spent two nights in Westminster Hospital under guard and was later transferred to a cell in the hospital wing of Brixton Prison.

At Bow Street on January 27 when Davoren again came before the Court he was once more remanded until February 25. His application for bail was renewed with the same conditions as before. Comrade Davoren refused to accept these conditions and was therefore remanded in custody until his next appearance in court.

The defence of Comrade Davoren against the charges brought by the police will cost a great deal of money. These cases are of the utmost importance in the revolutionary struggle and the fund which has been started to fight them deserves the full support of all those engaged in this struggle.

Please send as much as you can afford to the Treasurer, Davoren Defence Fund, Regent Street Polytechnic, London, W.1.

STOP PRESS: On January 30 the condition that Comrade Davoren must not take part in or organise any demonstration while on bail — a condition which Comrade Davoren had refused to accept — was lifted by Mr Justice Roskill after a private hearing. The hearing followed an application by Miss Rose Heilbron, QC, on behalf of Comrade Davoren, challenging whether a judge or magistrate had power to impose a condition that someone must not do something which they were lawfully entitled to do.