

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM!

Anti-imperialist paper of the Revolutionary Communist Group

Issue 71 September 1987

(20p unwaged) 30p

PHILIPPINES
THE BATTLE FOR POWER

SRI LANKA
PHONEY PEACE ACCORD

VIRAJ MENDIS
HOME OFFICE TRICKS

'the moment
you stop
digging their
gold is the
moment we will
be free'
Winnie Mandela



FREE
MOSES
MAYEKISO
MARCH 10 OCT

**Black miners
challenge apartheid**

NHS CRISIS / INVESTORS SHUN 'BOOMING' BRITAIN / DRUGS IN PRISON

POPPERFOTO

ISSN 01435426

News Notes

Lufthansa flight staff have threatened industrial action in protest against being forced to return refugees 'back to prison and to possible death sentences'. They resent being put in the position of 'the engine drivers who ferried Jews to Auschwitz' said a union spokesperson.

The Newham Monitoring Project report that racist attacks in Newham have risen by 252% in the last year. They estimate that there is one attack every hour.

Between 1985/6 and 1986/7 'dangerous occurrences' in British pits rose by 33% from 272 to 362. In the same period the number of major accidents per 100,000 worker/shifts rose by 57% from 1.94 to 3.05.

Labour Party membership has fallen by 16,000 (5%) in the last year.

A Tower Hamlets Council report described rehousing homeless Bangladeshi families as 'a waste of ratepayers' money'.

The EETPU have announced plans to buy a £6 million Georgian country house, set in 312 acres, as a holiday home for tired members.

Tired EETPU member Stephen Seaman, involved in the secret recruitment of scabs for Murdoch, has resigned as chair of the Wapping Salaried Staff Council. He doesn't like Murdoch's management methods. He didn't, apparently, notice these 'methods' when he was helping to steal the jobs of the printworkers sacked by Murdoch.

News International has just announced that its pre-tax profits have risen in the last year from £11.7 million to £111.5 million - a rise of 850%.

In the first six months of this year mortgage foreclosures reached record levels: 11,620 homes were repossessed compared with 10,330 in the second half of last year.

UK companies are topping the league of takeovers of US companies by foreign companies with 89 such deals last year. So far this year UK companies have taken over US companies to a total value of \$18.5 billion. This compares with \$13.9 billion in 1986 and just \$5.2 billion in 1985.

NHS—the truth behind Tory lies

During the June election, the Tories launched a disinformation campaign claiming not only that the NHS was 'safe in their hands', but that it was setting new records for treatment. At the time, Thatcher boasted, 'I can go on the day I want, at the time I want, with the doctor I want.' For those unable to afford private care, the reality of the NHS is not so cosy.

The shortage of maternity beds in London is so acute that women in labour have been forced to wait in corridors, or have been moved across the city. 90% of hospitals report a chronic shortage of nurses. The government's *Regional Trends* survey, published in July, showed waiting lists lengthening and bed availability falling.

This decline was revealed even by the Tories' friends, in a report by the drug industry's Office of Health Economics (OHE). This was prepared before the election, but kept secret until a few days after it. (Drug companies are, after all, major financial backers of the Conservative party.) The OHE showed that

NHS hospitals have been underfunded by £900 million from 1980-86. There has been a net loss of 300 hospitals, and 15% of available beds. Meanwhile, private health spending had grown four times in the last decade.

Despite this evidence, and the daily experience of NHS patients and workers, the Tories claimed that NHS spending was up some 25% in real terms. This lie is exposed in a new report, *Facing the Figures*, by the Radical Statistics Health Group.

Facing the Figures shows how the cost of goods and services that the NHS needs rises more steeply than general inflation. If this factor is

considered, NHS spending rose by about 9% 1978-86. Yet the DHSS itself admits that funds need to grow by more than this to meet changing demographic and technological needs: for example, the increasing number of old people needing care. So out of more cuts - the Tories conjure a rise of a quarter.

Facing the Figures further reveals how the Tories cheated on statistics about staffing levels, bed numbers, and numbers of patients treated. For example, the cut in nurses' working hours is not mentioned, nor the fact that with ancillary jobs slashed nurses now spend, according to one survey, up to 20% of their time doing domestic tasks. Under pressure to discharge unfit patients, hospitals have reduced the length of stays. While this conveyor-belt parody of medical care produces more 'treated cases', a study in Leicestershire showed that 49% were readmitted within 30 days with the same main diagnosis.

Facing the Figures points out that of the 12 countries of the European Community, the UK rates ninth in terms of health spending as a percentage of GDP. Only Portugal and Greece, the two poorest EC countries, spend less.

The NHS is racist and sexist in its recruitment and provision of services. Black people and women are overwhelmingly placed in the lowest paid, lowest status jobs. Cervical and breast cancer screening remain inadequate. Though one in 400 black people in Britain are affected by sickle-cell anaemia, the NHS has no screening programme for this crippling disease. However, as *Facing the Figures* says, there is routine screening for phenylketonuria, a rarer con-

dition affecting mostly white children. Black people are twice as frequently as whites detained in hospital under section 136 of the Mental Health Act: the section which empowers police to take someone to a psychiatric hospital. Afro-Caribbeans are between three and five times more likely to be diagnosed as 'schizophrenic' as UK-born admissions.

Health under capitalism relates to class. The Black Report of 1980 showed how the poor suffer more disease, higher infant mortality and earlier death than the rich. The Health Education Council (HEC) report 'The Health Divide' of April this year proved this gulf had widened under Thatcher: 'The unemployed and their families have considerably worse physical and mental health than those in work.' The government tried to suppress both reports. The HEC has since been abolished.

Tory policy aims to create a two-tier system where good health is a commodity priced for the pockets of the privileged. Edwina Currie envisages a 'breadwinner strategy': a health rationing plan which would prioritise those in work and leave the old, disabled and unemployed at the back of a lengthening queue. The Tories are anxious to provide fresh inroads for capital into the NHS: privatising support services and promoting the profiteering of drug multinationals are only the start. The government is pushing a new wave of privatisations, looking greedily at the ambulance service and considering a 'fee-for-service' GP system.

From its beginning, the NHS was planned to meet health needs alongside full employment, good housing, adequate social security and so on: conditions which the crisis of capitalism cannot sustain. Tory policy represents an attack on the poorest and most oppressed sections of society, and it is therefore only by standing with these, 'the real masses', that health services can be defended.

Dave Burton

Facing the Figures 191pp Radical Statistics Health Group, c/o BSSRS, 25 Horsell Rd, London N5 1XL, £3.95 + 50p p&p



NETWORK

Nursing rotten with racism

Behind all the government's talk of commitment, dedication, improving standards and professionalism, NHS nursing is rotten with racism. The hands, in which hypocrite Thatcher said the NHS was safe, are increasingly whiter than white.

The racism shown in the following figures from South Derbyshire Health Authority could be applied to many places in the country.

% of nurses by grade	white nurses	black nurses
	Clinical manager	2.3%
Ward Sister	17%	7.5%
SEN	30%	10%
Auxiliaries	26%	49%

Black nurses are clearly disproportionately recruited for the lower end of the nursing hierarchy.

A recent study at Liverpool University revealed that black people applying for nursing training are more than twice as likely to be asked to sit an entrance exam than are white people. In the same study over 96% of white nurses were promoted to ward sister within 18 months of qualifying compared with 45% of black nurses. Only 1% of white nurses had to wait two years for promotion, whilst 35% of black nurses had to wait up to 6 years.

Black nurses are recruited to the less prestigious schools and are channelled to the 'low status' areas of the NHS - geriatrics, psychiatry and mental handicap. In South Derbyshire 13.8% of all nurses are black, yet they comprise over 30% of nurses in geriatric care and 20% in psychiatric care. In contrast less than 5% in paediatric care were black.

Racism is particularly marked in schools running courses for the qualification of registered nurses. In three London training schools - Charing Cross, Middlesex and Bartholomews - black students were only 1% of all students - compared with a 15% black population in London. In Leeds black people are 4% of the population, yet make up less than 2% of nursing learners. In Bristol there is one black student out of 266

students. In Slough, where one in five residents is black, only one in 17 nursing students is black. Figures from 12 nursing schools reveal that

whereas 30% of white applicants were accepted for nursing training, only 15% of black applicants were accepted.

The result is black nurses are disproportionately trained to be enrolled nurses rather than for the higher qualification of registered nurse. Consequently, black nurses' jobs are under threat since the 'enrolled nurse' is being phased out under new reorganisation, and the old large psychiatric and mental handicap hospitals, where many auxiliaries work, are being closed down.

Gordon Teal

Massive cuts in British bank profits

Last month we reported how British banks have been forced to respond to growing pressures to substantially write down Third World loans. Nat West reported a pre-tax profit of £251m for six months to 30 June, a fall of 48 per cent on the comparable period last year. Midland's loss on the same basis has now been estimated at £665m.

By the end of July the other banks had made their provisions for writing down Third World loans. Lloyds Bank increased its provision by over £1bn to £1.3bn against its £4.3bn of loans to 28 'problem' countries, equivalent to a 30 per cent write down of these debts. Lloyds announced a pre-tax loss of £697m in the six months to 30 June. Barclays announced a pre-tax loss of £40m after making an increased provision

	Nat West	Barclays	Lloyds	Midland
Pre-tax profits before provisions (£m)	747	530	369	251
Provisions (£m)	496	570	1,066	916
Pre-tax profit/loss (£m)	251	-40	-697	-665

of £570m against its problem loans to Third World countries. By mid August Britain's fifth largest bank Standard Chartered had follow-

ed suit. It announced pre-tax losses of £224m after making a provision of £400m against Third World debts of £2.4bn of which £994m was for 12 countries in Latin America, £744m for 21 countries in Europe, Africa and Asia and £691m for South Africa.

All the banks hope to reduce these losses at the expense of British taxpayers. They will ask the Inland

Revenue to allow all the new provisions against Third World debts to be written off against tax.

David Reed

Morning Star sells out

On 4 August women from Yellow Gate, Greenham Common and Kings Cross Women's Centre demonstrated outside the offices of the *Morning Star*. The 'communists' who run the paper called the police.

Rather than politically confront the anti-Soviet politics of some of the women who had taken part in a recent delegation to a peace conference in Moscow, the *Morning Star's* report concentrated on domestic trivia and interviews with women from the Camden Greenham Support Group and Crisewatch who do not actually live at the camp. The political issue of defending the Soviet Union against imperialism was never raised, the status of the

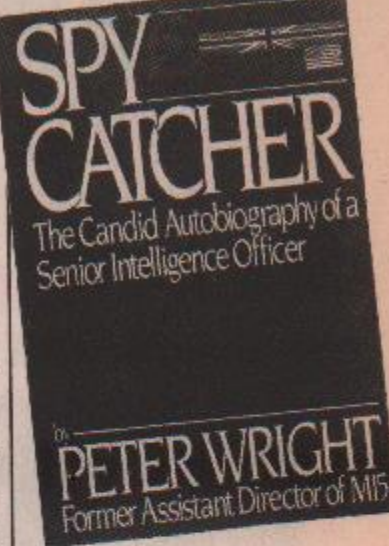
women who, in their own words, 'spoke out against the Soviet state and its weapons with the same conviction that we speak out against the British and American states and their weapons', was never challenged.

A letter of protest from Yellow Gate resident, Sarah Hipperson, was not printed and members of the *Morning Star's* workforce abused the demonstrators: 'This is a packet - you're an idiot.' 'You're only a girl. You don't count.' The 'com-

rades' locked the doors and called in the police. Shame on the *Morning Star*, for using the police to avoid a political solution to a dispute.

The management of the *Morning Star* has already scabbed on its staff and its supporters by selling the premises in Farringdon to David Sullivan, publisher of the pornographic *Sunday Sport* without consulting them. Workers have been laid off with minimum compensation. The building and machinery has been sold for £2 million to produce the *Daily Sport*. The 'comrades' now face industrial action from the NGA while rank and file *Morning Star* supporters come to terms with the fact that all their fundraising efforts to buy a new printing press have gone to the printing of the most pornographic paper in Fleet Street.

Nicola Jameson



Spycatcher secrets censored

Four newspapers face possible proceedings for contempt - *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times*. One newspaper is already being prosecuted - *News on Sunday*. Newspapers in Hong Kong and New Zealand are being pursued through the courts. The English version of *Pravda* has been impounded. We are all forbidden to repeat the details of or print extracts from or publish in full court proceedings relating to, Peter Wright's book *Spycatcher*. What's going on?

Spycatcher is sometimes funny, frequently boring and occasionally riveting. Wright provides evidence of MI5/MI6 involvement in a plot to destabilise the Wilson government; in two plots to assassinate Nasser; in a plan to tap all the telephone lines in the Republic of Ireland and plant booby-trapped detonators on the IRA. We are not allowed to reprint this evidence.

The government has succeeded in preventing detailed and sustained public discussion about, and action against, the secret rotten heart of the British ruling class. More than £3 million has been spent on this.

Instead the debate has been diverted to the issue of 'press freedom' - a figment of the bourgeois imagination at the best of times. Thatcher has, however, accrued enormous power to suppress exposure of the system she protects.

That MI5/MI6 are gangs of brutish, reactionary overgrown public schoolboys (mostly boys anyway) dedicated to destroying any opposition to the British ruling class is not news for revolutionaries. But, Wright's book could help to bring this truth to a wider audience.

That 'freedom of the press' is a fiction is not news for revolutionaries. But when the bourgeois press can be so completely silenced it means that the left too is muzzled.

The *Spycatcher* affair therefore affects us all. It is yet another example of a system in crisis abandoning, in words and deeds, all pretence of democracy.

Terry O'Halloran

RIGHT TO SILENCE THREATENED

On Thursday 30 July, in a speech to the Police Foundation, Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, attacked the right to silence.

The right of suspects to refuse to answer questions is a vital protection against police machinations and underpins the legal doctrine that suspects are innocent until proven guilty. Those who would like to reduce trials to a snappy hearing before the local Chief Constable naturally hate the right to silence.

Hurd asked why 'experienced

criminals' should be allowed to refuse to answer questions. There is now speculation that an amendment to abolish this right may be inserted into the Criminal Justice Bill which already seeks to remove the right to challenge jurors.

Of course, it is only our right to silence that is under attack. MI5/MI6, the government, the multinationals, the cops etc do not fall within Hurd's category of 'experienced criminals' refusing to answer questions.

Terry O'Halloran

HUNGERFORD MASSACRE

The sick society that makes killers

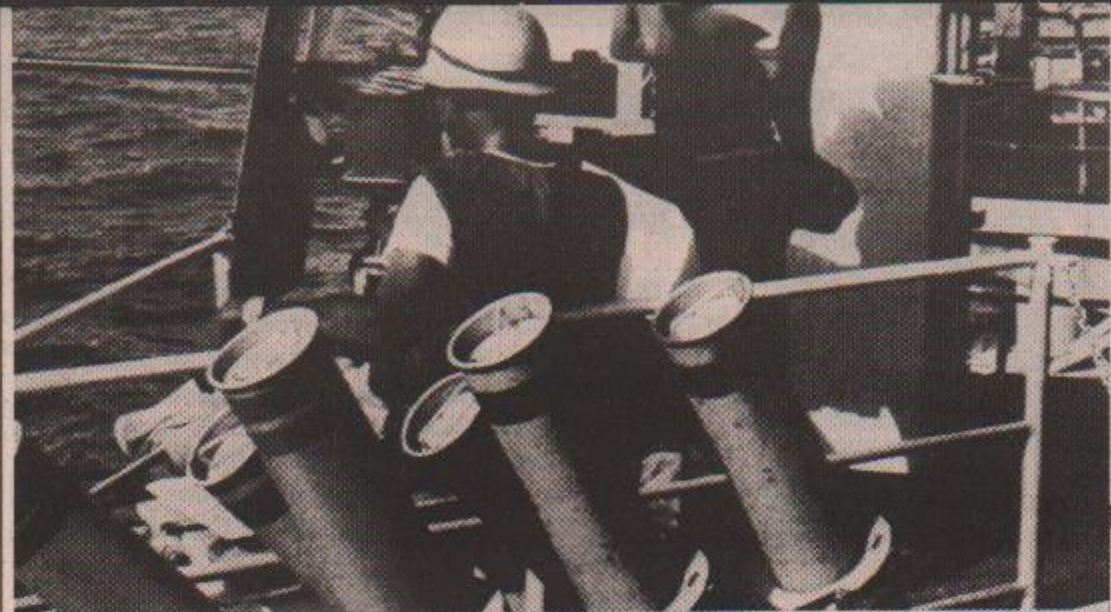
The gutter press greeted the Hungerford massacre, in which Michael Ryan killed 17 people including his own mother, with all the excitement of an adolescent greeting the release of a new record by a favourite star: every moment replayed; every aspect of the killer's personality made the object of fantasy.

They can say all they like about the mental state of Michael Ryan, the media and the availability of guns, but these are all inventions of a sick society attempting to protect itself from an investigation that would reveal its whole basis as one of systematic lying, robbery and violence: organised crime in short.

In 1966 21 people were shot dead from the University of Texas Tower. Three years ago 21 were killed in a McDonalds, in California. Last year 14 were gunned down in a small Oklahoma town.

There is no correlation between the availability of guns and murder rates but if you hold a population in permanent readiness to kill, then god them on, some will respond.

Terry O'Halloran adds: The Hungerford massacre, Zeebrugge and Bradford disasters have all, rightly, been followed by emergency appeal funds, messages of sympathy from the great and the good, and social agencies moving in to care for the bereaved.



Gunboat diplomacy in Gulf War

The seven year old war between Iran and Iraq has become the focus of world attention as United States warships escort reflagged Kuwaiti tankers through the Gulf. Only two weeks previously in an unprecedented display of concern the UN security council had unanimously called for an immediate ceasefire between the two sides.

For some time now the situation in the war has favoured Iran. Most analysts agree that the Iraqi army is coming under increasing pressure from the Iranians.

The US intervention has little to do with the defence of shipping. It is an utterly cynical military show of force designed to establish US control over the world's key oil producing area.

Following the Irangate arms scandal US popularity with its client states Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia is at rock bottom. Sending in the Navy serves both to rebuild influence over them and to so threaten the Khomeini regime that it has to start dealing with the US.

Iran's bellicose threats to close the Strait of Hormuz hides the reality that at present they have more interest in seeing a trouble free Gulf than the Iraqis. All their crude oil is exported down the Gulf whilst Iraq is able to use pipelines through Saudi Arabia.

The continuation of the war also serves the interest of the US, Britain and other imperialist nations. It keeps Iraq and other Gulf states dependent on imperialist military force.

The present incursion by the US Navy is not seen in isolation by hardliners at the Pentagon. They want permanent bases in the region not only to prevent unwelcome political developments around the Gulf but also to increase the dependence of the other imperialist powers of Western Europe and Japan upon the US for their vital oil supplies.

Britain and France have, after some deliberation, decided to join the US by sending minesweepers to the Gulf. Britain has also agreed to reflag Kuwaiti tankers. This will

take Royal Navy frigates into the Gulf. The US were greatly embarrassed when one of the escorted tankers, Bridgetown, was hit by a mine on its way to Kuwait. David Mellor, Britain's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs was not slow to follow the US lead in attacking the Iraqis.

Britain cannot afford to be left out of the US attempt to gain military control over the Gulf region. Already Britain plays a critical role in the functioning of US Central Command which is their strategic force on standby in Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific.

(Oman) - are effectively controlled by the British.

The only force working for a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis is the Soviet Union who have recently proposed that 'all naval ships of states not belonging to the area be withdrawn from the Gulf within the shortest possible period of time while Iran and Iraq, in turn, should refrain from actions creating a threat to international shipping.'

Andy Price

West Germany includes Pershing missiles in zero option talks

Arms control breakthrough for Soviet Union

Since the Reykjavik summit of October 1986 between Reagan and Gorbachev, the Soviet Union has made all the running in the arms control talks.

The Soviet proposals put forward at Reykjavik itself, which called for the elimination of nuclear weapons by the end of the century were blocked by US insistence on carrying on with Star Wars. After Reykjavik the Soviet Union put forward proposals for the elimination of all medium range (600-3,000 mile range) nuclear weapons in Europe, the so-called 'Zero Option'.

On 10 April Gorbachev called for negotiations to eliminate all short range nuclear weapons in Europe, the so-called 'Double Zero-Option'. This would leave just 100 medium range nuclear weapons in Soviet Asia and the USA out of range of each other's territory.

At the end of July, Gorbachev announced that the Soviet Union was prepared to eliminate its medium range nuclear weapons in Soviet Asia, they would also eliminate their

short range nuclear weapons in the area. This initiative the so-called global double zero option was, as Gorbachev pointed out, not linked with the US nuclear presence in Korea, the Philippines or Diego Garcia.

The response of the US was to state that no deal was possible if the Soviet Union insisted that 72 Pershing 1A missiles in West Germany be included in the agreement. These missiles according to the US and West German governments are third country missiles not covered by any agreement between the US and the Soviet Union.

All along in the line the US and its NATO allies have tried to sabotage the disarmament talks. Gorbachev through brilliant diplomatic tactics has managed to keep the initiative at every crucial stage. The aim of the Soviet Union is to prevent imperialism from gaining nuclear superiority and launching a nuclear attack on the socialist states.

Bob Shepherd

On 17 August Rudolf Hess, Hitler's right-hand man died. The world was rid of a mass murderer

Top Nazi dies

Since his death in Spandau after 46 years in prison, Rudolf Hess has been portrayed as a 'poor old man' who should have been released on humanitarian grounds. The Soviet Union has been pictured as mercifully rejecting 'clemency' in order to maintain a foothold in West Berlin.

Rudolf Hess was Hitler's deputy and closest ally, a founder member of the Nazi Party, co-author of Mein Kampf, and author of the Nuremberg Laws. He supervised the 'euthanasia' programme for murdering those 'not worthy of living'.

Six weeks before the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Hess flew to Scotland. His aim, apparently, was to persuade the Duke of Hamilton, a fascist sympathiser, to use his influence among ruling class circles in favour of an alliance between Britain and Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union.

His plan failed but it was no wild fantasy. Then US senator, and later President, Harry S Truman said: 'If we see that Germany is winning the war we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and in that way let them kill as many as possible.'

the revival of the glory of Europe - the parent continent of the modern nations and of civilisation. It would be a measureless disaster if Russian barbarism overlaid the culture and independence of the ancient states of Europe.

The Allies and the Nazis

The West's tears for Hess are con-



sistent with the behaviour of the US and Britain towards Nazi war criminals after the Allied victory.

Out of 23 directors of IG Farben, who built Auschwitz using slave labour at a cost of 100,000 lives, 18 were set free. The longest sentence was eight years.

The doctor who volunteered to work at Ravensbrück, carrying out 'experiments' in which an estimated 1,000 women died, was given a cash grant and an interest free loan to help her build up her own practice.

Alfried Krupp and eleven other directors found guilty of using slave labour were sentenced to just 12 years, with a special room set aside in prison for company board meetings. They were allowed to have the best food and wines. They were released after only three years.

In the early 60s more than 60 West German ambassadors and Foreign Office officials were former Nazi Party members. The British and US governments have long protected leading Nazis.

The Soviet Union At the Yalta Conference, 1945, the USSR, US and UK agreed:

'... to bring all war criminals to just and swift punishment... to remove all nazi and militarist influences from public office and from the cultural and economic life of the German people...'

Only the Soviet Union, having lost more than 20 million dead in the war against fascism, took this seriously. Out of 35,000 convictions of Nazis, 30,452 took place in the Soviet Union, Poland and German Democratic Republic.

The Soviet Union's refusal to allow Hess to be released, was consistent with the Soviet Union's historic fight against fascism. The Allies' pity for this major war criminal is equally consistent with Allied protection of Nazis ever since the war.

Nick Lewis

Politics of Profit



Stock Exchange brokers Sell, Sell, Sell.

Investors shun 'booming' Britain

DAVID REED

The spate of recent optimistic government economic forecasts cannot hide the underlying vulnerability of the British economy. Investors have little confidence that the recent rise in growth rates and fall in unemployment rates, fuelled by a credit financed consumer led mini-boom, reflect any lasting structural improvement in the fortunes of the British economy.

This was demonstrated by the dramatic swings in the stock market in August, a response to the totally unexpected government-imposed one per cent rise in interest rates in the first week of August and the later announcement of an acceleration in bank lending levels in July. More fundamentally it is expressed by a 'relatively depressed' investment in the British economy, while investment overseas is surging ahead.

As we have pointed out in this column on many occasions, British capitalism in the last decade has grown totally dependent on the monopoly profits from North Sea oil and from the rapidly accelerating export of capital abroad. The run down of North Sea oil revenues over the next few years will lead to a serious deterioration in the British economy.

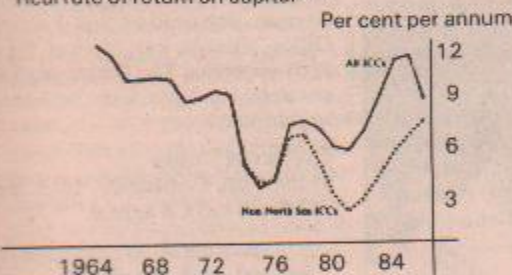
North Sea oil profits fall

The profits from North Sea oil companies reached a peak in 1984. They are now falling rapidly.

	1984	1985	1986
	(£ million)		
Gross trading profits (incl North Sea oil)	49,019	58,015	55,679
North Sea oil profits	19,019	18,364	8,410
2 as a % of 1	38.8%	31.65%	15.1%

North Sea oil profits have fallen from a peak of 38.8 per cent of the gross trading profits of private companies in 1984 to 15.1 per cent in 1986. In 1986 profits of non-North Sea oil companies increased for the fifth consecutive year (taking the real rate of return to over 8 per cent, the highest level since 1973). However, these profits did not rise by enough to compensate for the 54 per cent fall in North Sea oil companies profit. The overall result was a fall in gross trading profits of over 4 per cent for all industrial and commercial companies in 1986.

Real rate of return on capital^{(a)(b)}



(a) Excluding British Telecom
(b) Pre-tax profits net of stock appreciation and capital consumption as a proportion of total capital employed.
Source: Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin August 1987

Massive investment overseas

While investment in the British economy remains 'subdued', investment abroad has once again dramatically increased.

	Gross domestic fixed capital formation (£m)		Private investment Overseas (£m)
	Total Private Sector (at current prices)	Manufacturing	
1980	29,641	6,478	8,116
1985	47,785	7,950	26,651
1986	51,547	8,368	34,256

Private investment overseas increased by 28.5 per cent in the year to 1986 to a level equal to 66.5

per cent of total private sector fixed investment in Britain and over four times that of manufacturing investment. The figures for 1980 were 27.4 per cent and 1 1/2 times respectively. In six years private investment overseas has more than quadrupled. This is the other side of the relative decline of British industry.

Balance of payments crisis looms

Oil exports and overseas earnings from investment abroad and 'the City' play a crucial role in the balance of payments current account as can be seen from the table. One year has seen a dramatic change. The surplus from the oil trade has halved from £8,104m in 1985 to £4,056m in 1986. For the first time since 1980 the income generated from British assets abroad and the activities of 'the City', in spite of large increases on 1985, were no longer sufficient to compensate for the run down of North Sea oil revenues and the growing deterioration in the balance of trade that has followed the decline of British manufacturing industry. The situation is bound to get worse. The next few years will show why investors have little faith in the so-called renewal of British capitalism.

	Current Account (£m)		
	1980	1985	1986
Visible balance			
manufactured goods	5,457	-3,001	-5,492
oil	315	8,104	4,056
other goods	-4,411	-7,281	-7,027
TOTAL	1,361	-2,178	-8,463
Invisible balance			
financial & other services	3,932	7,236	8,421
interest profit & dividends	-219	2,992	4,686
other services incl government transfers etc	-2,158	-5,131	-5,624
TOTAL	1,555	5,097	7,483
Current Balance	2,916	2,919	-980

British imperialism prospers

Lenin described imperialism as parasitic and decaying capitalism. British imperialism has all these characteristics shown by its increasing dependence on the monopoly profits of North Sea oil, its earnings from investments abroad and the activities of 'the City' over the last few years. Direct investment overseas increased by 21.4 per cent last year to reach £90.8bn. Portfolio investment (in shares and securities) did even better and increased by 44.7 per cent to £145.7bn. Together these represent an increase of 356 per cent on the levels in 1979.

In addition to this is the lending overseas by UK banks of £438.2bn in 1986, an increase of 18.7 per cent on last year and 247 per cent on 1979. Overall, British overseas assets (incl public assets) increased to £731bn in 1986, an increase of 22.7 per cent on 1985 and 270 per cent on 1979.

In 1986 British imperialism's net external assets rose to £114.4bn a staggering 48.2 per cent increase on 1985. Britain is the second largest creditor nation in the world next to Japan, which had net overseas assets of £122bn at the end of 1986. Interest profits and dividends on direct and portfolio investments in 1986 were £13.5bn. If we add to this the earnings from 'the City' of £9.4bn in 1986, an increase of 41 per cent on 1985, we can see how crucially British capitalism depends on its parasitic activities abroad.

FIGHT RACISM

Campaign to free framed prisoners

On the weekend of 22/23 August Sharon Raghip, wife of Engin, framed for the murder of PC Blakelock, visited the Sanctuary of Viraj Mendis. As well as addressing public meetings in Manchester and Liverpool and joining in the Friday march from Piccadilly Gardens to the Church of the Ascension, Hulme, Sharon met the Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council and the Police Monitoring Committee to explain her campaign for the release of the framed prisoners.

FROM SHARON

The RCG invited me up to Manchester so that I would be able to gain support for the lads who have been convicted after the uprising which took place on 6 October 1985 on Broadwater Farm.

The RCG and the VMDC were very supportive and arranged three meetings with the main topic being the issue of Broadwater Farm. Karen and Viraj made me feel very welcome. It is so tragic that this young couple are imprisoned in a church for 24 hours a day each and every day. As Viraj stated, we are fighting one struggle; we are both taking on the Home Office; myself to have my husband released because he shouldn't be in there for something he never did. I have the right to be with the man I love and my son has the right to be with his family. In Viraj's case his

right is to be able to live freely in this country and after 14 years living in Britain they should think again about sending him back because the evidence shows that he will be killed.

I hope that Manchester and Liverpool are just a start by way of publicising what has happened, especially to Engin, Mark and Winston. The case of the Guildford Four and the way in which Engin and the other two were sentenced to life have uncanny similarities. I hope that in time this will be highlighted in order that the public can see the injustice which has taken place.

Finally I would like to thank the RCG and VMDC and especially Viraj and Karen for their support. I am sure that Winston, Mark and Engin would like me to express their thanks for them.

Courts uphold racist evictions

On 5 August two High Court judges pronounced that the Liberal-controlled council of Tower Hamlets in London's East End was within its rights to evict homeless Bangladeshi families from bed-and-breakfast accommodation. The Council had said that the families had made themselves 'intentionally homeless' by leaving Bangladesh. This is the same Council that had proposed to use a ship moored in the Thames as a means of solving its homelessness problem - a floating ghetto for Asians. For Jeremy Swan, Chair of Tower Hamlets' Housing Committee, it was 'quite wrong to house people who own their own homes when there are many people who are genuinely homeless'. Of the families threatened with eviction, only two own homes in

Bangladesh - one of them a bamboo hut valued at £50.

The High Court judgement endorses the message of Tower Hamlets Council: if you're black you can't come and live here. And even if you have kids we're not obliged to house you under the 1980 Child Care Act.

Virman Man

Police Complaints Authority Exonerates Killer police

Complaints Authority has decided to take no action against PC Michael Hobday and Neil Thomas responsible for the death of Clinton McCurbin, a 23 year old black man from Wolverhampton. On 20 February Clinton was attacked by these two PCs who accused him of using a stolen credit card in the city's main Next shop. Clinton was choked to death. Bystanders who protested against the police behaviour were told to mind your own 'fucking business'. Fierce fighting between youth and the police followed this murder. Now the Police Complaints Authority has found that death was 'consistent with restraint during the violent struggle'. Racist police 'investigating' their own killers could certainly produce no other result.

Chapelton police reveal all

What does a policeman think behind his 'community policing' face?

'Let me show you this, there are 15,000 West Indians in this locality, 15,000 on the Chapelton side - still a hell of a lot more down here (Harehills) and I tell you gentlemen 15,000 West Indians are very difficult to police... There are all sorts of problems, drugs is one of them, and we're out to stop prostitution, brothels and violence... West Indians in particular create a big problem and we're dealing with it as effectively as we can...'

Superintendent Ellis, Chapelton Police Chief, in a secretly tape conversation with Mr Om-parkash Sharma of Harehills, Leeds.

This is an extract of a conversation which took place 4 days after fighting between the police and the youth of Chapelton (as reported in *FRFI* 70). Ellis went further than this and said:

'We've been locking people up left, right and centre. We've got 28 West Indians in custody right now - some of them have been given bail against our wishes, but that's the courts for you...'

Superintendent Ellis is still in charge of the police in Chapelton. Such is the nature of community policing in Leeds. Clinton Cameron, a council equal opportunities officer, has publicly come out in defence of Ellis and said that no one should be persecuted on the evidence of the tape. There is little doubt that Ellis will continue in his post and gain promotion, especially with the backing of such 'community leaders'.

Chas Andrews

MARCH

from Broadwater Farm to Downing Street

**SATURDAY
3 OCTOBER 1987**

Called by The Movement for Civil Rights and Justice
Organised by: Broadwater Farm Youth Association
Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign
Broadwater Farm Residents' Association

The demands of the march are:

- A public enquiry into the uprising on 6 October 1985
- The immediate release of the innocent youths framed and convicted after the uprising
- Fight state racism and oppression!

The march leaves Broadwater Farm at 10.00am.
Meeting points: Seven Sisters tube 10.30am; Manor House 11am; Finsbury Park 11.10am; Camden Town tube 11.30am; Trafalgar Square 12.45pm; Rally in Hyde Park 3pm.

Further information: 01 808 1667 or 01 885 3752

Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign

Judicial review farce

The judicial review of Viraj's case, heard in the High Court on 15/16 July, made a mockery of 'justice' and gave the rubber stamp to the Home Office's intention to deport Viraj.

The VMDC had argued that Viraj's life would be in danger in Sri Lanka. Justice Mann himself asked during the hearing:

'What would happen to him if he went back? ... He may be free, but is he going to be in jeopardy, is he going to disappear?'

In rejecting Viraj's appeal, Mann made no effort to even refer to his own question, let alone answer it. Quite ruthlessly he ignored all the evidence from Amnesty International and other reliable sources indicating that Viraj's life would be in danger in Sri Lanka.

The Home Office made out that Viraj would be safe in Sri Lanka, using a worthless guarantee in a letter from the Sri Lankan High Commissioner. During the hearing Mann had asserted:

'What I think about it [the letter] is more important than what the Secretary of State thinks.'

When the verdict was announced on 27 July, however, it became apparent that in the intervening period something had produced an amazing *volte face* in Mann's mind:

'It is for the Secretary of State to decide the weight to be put on the letter.'

Regarding Viraj's long stay in Britain - the whole of his adult life - Mann had stated in the hearing:

'Residence of 12 years is a potent factor. I have to know the reasons for its dismissal, and there seems to be a gap at the moment.'

By the time of summing-up, any 'potency' had vanished, and there was no longer any 'gap' to fill.

Having ignored all these points Justice Mann calculatedly concluded his summing up by referring to the sanctuary - totally outside his brief. He stated that sanctuary has no basis in law and that:

'What is now to occur is not a matter for the courts but for the Secretary of State.'

What was this if not a call on Hurd to send the police into the sanctuary?

Anyone present at both the hearing and the verdict could be forgiven for thinking that there were two judges presiding: one who had expressed doubts about the Home Office case; and another who had been unable to attend the hearing and was simply there to deal the executioner's blow.

**Eddie Abrahams
Chris Proctor**

Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign

Campaign roundup

VMDC SUPPORTS SANCTUARY IN LEICESTER

On 8 August Renukaben Lakhani and her 4 month old baby went into sanctuary in a local Hindu Temple in Leicester. A VMDC group which was already in Leicester immediately visited her to show solidarity. The Home Office tried to deport Renukaben under the disgusting 'primary purpose' rule claiming her marriage was not genuine but a ruse to obtain settlement in Britain. Renukaben's strug-

gle has wholehearted support from the local community. Within 48 hours the sanctuary held a 300 strong public meeting. In the next 2 days over 3,500 petitions supporting her were collected, and donations for her campaign are flooding in.

THE VMDC IN LEICESTER

The VMDC was offered pride of place on the gay and lesbian demonstration in Leicester on Saturday 8 August. The

organisers in an act of solidarity donated the proceeds from the march to the VMDC.

BUILD THE WEEKLY MARCHES!

Every Friday, the VMDC organises a demonstration from Piccadilly Gardens to the sanctuary. Designed to mobilise popular support the marches have consistently grown since they began 4 weeks ago. Other organisations and campaigns are joining under the slogan 'Build the Resistance'. The Liaquat Ali Defence Campaign, Sharon Raghip and City AA have already taken part. The RCG has a contingent every week - other socialist organisations should do the same.

The VMDC Gay and Lesbian Subcommittee has made a special mobilisation for 4 September; the Chilean organisation ACCHLA will be mobilising on 11 September and the Ancoats Hospital Occupation on 18 September.

Join the weekly marches: Assemble every Friday at 5.30pm in Piccadilly Gardens.

LABOUR COUNCIL SHOWS ITS TRUE COLOURS

The Labour controlled Manchester City Council has chosen this moment, when the campaign is under the greatest strain, to withdraw postage and stationery facilities at the Town Hall where the VMDC has its office. Having already retreated on the question of Viraj's job, the Council is now losing any semblance of being interested in the fight against racism. It is surrendering

Tamil Hunger Strike on prison ferry

In a determined display of defiance to the Home Office's attempts to deport them to Sri Lanka, 58 Tamils on board the *MV Earl William* prison hulk moored at Harwich began a hunger strike on 1 August. They were protesting at the disgusting conditions on the ferry and demanding that they be allowed to stay with their relatives whilst their applications for asylum were being considered. Most of the Tamils had been held for months - some for over a year - at detention centres around the country.

The Tamils formed a committee and elected a spokesperson: this was an organised challenge to the Home Office. Other detainees on board the vessel were drawn in to support the hunger strike. The Tamils were quite clearly seen as the leading force in the fight for all the detainees' rights.

Within three days of the commencement of the hunger strike five of the Tamils were in a state of near-collapse. All the Tamil women were removed to Harmondsworth detention centre, where they continued to refuse food. By 7 August one 17-year old youth was unable to take either water or glucose. The fast ended on 10 August when Home Secretary Douglas Hurd stated that the case of the Tamils would be dealt with as soon as possible.

The victory of the Tamils came about not because of any compassion from Hurd, but because of the political consequences if even one of the Tamils died. The support and publicity generated by the hunger strike was an instrumental factor in forcing the Home Office to relent so quickly. In the past the Home Office has shown that it is capable of moving swiftly - but only to deport black people: in February 64 Tamils had to strip to their underpants at Heathrow to avoid being immediately bundled onto a plane bound for Colombo; and in May two Kurds slashed their wrists rather than be deported to persecution in Iraq.

Virman Man

TAMILS WIN RIGHT TO JUDICIAL REVIEW

Within days of the hunger strike ending, the Home Office cranked up its machinery to work overtime. Five Tamils were to be deported to Sri Lanka on 22 August.

One of the Tamils was deported straight away. He was dragged off by immigration officers as he reported to a police station to sign bail forms. Instead of trying to contact his solicitors, he submitted rather than face incarceration on the floating prison again.

Of the remaining four Tamils, three have won the right to a judicial review; the fourth faces deportation. The Home Office had once again tried to sidestep normal procedures by attempting to deport the Tamils without allowing them access to representation by MPs. It was only a last-minute intervention by MP Jeremy Corbyn that they were even able to get a temporary stop to deportation.

The case of the three Tamils will take place in September. *FRFI* urges readers to take up and support their case.

Virman Man

Act now! Join the VMDC fightback

Now is the time to mobilise the VMDC's mass support into action. We have to show that in its determination to deport Viraj, the Home Office remains as isolated as it was before the Judicial Review.

■ Bombard the Home Office with letters and postcards demanding that it does not raid the Church, and grants Viraj the right to stay. Send your protests to Timothy Renton, Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW 1.

■ Organise visits to your local MPs, councillors, Churches, political, religious community and youth organisations and ask them to sign our pledge demanding Viraj's right to remain and calling on the Home Office not to raid the Church. Return these to the VMDC c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Manchester M15 5AL.

■ Raise the question and put a resolution in your local Labour Party and trade union branch.

■ Organise delegations to visit Viraj in his sanctuary.

■ Invite the VMDC to speak at public meetings you organise, or to address meetings of your political, trade union, student, church or other organisation.

★ Please help us raise money. The campaign urgently needs your donations. The campaign's financial position has become that much more difficult following the Manchester City Council's withdrawal of postage and stationery facilities. In response to the Judicial Review verdict and the Indo/Sri Lanka peace agreement, the VMDC has produced a special dossier. The VMDC also has leaflets, pledge forms, postcards, posters, badges and other publicity material. It produces a regular weekly bulletin.

There are VMDC Support Groups in London, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Tyne and Wear, Brighton, Dundee, Bristol, Edinburgh, Bradford and Cambridge.

If you want more information, publicity material or if you want to be put in touch with a local support group write to VMDC, c/o North Hulme Centre, Jackson Crescent, Manchester M15 5AL.

to the pressure of the Home Office and the racists. The principled work of the VMDC is exposing the opportunists for all to see.

LONDON SUPPORT GROUP

The esteem with which the VMDC is held internationally was shown on 1 August at a public meeting in London when the VMDC was invited to share a platform with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front.

POSTCARD CAMPAIGN

On 21 August, the VMDC launched a new postcard campaign. It plans to bombard the Home Office with thousands of cards protesting against its threats to invade the sanctuary and demanding that it abide by its pledge made before the Judicial Review that the police will not be sent into the Church to arrest Viraj.

Order your cards from London VMDC Support Group, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX.

FREEDOM RIDES

The London Support Group will be organising 'Freedom Rides' to Manchester every month to join the Friday

evening VMDC demonstrations and visit Viraj in sanctuary. The minibuses will be decorated with banners and slogans proclaiming Viraj's continuing fight to those who see it on its way. The dates for the next 'Rides' are 11 September and 16 October. Phone London VMDC at 01-837-1688 for details.

POLICE INSPIRED ATTACKS

Following the Judicial Review, elements in the Manchester police force provided the *Manchester Evening News* with a copy of the Police Federation magazine *Police*. They had highlighted an item linking Viraj to 'convicted IRA terrorists in the Maze prison'. The *Manchester Evening News* followed this up with a banner headline 'Mendis Swaps Letters With IRA Thugs' in 1 August. A day later there was a bomb scare at the sanctuary. Then at 6am on 3 August bricks and bottles were hurled at the Church. Days later Chris Proctor, RCG member and VMDC chair, received a death threat letter. Numerous other threats in letters and phone calls have since been received. One claims to be from the notorious Column 88 saying 'Its over for Mendis - Wog Get Out Now!'

The VMDC responded with a 50 strong picket of the *Evening News* office supported by the RCG, the Umbrella Theatre, the Joe Hill Company, the SWP and the RCP amongst others.

New threat to rights of black people

Douglas Hurd, Home Secretary, is preparing a new immigration bill which will undermine further the rights of black people legally settled in Britain and will overturn legal precedents favourable to black people established in the courts.

Hurd plans to make 'overstaying' a continuing criminal offence. This will overturn a 1982 House of Lords judgement that the 'criminal offence of overstaying' was committed once only - the day after expiry of leave to remain. Under Hurd's proposals, people charged with 'overstaying', who remain in the country while their case is being heard, would be liable to repeated prosecution. This will give the police a free hand to constantly attack victims of the new law.

The law granting citizenship to children claiming British descent is also to be changed. Hurd is proposing that the Home Office be given the right to challenge such

claims and exclude the claimants from Britain. They will not even be allowed into the country for their own appeal against the Home Office. It will thus be virtually impossible for claimants to fight their case in British courts.

The new proposals being prepared will also abolish the right of entry for wives and children of Commonwealth citizens settled here before 1 January 1973. It will thus remove the only right of family reunion in British immigration law. The hated 'primary purpose' rule will be extended to include all spouses: not just women but also men. Hurd will 'abolish' sexual discrimination in immigration laws not by ex-

tending rights to women but by removing them from men!

Families coming to Britain in the future would not be allowed access to housing benefit, supplementary benefit or family income supplement. A new accommodation test will allow families to join settled sponsors only if housing is arranged for them in advance. Thus only the wealthy or better off will be able to come to Britain.

These proposals are being prepared even while the reactionary effects of the 1981 Nationality Act come into force. This Act made a provision that Commonwealth citizens settled in Britain before 1973 had an automatic right to British citizenship only if they registered before 31 December this year. Unless registered, naturalisation would no longer be automatic but discretionary. Registration costs £60 for each applicant. Again the poor are being attacked and laid open to deportation from Britain.

Hurd's new proposals have yet to be submitted to Parliament. All anti-racists should be ready to mobilise against them when they are presented to Parliament.

Virman Man

Drugs panic: cover for repression

The Home Office has circulated a secret draft circular instruction on the 'drugs problem' in prisons. FRFI has obtained a copy of this secret circular.

TERRY O'HALLORAN

The circular claims that there were 2,300 drug-related finds in British prisons in 1986 (p1); more than 90% were related to cannabis. In other words there were less than 230 finds related to hard drugs. This figure should be set against the more than 100,000 people imprisoned in 1986.

The Prison Officers' Association (POA) publishes a three monthly summary of serious incidents in prisons in its magazine *Gateledge*. The August summary for the months March to May lists 168 incidents: 12 suicides and two attempted suicides; six other deaths of prisoners; 30 incidents involving barricading, cellfires, hostage taking, roofclimbs or 'concerted indiscipline'; 30 assaults on inmates; 19 assaults on staff; and one, just one, drugs find.

TOUTS CHARTER

The Home Office's guidelines call for collection of 'intelligence' - gossip magically metamorphosed into fact - about prisoners and their friends and relatives. Prisoners are to be encouraged to inform on other prisoners. This is 'meritorious conduct which may be rewarded' (para 1.4 of guidelines.)

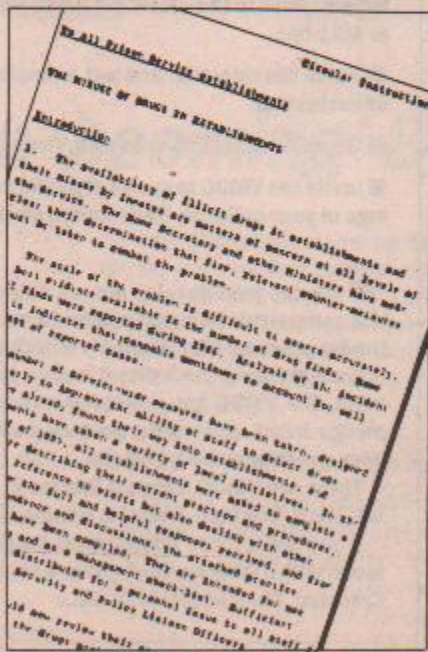
There will be systematic liaison with police and other outside bodies to build up 'intelligence'. None of this 'intelligence' will be subjected to any independent scrutiny or test. The guidelines will allow any governor, any prison officer, any corrupt prisoner (either to work off a grudge or earn a favour) to target any prisoner as 'suspect'.

THE CRACKDOWN

A visit may be cancelled or stopped at any stage (para 2.2). Visits by persons other than close relatives may be refused (para 2.2). A visit may also be refused if the visitor objects to being searched (para 2.12).

Visitors' luggage, including pushchairs and babies' requirements, may be searched or removed from the visitors for the duration of the visit (paras 2.4 to 2.10). Paragraph 2.13 points out that there need not be any 'reason to believe that an individual may be carrying drugs' before instituting these procedures.

Prisoners and their visitors may be forbidden to embrace or have any physical contact (para 2.6). Prisoners may be put on closed visits - ie with a physical barrier between the prisoners and their visitors - for an unlimited period (paras 2.27 and 2.28 - para 2.27 points out that the imposition of closed visits is an administrative measure and does not depend on any finding of guilt in an



The secret circular

adjudication).

Home leave may be forbidden (para 2.33). The 'privilege' of food being brought in for remand prisoners is to be reviewed (para 2.37). The custom of Christmas and birthday parcels in young offender institutions will be discontinued (para 2.38).

All prisoners will have a rub-down search before and after every visit (para 3.12). Targeted prisoners will be strip-searched after every visit (para 3.13). Random strip searching, up to 100% on certain days, will be carried out (para 3.14). All prisoners in closed prisons will be strip-searched on return from home leave (para 3.15). Some, at least, of these searches will include intimate body searches.

Targeted prisoners will not have access to outside working parties (para 3.16). In certain cases all prisoners in outside working parties will be strip-searched (para 3.16).

Targeted prisoners may be placed in

Prisoners at Long Lartin tell us that following the letter 'Increased Repression at Long Lartin' in FR66, Governor Joe Whittle stormed into the cells of John Bowden, Andrzej Jakubczyk and others shouting, 'Have you read what they have written about me in that FRFI paper? I wouldn't mind but I was never at Gartree (a lie - several prisoners remember him). I know what to do about this rubbish. I won't be letting this go! The truth often hurts!

solitary confinement and administered emetics after visits in case they have swallowed something (paras 3.22 and 3.23).

PRISONERS ARE THE TARGET

Prisoners are the target of these proposals not drugs. There is not a word in the 25 page document about the complicity, direct and indirect, of prison staff in the drugs traffic. There is not a word about the problem of prison medical officers prescribing powerful mind-affecting drugs.

The proposals can do nothing for those prisoners suffering from drug addiction. Rather than lay themselves open to all the

horrors above, they will continue, in secret, to inject themselves with God-knows-what using dirty needles shared with God-knows-who.

These proposals serve two purposes. One, they are a concession to the POA to sweeten the pill of the Fresh Start scheme. Two, they allow any prisoner who resists the already inhuman British prison system to be targeted as 'suspect'.

There can be no doubt that prisoners, being human beings, will resist these draconian decrees. Now that the Home Office's secret scheme has been exposed it is up to all of us on the outside to resist it also.

Nicola Jameson

Albany Censorship

In July 1986 Tommy Curliss, a prisoner in Albany gaol on the Isle of Wight, wrote us a letter about a prison officer of governor grade at Brixton prison who was prosecuted for shop-lifting in the late 70s, as he believed that officer was currently at Albany. Tommy also told us that he was writing to Tony Banks MP, asking him to investigate brutality in Albany.

The Assistant Governor, a 'Rhodesian' named McClean, had this letter stopped. He acted totally outside the law. Four months and a petition to the Home Office later, Tommy's letter was returned to him with the assurance of the Secretary of State that it should not have been stopped. Assistant Governor McClean has not been taken to task for his prejudices and is presumably still free to delay any letter he takes political or personal exception to.

Nicola Jameson

Disabled prisoner attacked

Following a hunger-strike three years ago, Martin Foran suffers from an incurable bowel illness. He requires clean clothing twice daily and showers three to four times, as well as specific medical attention.

In December 1985 whilst very ill, Martin was moved from Winson Green to Wandsworth the day before he was due to see a specialist. He was put in the prison hospital and again booked to see a specialist. The day before this appointment was due he was moved again. Back to Winson Green. From there to Maidstone where a specialist *did* examine him and recommended immediate hospital treatment.

In March 1986 Martin was transferred to Wandsworth where he was put on a waiting list for treatment at St Mary's hospital. Before this appointment could take place he was told that he was being transferred on GOAD (good order and discipline) to the block at Parkhurst. No reason was given.

Martin demanded to see a doctor as he was too ill to move. This right was denied

him for two hours during which time Martin repeatedly warned that he would take a hostage if forced to. Martin held a prison hospital officer hostage for 13 hours before he was finally granted a medical examination.

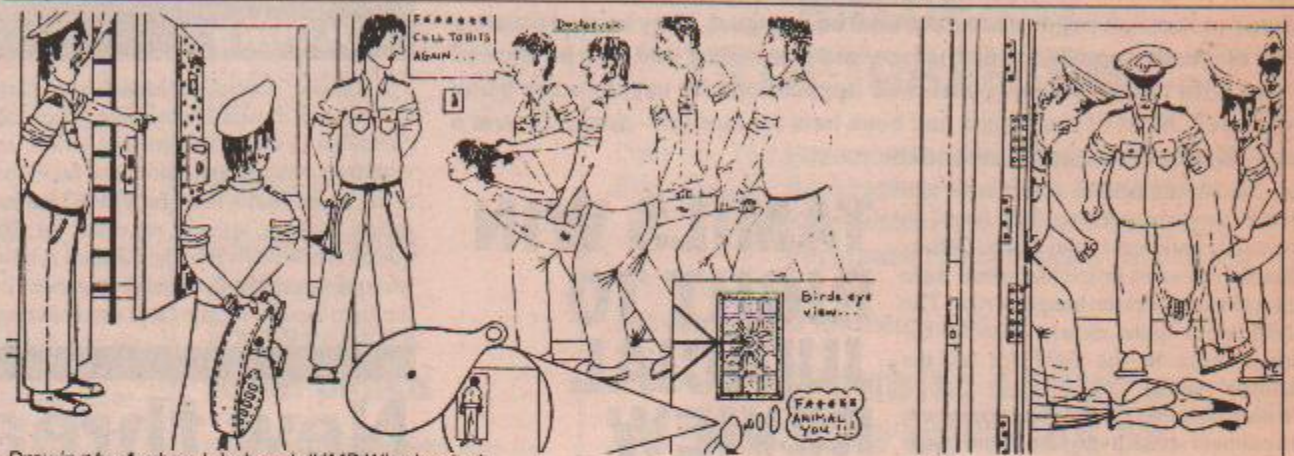
The prison doctor who examined him insisted that nothing was wrong and Martin was moved to Parkhurst where for four weeks he received no medical attention. Eventually the prison officers on the block complained to the governor and things suddenly began to move. Martin was rushed to Liverpool prison hospital for an emergency colostomy. Whilst recovering from this operation he was violently assaulted by six officers who dragged him into a padded cell, kicked him repeatedly and rushed him back to Parkhurst.

Martin is now at Long Lartin where he is

being held in the segregation unit because 'normal location' cannot cope with his condition. Other inmates confirm the continued brutality of his treatment and the rapid deterioration of his condition. They fear he may die. He is in constant pain. The colostomy was not successful due to the beating which followed it and infection is now spreading to his groin and legs. Martin himself has written to FRFI and tells us he is 'locked up 23 hours a day on GOAD, with a colostomy, in an airless cell, with hot pipes, inhuman, degrading, a pig can't live like this.'

Nicola Jameson

Messages of support and solidarity should be sent to: Martin Foran C51796, HM Prison Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 5TZ. Urgent letters of protest should be sent to the Governor at Long Lartin and to the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd at the Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1.



Drawing by Andrzej Jakubczyk (HMP Winchester)

INSIDE NEWS

Two prisoners were found hanged in Risley remand centre this month. James Armstrong, aged 18, had been on remand for 3 months for burglary; and Audrey Bergman, an American woman who was also awaiting trial on charges of handling stolen goods. Risley - built for 600 men and women - currently holds 1,000 prisoners in its cells. Labour MP Doug Hoyle is demanding an inquiry into the deaths, the overcrowding and disgusting conditions at 'grisly Risley... the most depressing place you can imagine.'

Up until mid August, 51,000 men and women were jailed in British prisons.

Under the government's 'early release scheme', there are now 3,000 fewer leaving a population of 48,000 - still 6,000 more than the jails were built to hold. This has led to the 'worst overcrowding this century' with at least 650 prisoners in police cells, suffering filthy, inhumane conditions.

The government's massive prison building programme is failing to keep up with its increasing repression. Home Office prison officials are thinking of building 'a modern version of a prison hulk' and are busy scouting round 'for suitable buildings', eg disused mental hospitals, to incarcerate the poorest and most oppressed in the working class.

Rollestone, an ex-army camp on Salisbury plain, was opened 'as an emergency jail' on 10 August. Ashford remand centre which should have been closed years ago through bad conditions, is to be kept open, despite a new prison,

Feltham, to replace it.

At Norwich jail on 18 August, prison officers were threatening to close the gates to any new admissions as they said overcrowding was reaching 'dangerous levels' despite the early release scheme. The prison had been holding 500 men in cells built for 239. There were not enough clothes to go round and prisoners were only getting one change of socks and underwear in 10 days.

Meanwhile, the number of men and women locked up in police cells has risen by 50 a week since June - the majority in the South East. Overcrowding in London's police cells has meant some prisoners being remanded hundreds of miles away in Dorset, South Wales, Devon etc. Prisoners in Bristol and Plymouth have been subjected to 600 mile round trips to make their statutory court appearances in London.

Conditions in the cells are foul. Most of them are below ground. The only light comes from small panes of green semi-opaque glass at the top of white-tiled walls. Many prisoners only see daylight once a week when they go to court because there are no exercise facilities. There are no showers or proper washing facilities - just one washbasin in a corridor for 6-8 people. The only way to wash is to strip down at these basins.

At Albany Street, London, the conditions are said to be better than most. Alan, aged 50, who was remanded in the Scrubs for 5 months before doing the rounds of police cells, said it was 'home from home'. There is little light; lack of air and a constant stench of urine; one wooden block bed with a plastic mattress and another mattress on the floor for a second prisoner. There is a toilet in each cell.

Alan said Lambeth police cells are the worst. 20 men are held in cells 30ft by 40ft

for hours before being allocated smaller cells.

Medical reports cannot be done in police cells so mentally ill or sick prisoners are just left for weeks on end. One man had been held for 104 days and a woman for 56 and this in cells designed to hold people for only a few hours. One woman in three is imprisoned in police cells awaiting trial in the South East - only one third will receive a prison sentence.

A Howard League report published in August argues that the government's £1 billion prison building programme 'is unlikely to improve the physical conditions' for prisoners. It estimates that, at current rates of sentencing, 70,000 people will be in jail by 1995 - Home Office 'plans' are based on a prison population of 54-59,000.

Alexa Byrne

South Africa's biggest miners strike ends

'They have not won, we have not lost'

On Sunday 30 August the South African National Union of Mineworkers (SANUM) announced a return to work in South Africa's gold and coal mines. After three weeks of heroic defiance, the miners ended the greatest strike in South Africa's history. Although the original wage demand was not won, SANUM secured re-employment of sacked miners, improved holiday allowance and death benefits. SANUM came out of the strike with its organisation intact and its capacity to fight demonstrated to the whole world. As Cyril Ramaphosa, General Secretary, put it 'They have not won, we have not lost.'

ADAM BOWLES

It is clear that the mineowners seriously underestimated the strength of SANUM. The strike began on 9 August, South African Womens Day. It quickly spread beyond the targeted 45 pits to affect 52 gold mines and collieries. As the days passed other strategic metal plants and the Rand gold refinery were also disrupted. 352,000 black miners, including an estimated 80,000 non-union members went on strike. The mineowners had stockpiled a weeks supply of gold. They anticipated that they had the ability to crush the strike in a few days, and with it the burgeoning power of SANUM. As they immediately began to employ ruthless methods of beating, shooting and starving striking miners back to work they were matched with the disciplined organisation and tenacious courage of the strikers.

The mineowners employ 5000 private thugs who are armed with shot guns, rubber bullets and tear gas. They also have nearly 1000 guard dogs at their disposal. The first few days of the strike saw the unleashing of these brutal forces to keep the miners at work. At the Harmony gold mine 32,000 miners were forced down the pits at gun point. The miners held a sit-in strike underground. Gencor's hired army opened fire on strikers with rubber bullets. Six miners were wounded when Anglo-American mine security shot at strikers at the Vaal Reefs gold mine, 65 miles from Johannesburg. On 29 August two strikers were shot dead at the Kinross mine in Eastern Transvaal.

In the second week of the strike discussions were briefly held between Anglo-American and SANUM to prevent further bloodshed at the mining compounds. The talks were cut short when the SANUM negotiating team learnt of Anglo-American security forces opening fire on strikers who were attempting to leave the President Steyn mine. Later that week Anglo-American upped the stakes by issuing dismissal threats to thousands of workers at the Vaal Reefs gold mine and the Western Holdings. 6000 black miners stood firm and chose to collect their final pay checks and return to their communities. 3000 strikers sat-in down the Western Deep Levels mine owned by Anglo-American.

The SANUM strike hit at the heart of the apartheid economy. Gold and coal sales represent over 50 per cent of the entire foreign earnings of racist South Africa. Black miners work in the most exploitative and discriminatory sector of the economy. 1986 saw the greatest ever recorded profits for the gold mining sector, whilst black miners wages have consistently fallen below the rises necessary to keep pace with inflation. Shareholders of goldmines 'earned' R2,545 million in dividends - more than the earnings of the 485,000 black miners who received R2,484 million. A further R3,366 million went to the apartheid state in taxes. Crucially it is from this final figure that any wage increase would come as the tax bill would decrease accordingly.

A black miner is paid a little over £1,600 a year on average, compared to the £8,500 paid on average to a white miner. The mines in South Africa are the deepest and most dangerous in the world. Over 600 miners, nearly all black, are killed in the mines every year. The health and safety conditions are appalling. It was the criminal negligence of the mineowners at

Kinross which led to the murder of 177 miners in 1986. A death in the mines of a black miner will result in only two years wages as compensation.

The greatest profit possible is extracted from the miner with total disregard to the value of human life. The Migrant Workers Act enables the mineowners to impose a regime of single sex hostels where black miners are crammed up to 24 to a room,

the bowels of earth digging the country's most precious metal.

The cost to the mineowners of the strike far exceeded the cost of the 30% minimum pay increase demanded by SANUM. The Labour Monitoring Group has estimated that the strike was costing affected mining houses R17 million a day. More conservative estimates put the loss to Anglo-American alone at R55 million to its working profit. That figure is based on weeks lost production. Anglo-American had all its mines affected by the dispute. After three weeks of the strike the mineowners had lost an estimated £100 million of production. It is the British and American multinationals who control over 50% of the South African mining sector, who had the most to lose from SANUM's success.

SANUM proved it had the support of



Striking miners at Matla Colliery chant 'Viva ANC'

they are supplied with the most basic of meals, and then have board and lodging deducted from their wages at source. Whilst management deducts R140 from their wages for a bunk bed and a meagre meal allowance, the union has estimated its worth to be just R70. Jacob Makobane, striking miner, describes conditions underground 'When we go underground at 6am we are given four thin slices of bread and nothing else. We have to eat that bread during nine-and-a-half hour stay down on

over three quarters of the black miners. For three weeks SANUM held out against sackings, arrests and killings. More than 44,000 miners were sacked. More than 300 activists were arrested. At least nine strikers were murdered. In the face of all this the SANUM strike was a historic achievement. They have tested their organisation against the world's most ruthless employers, backed by the world's most ruthless state machine, and emerged undefeated.

MORE DEAD IN MINE DISASTER

Hours after the end of the miners strike, GENCOR was once again involved in a major disaster at one of its mines in the Orange Free State. A huge explosion at the St Helen's mine trapped 90 miners who are presumed dead. GENCOR are the owners of the Kinross mine where hundreds were murdered last year.

Chief Inspector Perry from Cannon Row has finally admitted he was wrong to authorise the arrest of Steven Kitson for unlawful street collection on the Non-Stop Picket in June. Not only was the arrest illegal, there was also no prospect that it would ever come to court because City AA has proved in court that collections are entirely legal. Nevertheless the dogged CI Perry (not an LSE graduate) insisted on keeping a large amount of money belonging to City AA for nearly three months on the grounds that it was evidence, while he tried to convince the Crown Prosecution Service to take the charges to court. Finally even the CPS lost its patience and Perry was forced to back down. Steve will be taking action for unlawful arrest.



DOUBLE EXILE FOR BRUTUS

On Monday 24 August City Group picketed the Home Office in protest against black ANC member, poet, academic and political exile, Dennis Brutus, being refused entry to Britain. Dennis Brutus wanted to visit his wife, also a South African exile, who is receiving hospital treatment. He was arrested, jailed and then exiled from South Africa for his opposition to apartheid. In Britain he was a founder of the hugely successful Stop the Seventy Tour campaign, being arrested in 1970. In the US he was active against apartheid tours. The US government tried to deport him in 1980. In 1983 he won his three year battle to remain. Now he has to fight the apartheid-loving British government for the right to visit his wife.

Terry O'Halloran



NUM leader Cyril Ramaphosa

SA press laws tighten

On Friday 28 August the apartheid regime promulgated new censorship laws to control 'Systematic or Repeated Publishing of Subversive Propaganda' - subversive propaganda is, of course, code for the truth. The regulations allow for a newspaper to be banned for periods of three months unless, in effect, they appoint a government-approved censor to vet material before publication. The regulations are retrospective to 11 June when the current state of emergency began.

A WEEKEND FOR SANUM

Over the weekend of 22/23 August City Group held a rally and public meeting in solidarity with SANUM.

Hundreds joined the rally on the Non-Stop Picket. City Group has sent £500 to the SANUM solidarity fund from collections during the rally and on other events.

On Sunday 23 August people packed into Conway Hall to discuss the significance of the SANUM strike.

Dave Douglass, Hatfield Main and Yorkshire Executive NUM, called for workers sanctions and angrily denounced the 'daily toll of deaths in South African coal, gold and Namibian mines [which] is the hidden subsidy that is paid by our black brothers for the cheap prices that are paid on the wharves, in the power stations and on the Stock Exchange'.

Dave Temple, WRP/Workers Press and Durham Mechanics Executive NUM, announced that his NUM lodge have affiliated to City Group.

Andy Higginbottom, RCG and Secretary of City Group, related the SANUM strike to the struggle of the working class in the South African revolution. 'For the working class the struggle to end apartheid is a means to the end of ending all class exploitation, and the holding of political power by the working class through which a socialist society will be built.' 'The new trade union movement in South Africa derives its strength from... its connections with the whole working class... from its connections with the liberation organisations and... from its adoption of a political programme which demands the destruction of the apartheid state', he said.

David Kitson, ex-political prisoner in South Africa, talked about the significance of the SANUM strike in relation to gold. 'At the root of the imperialist system of the world gold is still the basic money commodity... so when the South African miners go on strike this really strikes a nerve in the capitalist system.'

The discussion was somewhat diverted by some idiot speeches from the Spartacist League and the International Communist Party. Both opposed the campaign for sanctions. The Spartacist League repeated the Thatcher line that sanctions lead to job losses for black workers. When I asked how they expected to get a revolution without losing a day's pay, they replied that it was alright to lose pay during a strike but not jobs. This weird view was dealt with in the discussion.

Terry O'Halloran

Police ban crushed by Non-Stop Picket

At Bow Street Magistrates Court on 27 July the Metropolitan police lost the final round of their most recent campaign to ban the Non-Stop Picket from the pavement outside the South African Embassy. Chief Stipendiary Magistrate Hopkins found Tim Perry and David Markovitch not guilty of breaching Commissioner's Directions and obstructing the police when they defied the police ban. During the campaign to win back the right to picket, from 6 May to 2 July, Cannon Row police had made 151 arrests leading to 302 charges. All the charges had to be dropped.

The ban was ended in practice on 2 July by direct action, with the support of five MPs, which forced the police to back down and allow picketers to resume their usual place outside the Embassy gates. Despite this defeat the police continued with the charges but even the courts could not be convinced that the police had acted lawfully.

This is not the first debacle for Cannon Row Police. In 1984 a similar attempt to ban the pickets from the pavement ended in embarrassing defeat. The picketers who were arrested during the 1987 ban have now decided to sue the police for wrongful arrest and false imprisonment.

A major factor which has blighted the morale at Cannon Row has been criticism from their own HQ, Scotland Yard. Before his retirement Metropolitan Police Commissioner Kenneth Newman made a strong bid in government and press circles for more-resources for the hard-pressed Met to 'fight crime'. The squandering of resources arresting peaceful demonstrators at the behest of the South African Embassy, in full view of the public in

Trafalgar Square, could not be justified. A question from Tony Banks MP in the House of Commons about the cost of policing the picket since it began in April 1986, revealed that £10,000 was spent in just 8 weeks, from 6 May to 5 July this year.

None of us are in any doubt that this defeat and the low morale at Cannon Row will be only a temporary set-back. The police have already returned to their former practice of targeting young women and black people. Since 2 July eight people have been arrested on trumped up charges. Two people have been strip-searched, and three people have been assaulted. RCG member, Simone Dewhurst, who was savagely assaulted and strip-searched last year, is taking civil action against the police again following her arrest on 17 July. On this occasion she emerged from the police station with extensive serious bruising and a suspected fracture to her arm. The charges which allegedly gave rise to the arrest have now been dropped.

Carol Brickley

For three years the black people of South Africa have organised non stop resistance to the apartheid state. The struggle has mobilised every section of the black community in the fight to destroy apartheid: in rent strikes, in protests against fare rises, fighting against evictions, for non racist education, for freedom of assembly, organising consumer boycotts, demanding the release of political prisoners and detainees, armed actions against the security forces and sabotage of commercial targets, for trade union rights, improved work conditions and wages. Internationally all eyes are turned on this revolutionary struggle against a regime so central to imperialism's interests.

FREE MOSES MAYEKISO

MAYEKISO

A HISTORY OF RESISTANCE

Moses Mayekiso was arrested in June last year on returning to South Africa after a tour of Europe to build support for the Trades Union movement in South Africa.

He and four others from the Alexandra Action Committee were charged with High Treason and Sedition, charges which carry the death penalty. Moses Mayekiso is Chair of the Alexandra Township Action Committee, he's a socialist, an executive member of COSATU, and General Secretary of the new and dynamic metalworkers' union, NUMSA. Moses Mayekiso's life has always been dedicated to the cause of the workers' struggle, and to the struggle for a free and democratic South Africa.

Moses was born in the Transkei 38 years ago and became a migrant worker in the mines, thus experiencing life in the notorious single-sex hostels which house up to 17 men in one room. These are men who are forced to leave their families thousands of miles away in the bantustans.

In 1978 Moses joined the infant Metal and Allied Workers' Union (MAWU) at the Toyota car plant. He was in the forefront of making the union a force to be reckoned with and his union activities soon led to victimisation and his dismissal in 1979.

As Transvaal Secretary of MAWU, Moses continued organising the union and turning it into a driving force in the burgeoning trades union movement. His history of incarceration and torture suffered under police brutality is a harsh but inspiring one.

Following the mass strike by gold miners at Witwatersrand in 1984, Moses was arrested and detained at the notorious John Vorster Square Detention Centre for one month. Only massive pressure from outside and within South Africa gained his freedom and the charges against him were dropped.

Moses was arrested and charged twice more in 1985. Again he was freed and led MAWU into the formation of COSATU and this year became General Secretary of the newly-formed NUMSA (National Union of Metalworkers).

Moses has refused to be intimidated. He remained active in the trades union movement and in his community, Alexandra township, where he lived with his wife Kola, also an active trades unionist, and their seven children. All nine of them, plus Moses' brother, Mzwanele, lived together in one room. The regime has singled out Alexandra

for attack ever since the uprising of February 1986 when the security forces were kept out of the township for four days by 6,000 township residents after they had attacked a funeral. The state's revenge was bloody. Eighty Alexandra residents were massacred. Mayekiso was again detained and tortured for five days and was freed when workers at 50 factories struck for his release.

Moses' ill treatment has not been confined to South Africa. When he came to Britain last year he was detained for six hours and was stripsearched by the authorities at Heathrow.

Meanwhile, Alexandra was again attacked. More than 10 people were killed and Moses' house was fire bombed. He was arrested on his return to South Africa last June.

He is charged with four others. One is his younger brother, Mzwanele, aged 22. The others are Paul Tshabalala, Richard Mdakane, and Obed Kopeng Bapela. The charges against the Alexandra Five relate in the main to the activities of the Alex Action Committee. The charge states that they have tried 'to overthrow, usurp, or endanger the authority of the state with seditious intent, to defy or subvert the authority of the state.' They are charged with treason for running People's Courts; Street, Block and Area Committees, and forming an Action Committee. The state, which reckons it is democratic, describes these as organs of people's power.

City of London Anti-Apartheid Group had a special picket of South Africa House on 4 August, and plans another on 14 September when the trial opens.

The South African regime wants to hang Mayekiso to teach the township Action Committee and the trades unions a lesson. To do this they are prepared to hang five brave young (their ages range from 22 to 38) freedom fighters. We must not let them.

Moses Mayekiso remains defiant, despite the conditions in which he is being held. In fact, when he and his comrades appeared in court last month the papers described him as being 'bolshy'. Comrades, we too must be bolshy, defiant, and stand with Mayekiso.

The March for Mayekiso Committee meets at 8.00pm every Wednesday at Camden Town Hall. Please come. Please get involved
Viva Mayekiso!

Charine James

In 1985 as a result of intense struggle and organisation, the black working class in the townships began to create no-go areas for apartheid. Street and Area Committees were formed. Embryonic organs of working class power were coming into existence. The regime moved quickly to crush this challenge: tens of thousands were detained under emergency powers, organisations banned and forced underground, and draconian censorship was imposed. Open political organisation, difficult and dangerous under any circumstances in South Africa, became almost impossible for community based organisations. As the only working class organisations legally allowed to campaign and organise openly, the trade unions now took the centre of the political stage.

In the spring of 1987, the South African Harbours and Railway Workers Union (SAHRWU) struck against victimisation by the employers, SATS. This was no pure economic struggle, it was a strike against apartheid, and involved action by youth of the townships previously organised through the Street and Area committees. In reality it was a continuation of the battle waged by the township communities in 1985 and 1986, expressed now through a trade union struggle.

The victory of the SAHRWU strikers laid the basis for renewed struggle by the trade unions. Because the trade union struggle in South Africa goes far beyond narrow economic demands and represents a challenge to the apartheid state, so does this struggle have repercussions far beyond the boundaries of South Africa.

In 1986 Winnie Mandela described the South African miners as 'the golden key to freedom... the moment you stop digging their gold is the moment we will be free'. The South African NUM fought the biggest strike in South African history. The political nature of the union, its links with the community and with the liberation movement, as well as the massive significance of gold and other minerals to the economies of South Africa and the West, make this strike a landmark in the history of South African liberation. This is the context in which we must examine the role of international solidarity for the freedom struggle.

Moses Mayekiso and his comrades stand in the front rank of a new generation of socialist freedom fighters in South Africa. From the Transvaal stay-away in November 1984 when the youth, community organisations and trade unions came together in a massive and united defiance, the apartheid regime marked out Moses Mayekiso as a leader who had to be removed from the scene. The reason is simple. Mayekiso personifies the unity of the resistance in the townships with the trade union struggle. He is Chair of the Alexandra Township Action Committee and General Secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers (NUMSA), formerly MAWU. MAWU played a central role with the National Union of Mineworkers (SANUM) in founding COSATU. Mayekiso is an executive member of this, the

largest confederation in South Africa which plays a leading role in the trade union and anti-apartheid struggle.

Moses Mayekiso was detained in June 1986 after returning from a visit to Europe. He is now facing trial for treason with other members of the Alexandra Action Committee. It is clearly vital that international solidarity is built to save the lives of Moses Mayekiso and his comrades who face the death sentence. How is this to be done?

In Britain it was the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) which adopted the defence of Moses Mayekiso during a period in 1986 when many British trade unions and organisations were 'adopting' detainees - especially trade unionists - much to the chagrin of the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) which has always regarded any 'unofficial' anti-apartheid activity as muscling in on their territory. But, despite the fact that a 'Friends of Moses Mayekiso' campaign was formed, its activities have consisted only of collecting signatures, passing motions and raising funds. In reality the campaign is tightly controlled and in no way open to other political forces: very similar in structure to SATIS, the AAM's front for campaigning on political prisoners. Both the AAM and the SWP are determined to prevent a mass open and democratic campaign in Britain in support of political detainees and prisoners. Both organisations campaign on entirely sectarian lines.

Moses Mayekiso was detained on 28 June 1986. Within half an hour the news of his arrest was relayed to the platform at the AAM's national demonstration. No announcement was made. The opportunity to inform tens of thousands that an important leader had been detained was deliberately squandered. The Friends of Moses Mayekiso campaign was set up following this sabotage.

Moses Mayekiso has a different political standpoint to the South African Communist Party, which has a major and decisive influence on the British Anti-Apartheid Movement. It is for this reason that the AAM and its front organisation, SATIS, have refused to take up the defence of Mayekiso and his comrades. In the last month the AAM and the London office of SACTU have begun directly to sabotage support. For example the NALGO leadership has sent a circular to all its branches stating that SACTU opposes the Friends of Moses Mayekiso on the grounds that it is

an SWP front. On 20 August at a Hammersmith Trades Council meeting, SACTU refused to share a platform with Terry Bell from Friends of Moses Mayekiso (see report on this page). Hammersmith AA tried to remove the Trades Council's banner depicting Moses Mayekiso alongside Nelson Mandela and to tear up leaflets. Other arguments from the AAM include that a personality cult is made of Moses Mayekiso and that it endangers his life to publicise his trial, and so on. These are familiar arguments used by the AAM to prevent the popularisation of the anti-apartheid struggle in Britain over the last ten years.

In July City of London Anti-Apartheid Group decided to call a demonstration in September/October calling for the release of Moses Mayekiso and other detainees. The date was eventually fixed for 10 October after discussions with Friends of Moses Mayekiso and various trade unionists. 10 October was the first available date after the start of Mayekiso's trial on 14 September. A March for Moses Mayekiso Committee has been convened which is open to all who support and will work for the demonstration. The SWP refuses either to support or sponsor the City AA demonstration. Why is this?

First of all we must dismiss the SWP's public excuse that a demonstration on 10 October will interfere with the AAM's national demonstration on 24 October. Interestingly this is also one of the AAM's favourite excuses for doing nothing. Since when have two activities against apartheid in a month 'weakened opposition to the apartheid regime'? (see SWP letter printed on this page). City AA's experience is exactly the opposite; indeed its criticism of the AAM is that calling one national activity a year in the face of the continuing and escalating struggle in South Africa actually demobilises support. We find it interesting that the SWP which regularly criticises the liberation movements in South Africa and is currently attacking SANUM for its strategy in the miners' strike, feels incapable of calling out its own members twice in one month in solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle. No, the real reason the SWP will not support the March for Mayekiso is very different.

The real reason is the SWP's refusal to fight the opportunism of the AAM, even though the AAM has launched a full scale attack on the SWP. Significantly the SWP sent a copy of their letter opposing the March to the National AAM. Let's get this straight. The AAM are attacking the SWP, yet the SWP is attempting to forge an unholy alliance with them against City AA: the only force out on the streets campaigning against apartheid in a non-sectarian fashion. City AA alone supports all those fighting apartheid, all detainees and political prisoners, all liberation forces, irrespective of their political standpoint.

The SWP's politics have always been directed at the more privileged sections of the organised working class. They will not, therefore, fight the AAM in practice,

EUROCENTRIC FANTASY

'After the revolution in Britain, the BBC (perhaps renamed the Workers' Revolutionary Broadcasting Station) could carry out a very simple appeal to workers around the world: Take into your own hands former British capital. Black workers of South Africa! With your sweat and blood you created the gold mines. They are yours! Workers throughout the world - Take! Tony Cliff, leader of the SWP, 1975.

FREE ALL THE DETAINEES! FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS

On 13 December 1985 six young people were sentenced to death in South Africa for their alleged involvement in the death of a 'community councillor' in Sharpeville during a mass protest by thousands of local residents against a rent increase they could not afford to pay. The appeal against the death sentence against the Sharpeville Six will be heard in Bloemfontein, South Africa on 10 September.

There are currently 253 death row prisoners in South Africa 32 of these

prisoners have been condemned to death for politically related offences, including the Sharpeville Six. The South African Youth Congress has launched a campaign to save their lives. Albertina Sisulu, co-president of the UDF was the first to sign a letter protesting against the death sentences.

On Friday 14 August 13 ANC members received savage sentences in the Cape Town Supreme Court. Umkhonto we Sizwe commander in the Western Cape,

Lizo Bright Ngquangwana, was sentenced to life imprisonment. The other defendants received sentences ranging from 25 years to three years. Six of the defendants received sentences ranging from 25 years to three years. Six of the their relatives, in the court, declared 'We'll cry at home, but here we'll show no tears.'

Hundreds of activists are convicted to South African jails. The Detainees Parents Support Group says that since

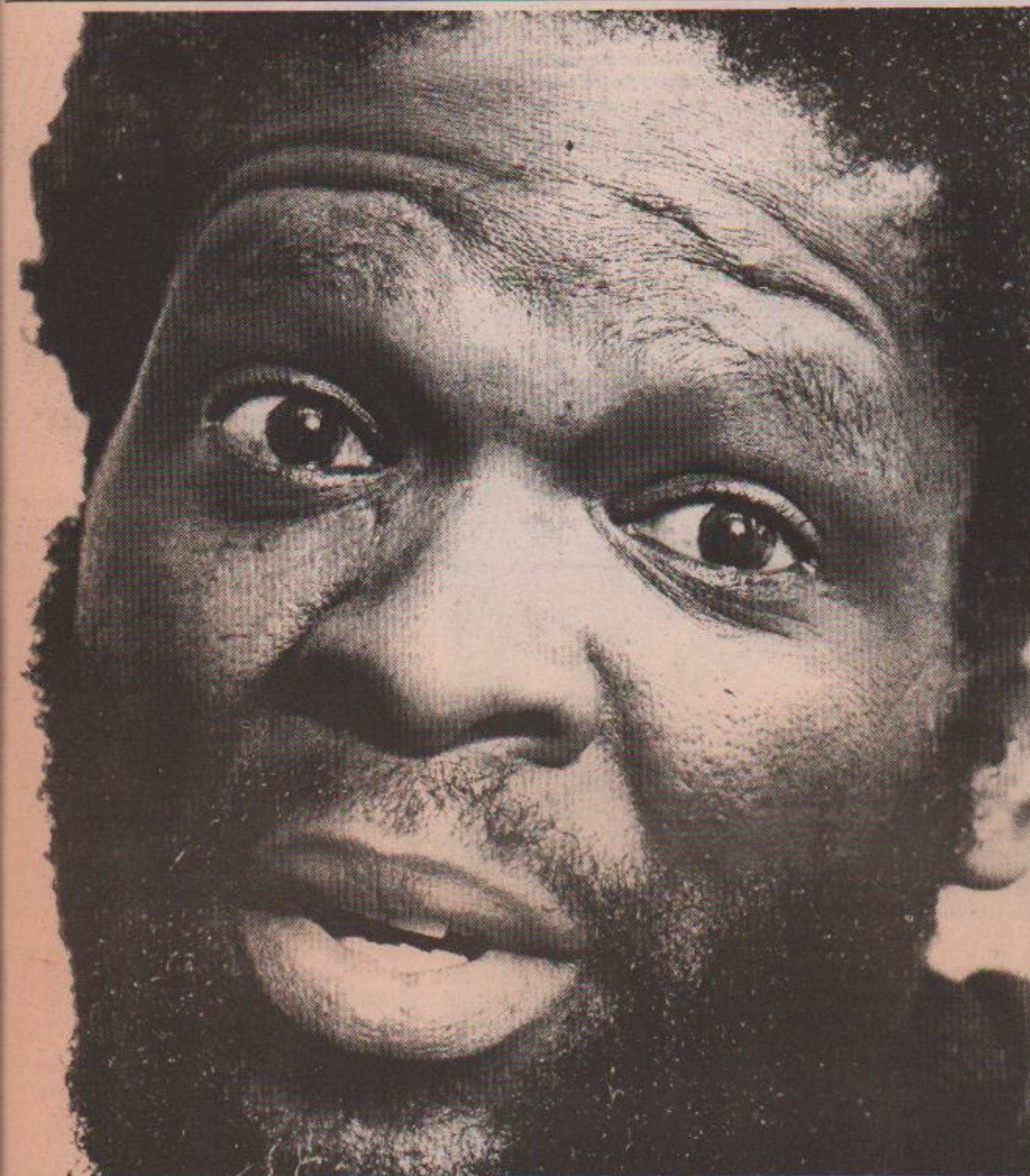
the State of Emergency was imposed on 12 June 1986, 30,000 people have been detained under Emergency regulations.

In August Botha announced that he is considering releasing Govan Mbeki, former Chair of the African National Congress. This could pave the way for other imprisoned black leaders such as Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada and Nelson Mandela, the recognised leader of the black people of South Africa, to be freed.

These leaders have spent 25 years or

more in prison for their part in the liberation struggle. Botha is desperate to give some credibility to his National Council. However, even major sellouts like Buthelezi are refusing to take part or negotiate with Botha unless Mandela and the other leaders are freed. Botha's highly qualified remarks about releasing Mbeki should be seen in this light.

Lorna Reid



RELEASE MOSES MAYEKISO

RELEASE ALL SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS AND DETAINEES

HANDS OFF COSATU

END BRITISH COLLABORATION WITH APARTHEID

★ Join the

MARCH for MOSES MAYEKISO

Saturday 10 October

ASSEMBLE CLERKENWELL GREEN ECI 12 NOON

(nearest tube Farringdon-Circle and Metropolitan)

MARCH TO RACIST SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY

TRAFALGAR SQUARE

Organised by the March for Mayekiso Committee

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

4 August

Dear comrades,

In response to your letter, notifying us of the formation of the March for Mayekiso committee and the demonstration called on October 10th, we believe that it is important to build the maximum support possible for the national Anti Apartheid demonstration on October 24th. The cause of Moses Mayekiso and his fellow accused, as well as all other detainees will be best served by taking part in that demonstration. To attempt to build a demonstration on October 10th, only two weeks before the main demonstration can only weaken the opposition to the apartheid regime. Hence we are not prepared either to sponsor the demonstration on October 10th, nor send delegates along to the March for Mayekiso committee.

We will of course continue to support the campaign by the Friends of Moses Mayekiso for his unconditional release and that of his four comrades.

fraternally

Sheila McGregor

on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party

RCG FIGHTING FOR MOSES MAYEKISO

LONDON *Street Rallies:* ● Saturday 5 September outside Sainsbury's Peckham Rye Lane SE15. 11am to 3pm (buses 12, 36, 36a, 36b, 171) ● Saturday 12 September outside Royal Agricultural Hall Upper Street N1. 11am to 3pm (nearest tube Highbury - Victoria line). *Public Meetings:* ● Video 'A Giant Has Arisen' and speakers. Tuesday 15 September 7.30pm Admission 50p/25p. Southwark Town Hall Peckham Road SE5 (buses 12, 36, 36a, 36b, 171). ● Tuesday 22 September 7.30pm Islington Central Library Fieldway Crescent N7. (nearest tube Highbury-Victoria line)

DUNDEE *Public Meeting:* Video and speaker. Tuesday 22 September 7.30pm Admission 50p/25p. Wellgate Library, Wellgate, Dundee.

MANCHESTER *Public Meeting:* Video and speakers. Tuesday 22 September 6.30pm Admission 50p/25p 8411 Centre, Moss Side, Manchester. Coaches to demonstration leave 7am, Mandela Building, All Saints, Oxford Road, Manchester £6 waged/£4 unwaged.

GLASGOW *Public meeting:* Video and speakers. Tuesday 6 October 7.30pm Admission 50p/25p. McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall St. Glasgow.

For details of events in Liverpool, Leeds, Bradford, Newcastle and Edinburgh write to FRFI BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX or phone 01-837 1688

AAM ATTACK MAYEKISO

On 20 August, comrades from City AA who support the March for Mayekiso Committee attended a public meeting called jointly by Hammersmith Trades Council and Hammersmith Anti-Apartheid Group. The meeting was titled 'Free Moses Mayekiso, Free all South African Political Prisoners'. The meeting became a forum for the AAM's sectarianism. AMANDA COLLINS reports.

From the start Hammersmith AA exposed their sectarianism, refusing to allow Terry Bell, co-ordinator of The Friends of Moses Mayekiso to speak even though he was invited. They were carrying out orders from the AAM, who also mobilised their supporters to try to make sure that democracy was off the agenda for the evening and sectarianism was on.

Before the meeting started we placed leaflets supporting Moses Mayekiso, 10 October demonstration and Solidarity with the South African miners, on all the chairs in the hall. The AAM told us that this literature was disgusting and an insult to the people of South Africa and preceded to screw them up. We, with the support of Hammersmith Trades Council, stopped them and continued distributing leaflets among people arriving.

The next dirty move from the AAM was to physically try to remove the Trades Council's 10ft banner that portrayed Comrade Mayekiso alongside Comrade Nelson Mandela. According to the AAM this was also disgusting because 'Mandela represents the people of South Africa and Mayekiso does not'. The feeling from

most of the people in the room was so strong that neither their arguments nor their bullies could remove the banner.

When the meeting started, the first to speak was Ken Martinville, Chair of Hammersmith and Fulham AA. He informed us of the achievements of Hammersmith and Fulham AA including their success in stopping South African performers at the Lyric Theatre.

The next speaker was Steve Blease from the BTR Hanger dispute. He spoke of how he and many of his comrades had been politicised through their struggle. They had donated £500 to the SARMCOL strikers fund, collected among his now unemployed fellow workers at BTR. He also spoke about the racism of British workers and expressed his horror at some of the people at the meeting for their sectarianism. 'They say they're against apartheid and all they seem to do is tear down banners... the official AAM refused to support the picket of BTR's AGM that we called'.

Peter Kenvin, a London AAM Committee member, suggested that Steve Blease had said that 'A British workers strike is more important than a South

African workers strike'. Of course he was shouted down.

Geoff Schreiner spoke on his part in the recent BTR strike in South Africa and about Moses Mayekiso, calling for unity and the greatest possible support for Moses and the other political prisoners. He then spoke on the great work that the 'Friends of Moses Mayekiso' had been doing.

Terry Bell was then invited to speak by the chair, a member of Hammersmith Trades Council. The representative from SACTU followed this by calling on everyone not to support the Friends of Moses Mayekiso. He also went on to say that Terry Bell had set up the campaign without consultation with the AAM or the ANC. In fact Terry Bell had written to them and received no reply.

Amongst many who spoke from the floor that evening against the lack of democracy and the sectarianism of the AAM was a black comrade from South Africa who stood up and addressed the SACTU representative. He said 'On behalf of the workers in South Africa I am disgusted with what you have just said in your speech'.

The meeting ended with Geoff Schreiner from NUMSA saying that he was 'deeply disturbed by the split which obviously has taken place... A split that we did not want to take place. All I can say at this point is that any initiative taken in support of Comrade Mayekiso is welcome.'

because the AAM totally controls the mobilisation of these forces on the issue of South Africa. The SWP will not even publish in its own newspaper an accurate report of the scurrilous attack by the AAM and SACTU on the Friends of Moses Mayekiso and the SWP at the Hammersmith Trades Council Meeting. The report in *Socialist Worker* merely mentions 'impassioned contributions from the floor'. The SWP know that among the privileged layers of the working class they are not capable of defeating the AAM in an open public fight. The attack on City AA is designed to prevent their own isolation from these forces.

City AA believes that the forces which will lead the anti-apartheid, anti-racist solidarity movement in Britain will not come from this privileged layer. They will come from the more oppressed sections of the working class, black people, the unemployed, the youth. City AA knows from its own experience that a broad-based campaign in support of Moses Mayekiso and other detainees can be built now in Britain with these forces at its core. In practice if the SWP participated in such a campaign, their whole political perspective would be tested out in the open. Their members would realise that the SWP has to break its ties with the old movement of privileged workers, to build a new movement against apartheid. So, they would rather limit solidarity for Moses Mayekiso and other detainees to what can be made acceptable

to the AAM.

The RCG supports the March for Mayekiso Committee and calls on SWP members and AAM activists to break with the sectarianism of their leaderships, to vote with their feet and march to the South African Embassy on 10 October.

THE VOICE OF EXPERIENCE!

'The strategy of the NUM general secretary Cyril Ramaphosa, is to send the miners home... this strategy has certain major drawbacks... it rules out the possibility of the mass of miners being actively involved in the strike... the "go home" appeal will cut off union activists from the mass of the membership...' *Socialist Worker* 15 August 1987.

This is taken from an article called 'The need for the right strategy'. It is typical of the patronising arrogance of the Trotskyist left, which itself has had no experience of leading workers in struggle. And this comes from an organisation which refuses to call its membership out twice in a month to support those fighting for freedom in South Africa, but calls on SANUM to put its members in a situation where they can easily be butchered and shot by the security forces and the mine owners' armed thugs.

Phoney peace

The British Home Office has used the Indo-Sri Lanka agreement to suggest that it is now safe for Tamil refugees to be returned to Sri Lanka. Viraj Mendis is coming under similar pressure to leave the sanctuary in Manchester. As Viraj himself put it to Radio Telefis Eireanne, the Agreement, like the Anglo Irish accord, will not work because it excluded the revolutionaries. Below Trevor Rayne examines the basis for the Agreement, explains why it cannot work, and destroys the carefully presented illusion that peaceful conditions now prevail on the island.

I want to make it absolutely clear that India is now responsible for every Eelam Tamil. We will give them this opportunity. However, I am under no illusion that this pact will find a lasting solution to the problems of Eelam Tamils. It will not be long before the monster of Sinhalese racist chauvinism swallows up this pact' Vellupillai Prabhakaran, Supreme Military Commander Tamil Tigers

BEHIND THE CEREMONIES

Within three weeks of the accord being signed both signatories narrowly escaped assassination attempts that would have wrecked the Agreement. Nevertheless, the world's press and television have been treated to a series of ceremonies.

Rajiv Gandhi's fleeting trip to Colombo took place amidst three days of rioting in 17 cities that left some 74 people dead, most of them killed by police firing on crowds. MPs' homes were set ablaze, one was murdered, several were made police superintendents under emergency rules, others favouring the accord went into hiding. Three Indian frigates anchored off Colombo in a gesture of support for Jayewardene's government, while the Sri Lankan army was flown south from Jaffna to barricade Colombo from converging mobs marching from the countryside.

Two members of the main opposition Freedom Party were arrested for inciting violence as government property was burned down and *The Guardian* reported Sinhalese soldiers chatting with young voters.

On 30 July, having signed the Agreement, Gandhi ducked from what could have been a lethal blow to the skull from a Sri Lankan sailor wielding a rifle-butt as he inspected a farewell guard of honour. The sailor's action coincided with the decisions by Prime Minister Premadasa, the second most powerful political figure in the government, and National Security Minister Athulathmudali in charge of the state armed forces, to boycott the signing ceremony. At the very time when Colombo had been turned into a battlefield 17 people were killed when a bomb exploded on 28 July in the northern Tamil village of Poornern. On 4 August as Prabhakaran announced the halting of the Tigers' agreement to surrender arms, two EROS members were killed by Sri Lankan forces. The Indian army said the EROS claims were 'baseless and untrue', but shops and workplaces shut across the Tamil areas in protest at the killings.

By the 18 August final delivery of weapons to the Indian army it was clear that the Tigers had only disarmed in the public eye. A trained eye discerned that the bulk of those weapons surrendered were either home made, and therefore replaceable, or captured from the Sri Lankan army.

THE AGREEMENT - INDIA'S STRATEGIC DOMINANCE

India is the most powerful nation in the Indian Ocean. Either I must go to some bigger power, which I do not want to do, or I must accept that fact.' President Jayewardene, *New York Times*. Jayewardene understood that even with KMS and other

economic growth has almost halved since 1983, and tourism has fallen by the same proportion over the same period. Sri Lankan tea, rubber and coconut prices are now at their lowest levels since 1945. The foreign debt has multiplied five fold since 1978 to over \$3.5 billion. Jayewardene and Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel understood that the war effort could not safely be sustained. The international banks and aid consortium saw little return for their money. Jayewardene and Gandhi had a coincidence of interests: India would

homes and livelihood. They can't go out to sea and fish. Then where is the guarantee of their protection?' In particular, Prabhakaran remarked that it was 'a strange thing' that the Indian Army had gone to the areas where Tamils were least vulnerable, and avoided places where Tamils were in greatest danger. He noted that the Home Guard Sinhalese colonists were still operating. In this context they would not fully surrender their arms.' In a situation where there is no security it is better to fight and die than die on a large scale after laying

was shot dead and ten reported injured when Home Guards fired into a 'jubilant crowd' celebrating the Agreement in Trincomalee. Shortly after the signing of the Agreement the Tamil population were driven from their homes by Home Guard threats in the Muttur district, near Trincomalee. Over 11-13 August Sri Lankan government authorities brought in Sinhalese from other areas to occupy the vacated homes.

In the north, the Tigers' laying down of arms means there is no effective policing. It is apparent that the coalition formed by TELO, PLOTE and EPRLF, the Eelam National Democratic Front, is being given encouragement by India. It operates an armed wing, Tristar. On 30 July the Hindu Nahlur temple festival was attacked by gangs of youths who robbed the celebrants. Armed robberies have taken place across the north. On 9 August a prominent Tiger activist in the Trincomalee area, Selvam, was killed by EPRLF gunmen. In Mannar in the north west on the same day 25 Tigers were kidnapped, including a relative of a leading commander, Asoken. Thus far 9 of their bodies have been recovered: Tristar is suspected. Tristar is working with the Indian Army to locate Tiger arms caches. Also in Mannar on 22 August 60 TELO, PLOTE and EPRLF forcefully occupied and ransacked the Tigers' offices. On 26 August 3 Tiger supporters were shot dead by armed cadres of PLOTE. In the most telling incident yet, also on 26 August in Mannar, armed TELO members inspecting private vehicles looking for Tiger supporters fled when Indian forces approached, except for one who stayed, was inspected and allowed to go free with his G3 rifle. In response to the lawlessness some Tamils have called upon the Tigers to take up arms again.

VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTH

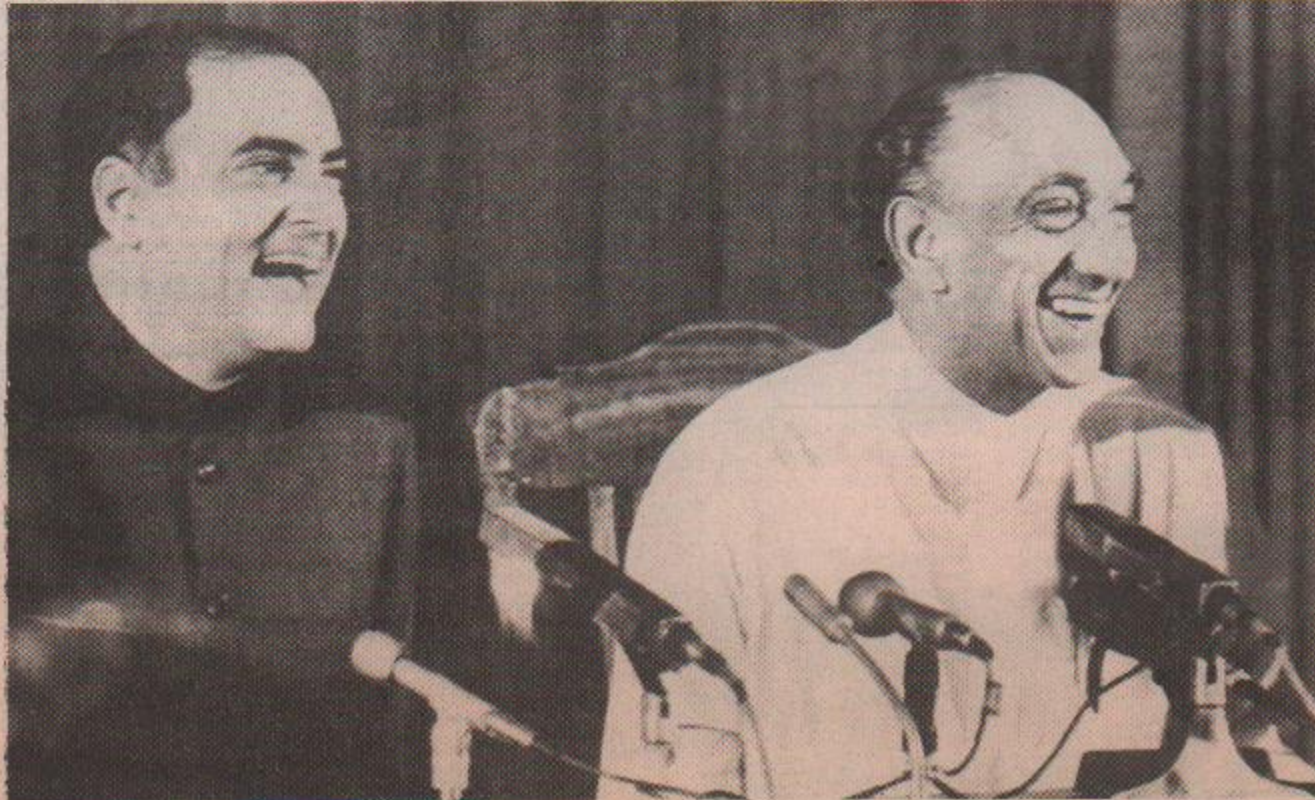
Peace has neither broken out in the north nor the south of the island. Sinhalese chauvinism was mobilised to defeat the Tamil liberation struggle. Jayewardene appears to Sinhalese society to have made a concession to it by yielding control of the north and east to India. No sooner had Jayewardene announced the Agreement than his ethnic origins were questioned by the opposition: he is called a traitor.

The government blames the violence in the south on the JVP, thereby making it appear to be a marginal and controllable problem. However, the problem facing the Sri Lankan government and ruling class runs far deeper and is far more intractable than the JVP. Sinhalese bourgeois political careers have traditionally been made by stoking the flames of Sinhalese chauvinism: hence the repeated pogroms (1956, 1958, 1961, 1974, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1983).

More serious than this is the tacit acceptance of subordination to the Indian ruling class and military made by Jayewardene on behalf of the Sri Lankan elite and military: a subordination far from acceptable to all. Premadasa and Athulathmudali represent interests tied to US imperialism, thus their refusal to meet Gandhi, who has temporarily stymied US plans for the island. They and sections of the military understand that they can only escape subordination to India if they play the role of accomplice to US plans. In this light it is no surprise that the Sri Lankan government should suggest that 'a foreign power' was behind the 18 August attack on Jayewardene and his cabinet.

The Agreement cannot hold the fissures that run through Sri Lanka together. Indeed, it is threatening to explode them. A military intervention is the likeliest response to continued violence and unrest in the south. In the north a long process of attrition is setting in aimed at destroying the Tigers, and enabling the Sri Lankan army to resume the positions they were driven out of. Prabhakaran and the over 600 Tamil Tiger martyrs he spoke for will not accept this; 'I have no doubt in my mind that the sovereign state of Eelam is the only solution to problems facing the Tamil people. I want to make it abundantly clear that I will continue to struggle towards the goals of Tamil Eelam'.

Long live the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam



Above Rajiv Gandhi of India and Jayewardene of Sri Lanka



Vellupillai Prabhakaran

foreign help he did not have the means available to beat the risen Tamil people. This was driven home to him when the May-June Sri Lankan offensive was brought to a standstill by the ferocity of the Tigers' resistance, and the Indian violation of Sri Lankan airspace.

The Indian government has never supported the Tamil struggle for national self determination. With over 50 million Tamils living in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, the struggle of 3 million Tamils for Tamil Eelam is a potential source of major revolutionary developments within India itself. They have every interest in arresting the revolutionary process in Sri Lanka, but are willing to use it to their own ends. They recognise that imperialist plans for Sri Lanka would diminish their own bargaining power in the region and be a source for destabilisation. Pakistan and Israel were operating in alliance with the Sri Lankan military as instruments of imperialism's strategic interests (see FRFI 67), thereby threatening India from the north west and the south. For the Sinhalese bourgeoisie the Tamil struggle is also threatening. Apart from the example it sets the most oppressed sections of Sinhalese society, the fact that it could not be beaten was damaging the legitimacy of the Sri Lankan government, failing to fulfill the ambitions of Sinhalese chauvinism. The military budget has grown fifteen fold in a decade, starving public works of finance. The infrastructure is collapsing,

suppress the Tamil struggle in exchange for a pliant Sri Lankan foreign policy.

THE AGREEMENT

The Agreement includes a critical addition which makes provisions for the eastern part of Trincomalee to be developed jointly by Sri Lanka and India and not used by any power without India's permission. It has been surveyed by the US and Britain for a military and communications base. It also stipulates the removal of any foreign forces considered hostile to India, meaning Pakistan and Israel, and any broadcasting facilities that may be opposed by India. The Agreement falls far short of the Tigers' demand for statehood, retaining Sri Lankan and hence Sinhalese jurisdiction over the whole island. Nine provincial administrations are to be formed, including a Northern and Eastern province, to be run as a single unit only if sanctioned by a referendum to be held before the end of 1988. Such a referendum in the East may be postponed at the Sri Lankan President's discretion. Until that time an interim administration will operate. India guarantees that its navy will 'cooperate with the Sri Lankan Navy in preventing Tamil militant activities from affecting Sri Lanka.'

THE TIGERS' OBJECTIONS

The Tigers were neither consulted nor were they signatories to the Agreement. Referring to the Tamil Eelam homeland Prabhakaran declared 'It is not a question of the merger of the North and East. It is our homeland. There is no question of any negotiation on this.' He pointed out that there were some 200 Sri Lankan army camps in Tamil areas. These 'legitimised the Sinhala settlements', by which means the Sri Lankan government had reduced the Tamil population to a 40 per cent minority in its own homeland to the east. There was no question of guaranteeing the protection of the Tamil people until these camps were removed. The Agreement does not provide for the removal of these camps; 'Our people cannot return to their

down arms.' Pointedly, Prabhakaran added that 'Dangers arise for us from the other armed organisations and from the Sri Lankan army.'

INDIA'S DANGEROUS DILEMMA

The character of the Indian troop deployment is no accident; neither is the intimidation of the Tigers by rival groups and nor are the activities of the Home Guard in the east. For as long as Indian forces remain in Sri Lanka they will fuel Sinhalese chauvinism, which in turn jeopardises the Sri Lankan government and the Agreement. However, should Indian forces leave while the Tigers remain the major political force among the Tamil people the revolutionary momentum of the national liberation struggle will once more gather pace. Again this would have the effect of further destabilising the south. Thus, the Tigers have to be neutralised or replaced in Tamil society, swiftly, if a dangerous situation is not to explode.

With Indian government encouragement the parliamentary Tamil United Liberation Front and the small Tamil groups TELO, PLOTE and EPRLF all gave their backing to the Agreement. India is now trying to construct a coalition of collaborators to challenge the Tigers' position in Tamil society. This challenge includes attacks upon the Tigers themselves. Were India to follow out the terms to the Agreement and try to create conditions in the east favourable for the return of the refugees who have been driven from their villages (52 villages have been destroyed in this region) then the referendum would produce a united Tamil province. This would undoubtedly be seen as a Tiger victory, and an important step on the way to Tamil Eelam.

CONTINUING VIOLENCE IN THE NORTH AND EAST

India's strategy is already endangering Tamil lives. In the east, in violation of the Agreement, the Home Guard have not been disbanded. On 7 August one person

Peace moves in Central America

On the chess board of Central America diplomacy the Sandinistas are outplaying the US administration: Reagan keeps issuing assurances that he will not sacrifice his favourite pawn - the Contras.

In a ploy designed to win Congressional support for increased aid for the Contras, Reagan and the Democratic Speaker of the House of Representatives put forward a plan for Nicaragua on 4 August. Restricted to Nicaragua it amounted to a demand for capitulation to US policy. Reagan intended the Sandinistas to reject the plan; Congressional doubters would be drawn to his side, and the way paved to greater aid to the Contras.

Within three days the heads of government of five Central American countries, Costa Rica, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, replied with their own proposal. If he did not wish to appear contemptuous and isolated Reagan had to appear to accept it. By forming an agreement with four US clients the Sandinistas have limited US manoeuvrability in the region.

The Central American plan calls for a ceasefire by 7 November and an end to all outside support for insurgent groups in the area. It also requires the dismantling of support bases for such groups in other countries. The plan has a 90 day deadline. Nicaragua's President Ortega hailed it as a 'historic step'. The US found its forward piece threatened.

The Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the FMLN in El Salvador have mass support, while the Contras and the Duarte regime have little support outside of Washington. The FMLN can certainly sustain themselves without outside support. They have no bases outside of El Salvador.

On the face of it, it is surprising that Duarte should risk a popular demonstration of support for the FMLN. However, after \$3 billion worth of US aid and killing 6,500 people the government are no nearer victory; the FMLN are expanding their operations across the country. Duarte has reason to fear fascists in the military. The FMLN greeted the plan and called for talks with Duarte.

Reagan's fascination with the Contras has provoked his allies into an agreement with the Sandinistas. Reagan's war has not only stirred popular opposition, it has generated jealousy among local elites who find their interests subordinated to the Contras. It has demoted their strategic significance as that of the Contras has been promoted, and it has frightened the Central American ruling class with the prospects of what might happen should Reagan invade. He will have to be more generous if he is to win back their favours.

In a counter-move to recoup their situation Reagan and the Contras have asked Congress for increased military and 'humanitarian' aid, with the military aid to be held in abeyance until they judge how the Central American plan is proceeding. The Contras understand that their position is never lost while their Commander-in-Chief occupies the White House.

Trevor Rayne

BRAZIL

'They are killing us. The rebellion is over but the police are shooting in all directions,' prisoner Arquimedes Martinez shouting from the roof of Sao Paulo's (Brazil) maximum security jail after the most violent uprising in the prison's history.

On 29 July heavily armed riot police stormed the prison two hours after prisoners had taken over. Prisoners in the workshops took 48 prison officers hostage including the prison doctor. They set free men in other blocks and burned all the prison records.

Official reports say that at least 27 prisoners and two guards were killed. Notes thrown from the jail windows state that nearly 100 prisoners have died. 'There are many shot dead. It is a river of blood here.'

Alexa Byrne

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT on the Philippines coup

The 28 August coup attempt in the Philippines was the fifth in Aquino's 18 months as President. It came after strikes and demonstrations forced her to back down on an 18% rise in petrol costs. Over 55 soldiers were killed before the coup attempt was put down. Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! asked Luis Jalandoni, international representative of the Philippines' National Democratic Front, for his view of the latest troop rebellion.

'Well, the latest coup attempt, which is the most serious since Aquino took over, manifests the growing contradiction within the various elite factions in Philippine society. So, there is this faction of the militarists in the armed forces, which has a long record of human rights violations against the people, who wanted to take over power, and there was the Cory Aquino government, which has been challenged, which, over the last 18 months, especially the last 8 months, has also accumulated a record of suppression and oppression of the workers and peasants. It has also carried out policies of the International Monetary Fund in favour of the

foreign multinationals at the expense of the workers and peasants. So, it was a fight between two elite groups in Philippine society, and, therefore, was not done in the interests of the people.

'There are competing elite factions in the ruling class, and the Aquino government has laid itself bare to such an attack. There is growing corruption in the government with the electoral frauds that were committed in the last elections; the leniency towards the militarists who had plotted coups before, as well as towards those who were guilty of numerous human rights violations. Besides these, the Aquino government have been carrying out policies that aggravate the economic crisis. Thus the

Aquino government laid itself open to such an attack.

'Now one immediate consequence is that the government is likely to declare a State of Emergency on the basis of such a coup attempt. This State of Emergency has already been proposed by the Defence Minister Rafael Sieto... This would be used mainly against the left which has started to mount big demonstrations against Aquino's government. So, the coup attempt could be used as a justification for more repressive measures which would include the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, allowing the military and police to make arrests without any court order. This would be very much along the US design to have tougher measures against the left, which it considers to be the strategic threat to its huge military and economic interests in the Philippines.'

The next issue of FRFI will include a full length interview with Luis Jalandoni on the Philippines' revolution.

Haitian general strike

Events over the last month show that the people of Haiti who vanquished dictator Jean-Claude 'Baby-Doc' Duvalier in February 1986 are not now prepared to be fobbed off by the pro-US imperialist National Government Council (CNG).

Supporters of Duvalier including former members of his army, the Tonton-Macoutes, are still involved in violent activities such as the massacre of 200 peasants demonstrating for land reform in the town of Jean Rabel.

Continuous strikes, stay-aways, boycotts and demonstrations show that all sections of the working-class and peasantry, including the church, are united in their opposition to General Henri Namphy's CNG and its blatant attempts to violate and circumvent the independently drawn-up constitution.

The Haitian Communist Party (PUCH) is supporting the independent constitution as a basis for campaigning against US interference. The extreme anti-Communism of Duvalier and of the US has backfired to create strong Communist sympathy among the Haitian people, especially on the Neighbourhood Committees which were originally formed to organise against Duvalier and which have gone from strength to strength since his overthrow.

Nicola Jameson



POPPER/PHOTO

Strikes frighten Korean regime

'We worry about the so-called 'British disease'. We could never allow something like their coal miners' strike' Senior official, south Korean Economic Planning Board.

During the last two months, south Korea has been struck by a powerful wave of industrial action, affecting 1,800 companies and causing a loss of £600m in production and exports. Strikes have hit every sector, including such key areas as mining, automobiles, shipbuilding and electronics. Many of south Korea's massive corporations, such as car giants Daewoo, Hyundai and Kia have been halted.

The workers are demanding higher wages, better conditions and, most importantly, the right to form democratic unions. In 1986, average hourly earnings for south Korean workers were US\$2.26 for men and \$1.07 for women. Wage rises have lagged far behind productivity. While profits for 250 top companies surged 69% for the first half of 1987, the annual spring pay rises averaged just 8%.

South Korea has the longest working day in the world, an average of 10-12 hours, even as much as 18 with compulsory overtime. In dirty, noisy and dangerous conditions the exhausted workers suffer many industrial accidents - 1,660 were killed and 21,000 disabled last year.

All strikes and demonstrations were banned from 1961 until 1981. Unions are still bound by a tangle of labour laws which make effective action impossible. They can only organise in individual firms over a certain size, not nationwide, and leaders are vetted when they register with the 'government'. As a result, most of the official unions are depoliticised and led by company stooges. Workers are deman-

ding the right to freely elect union officials and in some cases have demanded the resignation of the present officials as part of a settlement. At Daewoo Shipyard workers rejected a 5% pay rise agreed by tame union leaders and management, and won a rise of 23% after a few days of militant action.

The strikes have been made possible by the 'liberalisation' wrung from the regime by widespread student-led demonstrations in June. Consequently, although every one of the present strikes is technically illegal, the government has not thus far moved to crush them as it normally would. However, as the strike movement has developed sections of the students have joined in the protests. On 28 August government troops swooped blocking rallies, rounding up activists and claiming that 'impure leftist elements' were to blame for the disputes. Culture and information minister Lee Wong Hee said August's military manoeuvres were intended to 'safeguard the nation from growing danger within and without.'

Jonathan Cohen

French fascism on the march

The Front National, the French Fascist Party led by the notorious torturer of Algerians, Jean-Marie Le Pen is rapidly becoming part of mainstream political life in France. At the French General Election the FN polled 10% of the vote, gaining 34 MPs. Almost 3 million people voted for a programme based on the repatriation of all black immigrants, the refusal of work permits to black people, the reintroduction of the death penalty, and support for the apartheid regime in South Africa.

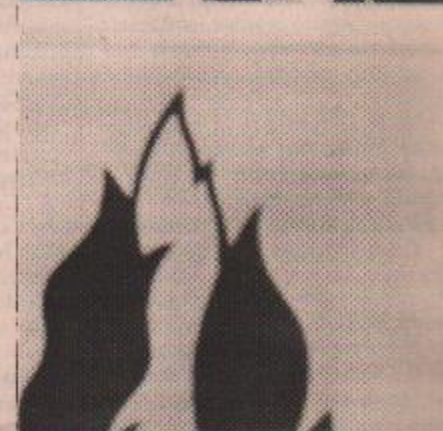
Le Pen's rise continues, exploiting high unemployment and widespread racism in the working class, putting out professional propaganda. In the forthcoming Presidential elections the FN may hold the balance of power in the coalition of the right. Despite attempts by Jacques Chirac the Prime Minister and his colleagues on the right to be seen as condemning the FN's programme, many on the right seem all too eager to make a back door deal with the Fascists. The FN is in a position to make demands on the right wing parties.

The FN would not exist were it not for a racist consensus among the 'respectable' right. Nine French MPs from both the FN and the majority RPR party have staged a tour of South Africa at the invitation of the Botha government. They thoroughly approve of the regime, making statements like 'Apartheid was abolished in 1984' and that they can find no evidence of racial discrimination in South Africa. Thatcher's former speech writer, adviser and contact with the Contras, Sir Alfred Sherman has invited Le Pen to address a fringe meeting at this autumn's Tory Conference.

The last five years has seen a shift to the right of dramatic proportions, not limited to the FN's voters. Racism is becoming acceptable in France. Racist attacks and murders are commonplace. Two Arabs were murdered recently by a French racist for 'making too much noise'. A black student was killed in the recent student protests by the notorious CRS paramilitary police. These thugs have consistently directed their violence against the black community.

The left in France has allowed Le Pen to perpetuate an atmosphere of racism without serious challenge. Neither the PCF (Parti Communiste Français) nor the Socialist Party (PS) have attempted to mobilise in defence of black people under attack from the FN and the Government. The anti-racist organisations controlled by the PCF and the PS are moribund and have failed to draw in black communities.

The real action has come from SOS



Racisme and similar campaigning groups, which represent a loose coalition of students and immigrant youth. The campaign 'Touche pas à mon Pote!' ('Hands off my mate!') has attracted immense support among the young, with a 400,000 strong demonstration taking place in Paris this year. SOS Racisme has also taken up issues such as apartheid in South Africa, organising boycotts and protests. In order to defend the immigrant population from this attack abetted by the state, anti-racists will have to make further links with the black community in France to build a movement capable of fighting racism whether it comes from the state or from Fascists like Le Pen.

Ann Burrows

COUNTER-REVOLUTION DEFEATED

After the July days, the masses had fallen back in confusion. Would the forces of reaction seize the opportunity to crush them? In earlier proletarian revolutions – France 1848, 1871 and Russia 1905 – the bourgeoisie was able to wreak a terrible revenge, killing thousands of workers out of hand. But in Russia 1917 the counter-revolution was too weak to take advantage of this its most favourable moment.

PATRICK NEWMAN



Lenin disguised, August 1917.

Only the First Machine Gun and two other regiments were disarmed, disbanded and expelled from Petrograd. The mass of the soldiers showed a passive hostility to the Bolsheviks, but could not be incited to counter-revolutionary violence. Very few armed workers were disarmed by force and hardly any gave up their weapons voluntarily. In the factories where the Bolsheviks were weak, there were some cases of Bolsheviks being hounded out of work; but where the Party had been strong, the workers were somewhat demoralised but not defeated.

The countryside followed the town, but at a sluggish pace. Tsereteli, Menshevik Minister of the Interior ordered the arrest of peasants seizing land, and, in the few cases where the authorities were strong enough, land committees were dissolved.

Even Lenin was surprised at the feebleness of the reaction – his first response to the setback was: 'They are getting ready to shoot us all.' In fact only one Bolshevik was killed, while selling papers. Several Bolshevik Party local offices in Petrograd were raided. The Party's Military organisation was, however, quite seriously affected, with some of its best leaders jailed, and its paper, *Soldiers Truth*, banned.

Lenin and Zinoviev went into hiding, but other leading Bolsheviks remained in the open. Of the top Bolshevik leadership, only Kamenev was arrested immediately, Lunacharsky and Trotsky on 22 July; of the total membership, no more than 400 (out of a Petrograd membership of 32,000) were arrested. Even in prison the regime was relatively lenient, not for humanitarian reasons, but as a prison warden explained: 'Here you are today, in prison, but tomorrow, perhaps, you will be ministers.'

All these instances of repression were carried out sporadically and usually on local, rather than governmental initiative. Why was the reaction unable to seize the opportunity?

The major reason was the continuing opposition to the war. If the Russian army had been successful at this point, a wave of patriotism might have swept the revolution away. But on 7 July it became known that the offensive had failed dismally. The high command of the south-western front, where 56,000 men had been killed in the preceding two weeks, admitted that: 'The desire to attack has dissipated quickly. The majority of the units are in a state of increasing demoralisation.'

In the cities the conditions were steadily worsening. By mid July the theoretically available rations per person were 600gm of bread per day, 5 eggs and 450gm of meat per week.

Here was a stalemate – the masses not yet strong enough to overthrow the government; the bourgeoisie unable to inflict a decisive defeat on the revolution.

At first the crisis expressed itself in a rapid series of governmental changes, then the counter-revolution openly mobilised for a *coup d'état*.

THE SECOND COALITION

On 7 July the Popular Socialist Kerensky became Prime Minister and, with the help of the Menshevik, Tsereteli, aimed to form a government. Over the next two months, there was a frequent shuffling of the cards in the ministerial pack, while the real power of the bourgeois party, the Kadets, grew enormously.

In the first Coalition, the socialists were in a minority (6/16), though masters of the situation; in the second Coalition, formed 25 July, they were in a majority (10/17), but as shadows of the Kadets. The Menshevik-SRs tried to present this as the strengthening of the 'democracy', their strategy being concisely expressed by a Popular Socialist Minister thus: 'The more forces we attract from the Right, the fewer will remain of those who wish to attack the government.'

Exactly the opposite was happening – real concessions were made to the Right, meaningless ones to the Left. Of the former, the most significant measure was the restoration of the death penalty, on 12 July.

THE BOLSHEVIKS RE-GROUP

How did the Bolsheviks assess the situation? Lenin argued that the dual power regime, when power could have been peacefully transferred to the Soviet, was over. Power had now passed into the hands of the counter-revolution, with the collaboration of the SRs and Mensheviks. The slogan 'All Power to the Soviets' had to be discarded, lest it encourage the illusion that power could be transferred peacefully; and the key task now was the organisation of the insurrection ('On Slogans' CW 25 p 185).

His position was not immediately accepted by the Party. At the first meeting after the July days, the Central Committee of 13-14 July, Lenin's theses were rejected 10-5, with Molotov his only staunch supporter.

His supporters campaigned vigorously at the Sixth Congress (26 July-3 August), where his theses were presented by Stalin, despite some reservations, and a compromise motion close to Lenin's position was adopted.

The Party now had firm roots among the masses. The Party's organiser, Sverdlov, reported that the Party had grown from 80,000 members in April to 200,000, 45% of them in Petrograd and Moscow. By contrast, the Mensheviks had only 8,000 members.

The Bolsheviks' growing strength spurred on the counter-revolutionaries' efforts at mobilisation. The usual counter-revolutionary strategy, setting peasants from the provinces against the workers of the industrial cities, would not work in Russia, for two reasons.

The peasant land war continued unabated; and the Provisional Government had utterly antagonised the

oppressed nationalities. On 18 July it had dissolved the Finnish parliament for approving a law which proposed to enact a limited degree of self-determination; and it was equally hostile to the Ukraine's similarly modest claims for national recognition.

But the bourgeoisie had no other choice – the 'socialists' were clearly incapable of controlling the masses and pursuing the war effectively: an attempt had to be made to crush all kinds of opposition, the 'socialists' included.

conspiracy against the workers and soldiers, disguised in socialist phraseology.'

And what a conspiracy! Of the 2414 delegates the 446 Soviet representatives (mainly Mensheviks and SRs) were outnumbered by 488 from the 4 Tsarist Dumas (parliaments), elected on the most reactionary franchise in Europe. The Bolsheviks were forbidden by the Mensheviks – SRs from making a statement at the conference and did not attend. They made their point in the

Supreme Commander of the South Western front on 7 July, he had shown moderate competence in battle, but excelled in an energetically fought press campaign to portray himself as the 'hero of the nation.'

The plan was simple and well-conceived. Arouse chauvinist excitement; bring up regiments within striking distance of Petrograd; organise a network of terrorists in Petrograd; and a Cossack colonel, Dutuv, was to simulate a 'Bolshevik insurrection', creating disturbances

Even before the Moscow Conference 4 cavalry divisions, including the Savage Division, mountaineers from the Caucasus, were transferred closer to Petrograd. Theoretically their purpose was to defend the Baltic port of Riga, the key to the approaches to Petrograd.

But as the Germans advanced, Kornilov withdrew most of the forces defending the town which was captured on 19-21 August. The 'heroic' Kornilov ordered the retreat despite the wish of the Letts to 'fight for their capital'. In the forefront of its defence was a Lettish brigade consisting almost exclusively of Bolsheviks. Kornilov preferred to lose to the Germans than win with the Bolsheviks.

The generals knew they had to follow their timetable. The elections to the Petrograd Town Council (20 August) showed an unexpectedly large vote for the Bolsheviks: on a high turnout, the Kadets received 20%, the SRs 37% Mensheviks (all left-Mensheviks) 4.2% – and the Bolsheviks 33%. In the factory committees and the trade unions in Petrograd the Bolsheviks had an increasing majority.

On 26 August the Kadet ministers resigned creating a governmental crisis, in time for the 27th. Their plan was serious – but the conspirators were not. Events in Petrograd had a comic opera quality. Dutuv plaintively records 'I ran... and called people to come into the streets, but nobody followed me.' At least he tried – the two leading conspirators passed the time drinking in night clubs, until one of them slipped away with the funds.

Meanwhile, the regiments under Kornilov's command headed for Petrograd. But they did not get very far – railway workers tore up the tracks, or diverted trains onto sidings; and even the Savage Division belied its name. A Muslim delegation from the Caucasus explained to the troops the aim of the conspiracy – they then stuck on the staff car a red flag inscribed 'Land and Freedom.' It was notable that Kornilov could not raise a single infantry detachment – a peasant infantryman explained why: 'Kornilov wants war and not a word about the land and not a word about the war.'

In Petrograd itself, the right Mensheviks had proposed formal co-operation with the Bolsheviks in a 'Committee for Struggle with Counter-revolution'. The Bolsheviks agreed, on condition that the workers were armed, and that this was a military-technical alliance, not a political bloc with Kerensky. At least 13,000 workers enrolled in the Red Guards, with 40,000 rifles at their disposal.

There were no serious skirmishes – Kornilov's forces simply melted away. The conspiracy had failed ignominiously. Now it was the Bolsheviks' turn – would they have the political and organisational ability to lead the masses to a successful insurrection? Could they win power – and, more importantly, hold it?



Kronstadt sailors arrive in Petrograd to defend the Revolution

THE MOSCOW STATE CONFERENCE

Its first step was to organise a series of conferences in Moscow, from the beginning of August. At the Conference of Public Figures (ie landlords, capitalists and their hangers on) a textile magnate let slip their intentions in a phrase which echoed throughout Russia: 'The bony hand of hunger and national destitution will seize by the throat the friends of the people!'

The fulcrum of the conspiracy was the Moscow State Conference (12-14 August). Numerous peasant soviets complained – if a convention is to be assembled why not the Constituent Assembly on the basis of universal suffrage? The Bolsheviks gave the answer: 'If they hurry the convocation of the constituent assembly... most peasants will disapprove of the war policy... the Moscow Conference is a national assembly to approve imperialist and counter-revolutionary policies... a

streets. On the opening day a general strike (opposed by the Menshevik-SR majority in the Moscow Soviet) was a complete success: no lights, no tramcars, no taxis; the factories, stations, railroad yards and shops were closed; and even the waiters in the restaurants had joined the strike.

The Conference showed that the Kadets had moved so far to the right as to antagonise even the 'socialists' present. The Kadet leader, Miliukov, noted that when the right side of the hall clapped, the left side remained silent; when the left clapped and applauded furiously, the right was sunken in dejected silence.

KORNILOV'S PLOT

The unbroken support for the general strike had warned the bourgeoisie that the working class was on the alert. It could not use the Conference as a signal for the *coup*, so it planned for 27 August.

Its leader was to be General Kornilov. Appointed by Kerensky as

which would give the regiments a pretext to intervene to 'restore law and order'. The 27th was the six-month anniversary of the revolution, and the celebrations would offer the perfect opportunity for a provocation.

The generals had vital support from the imperialist governments, particularly the British. They had realised that the missions of 'socialist' leaders to persuade the Russian soldiers to fight were willing but ineffective. In the words of the Head of the British Military Mission, General Knox, 'This people needs the whip!'

The British Ambassador, Buchanan, was fully sympathetic to Kornilov, but diplomatically avoided a too obvious entanglement, while allowing Knox to place at Kornilov's disposal a weapon invaluable in street fighting – the British armoured cars. British soldiers dressed in Russian uniforms were engaged in training certain units close to GHQ.

DAVID KING COLLECTION

FRAMED PRISONERS

Government's dirty work

Developments in the fight for justice for the Birmingham 6 and Guildford 4 have shown that the British government is still determined to prevent their release. As a result of a powerful lobby in the Twenty Six Counties, the Irish government has been expressing 'concern' about the cases. It has linked the re-opening of the cases to the British government's wish for an extradition treaty with the South.

The sudden decision of Home Secretary Douglas Hurd on 14 August to launch a police investigation into the new evidence in the Guildford case is thought to be the result of the Dublin government agreeing to an extradition treaty. That Haughey should make such a deal is doubly shameful. Firstly the treaty will hand even more British courts which have framed numerous Irish people; secondly the Home Office decision that the police will review the new evidence in the Guildford 4 case does not even go as far as the decision on the Birmingham 6, namely the right of an appeal. Deeply entrenched forces stand opposed to the Guildford 4: Peter Imbert who was in charge of the police case against them is now Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Michael Havers, who headed the prosecution is now Lord Chancellor.

The Birmingham 6 Appeal is to be heard in November. In a recent letter to the *Irish Post*, Birmingham 6 prisoner Paddy Hill commented:

'While the Irish government has expressed 'concern' it has never had the courage to publicly declare its belief in our innocence... For years, we have

been pointing out that concern is not enough - is of little or no value. I fear that, unless the Irish government publicly declares that it is convinced we are innocent and demands our release, nothing may come of all this... In opposition, Fianna Fail pledged not to implement the new extradition treaty until justice was done in our case and in the similar cases. But it now looks as if that pledge is being reneged on...

The conduct of police investigating new evidence in the Birmingham 6 case indicates what will now happen in the Guildford case. Relatives of the Birmingham 6 have said that the police inquiry, which has cost more than £400,000, has concentrated on trying to discredit a crucial new witness, a former policeman who has backed up the men's story of police brutality. Such a witness would clearly be important at the forthcoming Appeal in the case. Now, the police have been given the job of investigating their own handling of the Guildford frame-up.

The framed prisoners and their supporters will clearly need to fight every inch of the way for justice.

Maxine Williams/Paul McKinlay



The Guildford Four: Carole Richardson; Patrick Armstrong; Paul Hill; Gerard Conlon

No progress on repatriation

Home Office minister the Earl of Caithness, claims that this year a less restrictive approach has been taken to the repatriation of Irish POWs in English gaols. Yet not one has been moved to the Six Counties.

In fact, the Home Office has made matters worse by imposing intolerable visiting conditions on Nat Vella, Hugh Doherty and their relatives at Wakefield Prison. All relatives are forced to undergo a rigorous body search and to sit 5 feet away from the prisoner, denied all physical contact. This act of inhumanity has made the prisoners and their relatives more determined than ever to win the right of repatriation.

Lord Caithness explained that the Home Office's 'less restrictive' approach consists of satisfying itself that the prisoners would not be 'disruptive' or a 'security risk' and that this is very difficult whilst prisoners maintain links with 'paramilitary organisations'. In other words the Home Office is insisting that the prisoners renounce their political affiliations so that they can be near their families.

In response, the Irish POWs in English Gaols Relatives Committee is calling for a broad-based campaign for the right of repatriation. At their meeting on 10 August in Belfast, relatives told representatives of the RCG and the Troops Out Movement that they are asking Marxist, socialist and all other interested groups to go to the forthcoming IBRG Conference where a call is being raised for a campaign on this issue. It is vital that this opportunity is taken to build a strong, united and public campaign in support of the prisoners.

Paul McKinlay

Ten thousand defy ban

On 9 August in Belfast over 10,000 people defied the Public Order Act to join the annual parade to mark the 16th anniversary of internment.

On the march were contingents from Sinn Fein, Irish Republican Socialist Party, NORAI, Herri Batasuna, Troops Out Movement including Sharon Raghup and others from Broadwater Farm, Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign and Manchester Irish Solidarity Committee (behind which the FRFI delegation marched). Stop the Strip Searches, Red Action and AUEW foundries section.

There was a massive police and army presence and two stewards were injured. Following the march the rally began with a one minute silence for all those murdered by plastic bullets in particular Sean Downes shot in the same place in 1984.

After the trip, Sharon Raghup drew the links: 'What happened on the Farm was that the police attacked the community so the people had to fight back. That happened in Northern Ireland years ago. The plastic bullets, tear gas, the spray paint to identify people were all used first there. In a few years you will probably have soldiers on the streets here too, when the people start standing up for their rights.' She saw similarities between the frame ups of Engin and Winston Silcott and those of the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six. But for Sharon: 'The thing that got me most was the togetherness of the people. Everybody was with each other fully. If we could achieve that here it would be a great victory.'

Andy Price



British terror: RUC thugs attack mourners at the funeral of IRA Volunteer Finbarr McKenna

Repression intensifies as King woos loyalists

With the collapse of the loyalist campaign against the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the British government is now seeking to draw Unionist organisations back into the constitutional fold. An essential part of this process is to convince the loyalists that repression against the nationalist community, in particular Sinn Fein, will be stepped up. Hence Northern Ireland Secretary Tom King's pledge to 'shut out Sinn Fein'.

MAXINE WILLIAMS

Sinn Fein's presence in local councils infuriates the Unionists. One of the carrots that King is now dangling is a proposal to prevent anyone standing for election who supports violence or 'unlawful acts'. With its usual hypocrisy the British government will of course ensure that support for 'violence' does not include support for imperialist violence.

For the past year the British government has concentrated on building up the alliance with the Twenty Six Counties government through talk of reform. The Twenty Six Counties government cares nothing for the fact that the much-vaunted reforms are meaningless and empty. Both sides know that reform is merely the fig leaf covering a deal whose only purpose has been to attempt to weaken revolutionary nationalism by giving the appearance that constitutional nationalism (the SDLP), now offers a way forward for the beleaguered nationalist community. Now, Britain will also be attempting to

keep the loyalists happy. Already the strains are apparent. Following recent Anglo-Irish talks Dublin suggested that they had gained a commitment on anti-discrimination legislation and three judge Diplock courts. Tom King was quick to refute this and his decision to stick to one-judge courts has rapidly been accepted by Haughey.

Whilst it has, for the purposes of satisfying Dublin, distanced itself from the extremes of loyalist bigotry, one of Britain's major methods of placating loyalism (and safeguarding British rule) will be continued systematic daily repression of the nationalists.

In the past two months we have seen:

- On 12 July Ciaren Adams was standing outside a Falls Road taxi depot with friends when British troops surrounded them. Adams was arrested, punched and thrown into a landrover. Kicked and punched he suffered extensive bruising and a cut requiring six stitches.

- On 17 July Liam McCabe and friends

were walking towards Turf Lodge when an Army patrol stopped them. McCabe was beaten unconscious. He was detained in hospital suffering from a broken nose, cuts and a head injury.

- On 6 August in West Belfast the RUC fired on a stolen car and critically wounded one of the youths in it. Other cars were hit and two elderly people narrowly escaped death when a bullet grazed the head of one of them.

- On 31 July the RUC and UDR occupied the Short Strand area and conducted a week of house raids and harassment. Many homes were wrecked and residents threatened. On 7 August as 400 people listened to a concert, the RUC drove landrovers into the crowd. On 8 August as people left a party a large force of RUC rushed into the area using plastic bullets and batons. Several people were injured including a pregnant woman.

- On 11 August British troops conducted early morning raids in North and West Belfast leaving several homes wrecked. Streets were sealed off and doors beaten down with sledgehammers. In Kevin Stanton's home, floorboards were pulled up, furniture, possessions thrown about and the kitchen systematically wrecked.

Little protest is ever heard from Dublin about the repression which is the daily lot of the nationalist people.

under British occupation.'

Whilst this was happening to Adam, I was questioned alone despite being a juvenile. They threatened to keep us for seven days and refused our request for a solicitor/phonecall. Luckily for us, RCG comrades had seen us detained and contacted solicitors. Phone calls inquiring about us soon started and shortly after this we were released. The sole purpose of the detention was to intimidate us and discourage us from returning to Ireland. In fact it has made us more determined.

Grace

PTA arrest figures still climbing

Despite mounting opposition to the racist Prevention of Terrorism Act the numbers detained, excluded and checked under the Act have shown a considerable increase in the past year.

58 people were detained in Britain (the figure excludes the large number detained on arrival in the Six Counties) from April to June this year, more than double

the number detained in the same period last year. The average period of detention is from 12-48 hours. During the first half of this year 112 people were detained compared to 147 for all of last year. The total number of arrests under the Act up to 1986 was 6486 of which 6306 were connected with Northern Ireland. Other oppressed sections are now also subject to the Act since its extension to cover international movements in 1984.

The figures for exclusion orders too have increased. 13 new orders have been made in the first half of this year compared to 11 for the whole of last year. There has also been a steady rise in the numbers of people computer checked under the Act. In England and Wales (le excluding Scotland and also the Six Counties) these checks have risen from 44,779 in 1984 to 59,481 in 1986, ie 163 people a day. High as these figures are they do not include the large number of detentions at ports and airports under the Emergency Provisions Act, for which no statistics are recorded.

A third review of the PTA is now being conducted by Lord Colville. But the British government has certainly got no intention of scrapping such a powerful weapon of surveillance and harassment of the Irish community and other oppressed peoples.

Paul McKinlay

Special Branch detains FRFI supporters

Returning to England on 10 August after the anti-internment march in Belfast, two FRFI supporters, Grace and Adam, were detained by the RUC Special Branch at Larne under the Emergency Provisions Act. Grace writes:

They told us they were detaining us because we 'couldn't account for our whereabouts'. They took us to their offices. Adam was taken into another room. They wanted to know where we had stayed and who had arranged the visit. Obviously we were not prepared to give information which would put our hosts at any risk of harassment.

Adam was threatened and assaulted. 'The officer grabbed me from the chair and threw me against the wall. He punched me in the shoulder and then threw a punch at my face which he stopped at the last moment. I was threatened with Castleareagh and forced to run round the room. I was terrified. Despite being arrested many times in London, detention by the RUC brought home the reality of life

Burnham's reply to British 'justice'

The Burnham Report of International Jurists in respect to Broadwater Farm Trials. Haringey Council. 1987. £1

On 19 July the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign launched the *Burnham Report*. This report gives the findings of two American jurists on the trial which resulted in the conviction of three people for the murder of PC Blakelock.

Margaret Burnham and Lennox Hinds attended the trial from 1 to 6 March 1987 reviewed summary transcripts of preceding hearings and spoke to many people associated with the trial and the events. Margaret Burnham is a lawyer, a former Massachusetts criminal and civil court judge and currently a Fellow at the Du Bois Institute for Afro-American research at Harvard University. Lennox Hinds is also a lawyer, he is professor and Chairman of the Department of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Despite one or two small inaccuracies (Engin Raghip received no recommendation for a minimum 8 year sentence) this is a very useful report. It follows in detail the prosecution case against the three young men found guilty of murder.

This entire case rested on admissions of guilt obtained over months from hundreds of detentions and interrogations aimed at building up a 'case' against the murder defendants, especially Winston Silcott. Over half of those arrested and questioned were juveniles. In the words of the Burnham Report, the charges presented to the jury 'were built on the interlocking and overlapping admissions of the defendants themselves.' (p12)



Winston Silcott

As well as the fact that the prosecution presented no forensic evidence whatsoever against the murder defendants the *Burnham Report* emphasises the manner in which the police carried out their 'heavy-handed and overbearing tactics to obtain confessions' (p14).

'While denial of counsel was the most appalling feature of the investigation, the entire tenor of the police enterprise here was highly disturbing. We have already made mention of the lengthy, dishonest and otherwise repressive manner of interrogation; the disregard for the orders of the magistrate; the exploitation of the youth and inexperience of some of the detainees; and the

creation of a climate of intense fear throughout the whole community. The effort appears to have been driven by the goal to identify the likely culprits at any cost.'

The *Burnham Report* concentrates on the legal questions about the murder convictions. Why did the judge rule that the statements of the juveniles were inadmissible because they were unreliable and extracted under pressure, but not the statements of Winston Silcott, Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghip who were equally pressured? And why was Winston Silcott found guilty on the basis of 27 words he is alleged to have said which are any way open to interpretation?

The *Burnham Report* finds the 'conviction of Silcott represents a gross miscarriage of justice' (p6). It concludes by recommending 'a careful and dispassionate judicial re-examination of the convictions rendered in the Blakelock murder trial' (p18).

Although the scope of the Report is limited to the fairness of the prosecution proceedings, it remains a powerful indictment of the Old Bailey trial. It refutes the media lies and the silence of the judiciary during the trial.

The report is a useful weapon in the fight for the release of those found guilty of murder. The resemblance between their cases and that of the Guildford Four is, in the words of Sharon Raghip 'uncanny'. The methods and intention of the British state were the same in both cases, terror, forced confessions, revenge and a verdict that would be a warning from the ruling class to all those who dare to act against it.

Release the Framed Prisoners!
Sue Davidson
The *Burnham Report* is available from: Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, 12/16 Tangmere, Broadwater Farm, London N17

Gypsy holocaust

When the violins stopped playing, Alexander Ramati. Coronet Books 1986. £3.50

'A gypsy can cry for himself but he will never lose his song.'

As a percentage of their total population in Europe, the gypsies suffered greater decimation during the Second World War than any other group of people, including the Jews. In the Soviet Red Army the gypsies and Jews were awarded proportionally more medals than any other peoples. Now, at last, Alexander Ramati relates the story of the gypsy holocaust.

He tells how Roman Mitga, an

Eastern European gypsy, spent his war. 300,000 gypsies died in concentration camps wearing the Z (for German word Zigeuner - gypsy) on their rags as other groups wore triangles etc. Many more were shot on the roads. No gypsy has ever received a penny of compensation individually or collectively for 'war damage'.

Occasionally one wonders at the title as the violins are playing on

every page but when they do stop playing an icy hand grips your heart. If one jeers at the softness that prompts the gypsies not to kill the dogs they had to abandon, or rages at the fate of the horses left tied to trees to starve to death in a forest full of food, one soberly reads the account of Dr Mengele who, when admiring the beautiful eyes of nine year old gypsy twins, says they must be removed at once and preserved in flagons. Fourteen year old twin boys are told he wants autopsies on them that afternoon.

These horrors are related with a cool lack of drama or passion. While scenes like the fight between the sons of the old and the new Shera Rom are so unreal they must be the author's dream. When he listens to Roman, his gypsy narrator, the story is real and strong.

I found a few mistakes in Ramati's book, some due to translation into English rather than the gadge (gorgia - gentile) Ramati misinterpreting Roman Mitga. He refers to the devil for instance. In romany language Devel is God. One glaring error is when he refers to the individual property being allocated to families in relation to the value of their contribution of jewels. A close tribe like this, travelling together in dangerous times, would certainly hold one common purse. New horses and new wagons would be distributed according to their needs not their family fortunes. Mostly the gypsy lore is accurate and comfortable to read.

Alexander Ramati attempts to portray some important historical events. The whole gypsy tribe of Kildarari being loaded into cattle trucks. The flaming chimneys, fuelled by human flesh, of Sobibor concentration camp, as seen through the eyes of a shocked youth. The mass roadside execution of the Lowari gypsies and the desperate struggle of the Polska Lowland gypsies he follows on their flight to Hungary with fewer families arriving each night at the rally points. Losing first their dogs then their horses then continuing on foot to what should have been safety - but someone had changed the goalposts.

This is the first real attempt I have seen to record the gypsy holocaust. The Germans still do not admit there was one. There are memorials in Auschwitz for all the nations whose people died there. Only the gypsies are not mentioned.

Annie Fury

Story of the Blues

The Story of the Blues, written by Ed Jones, performed by Manchester Umbrella Theatre, performed at Edinburgh Festival. 22-29 August.

The *Story of the Blues* as the title suggests, is a play about the police. The author Ed Jones highlights two cases of police terror to demonstrate both the similarities and developments in the role that the police have played in ruthlessly crushing any threat to the role of British capitalism over the last 150 years.

The first is the case of Coldbath Fields in 1833, when the working class in London fought with the police, the second is the police invasion of Broadwater Farm in 1985. The play shows how in the former a jury delivered a verdict of justifiable homicide for the killing of a PC, Robert Cully, while in the latter no such 'slip up' was allowed to occur. Winston Silcott, Mark Braithwaite and Engin Raghip all being framed and sentenced to life imprisonment for the death of PC Blakelock, with the police saying 'we can't tell black people apart.'

The play is extremely well researched, drawing on material published in Ireland: the key to the British revolution and *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!*. This information is presented by a cast of four who repeatedly change roles, from oppressor to oppressed, from Peel and Wellington, the figures of 1833 to

their descendants today, Newman and General Kitson.

Through this basic technique, Jones manages to reveal the complex development of the police force, from its slave trade origins to its present day background of RUC torture techniques revealing the law and order that the police uphold to be, in the words of General Sir Frank Kitson 'merely a propaganda cover for the disposal of unwanted members of the public.'

Ed Jones has written *The story of the Blues* not out of an academic interest in the developments of imperialist oppression, but out of first hand knowledge of fighting against that very same state. Jones has been involved in the Justice for Steven Shaw Campaign, the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign and has witnessed police attacks on the Non-Stop Picket outside the South African Embassy in London.

The Story of the Blues is a product of this first hand experience gained by a committed and determined young playwright. It is an excellent play that offers both education and entertainment. For information about future booking etc you should contact Ed Jones on 061 234 3168.

Nick Lewis/Chris Procter

Moses Mayekiso • S A Miners • Viraj Mendis

Join the struggle!

The aim of all FRFI supporters in this coming period is to build mass support for City Group's March for Moses Mayekiso on 10 October. Already the old movement as represented by the AAM and its new-found ally, the SWP, is organising to destroy the potential to build mass opposition in Britain to the trial of Moses Mayekiso and his four comrades. (See centre pages for full report).

The RCG fully supports the March for Moses Mayekiso and our members and supporters are organising now to mobilise support for the

The opportunists of the AAM will leave no stone unturned in their attempts to destroy the 10 October demonstration. We must

fraudulent 'peace accord' in Sri Lanka. All anti-imperialists know that until the rights of the Tamil people are guaranteed there can be no peace and no guarantee for the safety of Viraj's life.

Our members and supporters are organising street events and public meetings to expose the racist lies of the Home Office and to expose the phoney 'peace' in Sri Lanka. The Home Office must



march as widely as possible. Whilst the AAM and the SWP argue amongst themselves for control of the fate of Moses Mayekiso, the RCG and its supporters will be on the streets, in the communities, attending other left-wing and progressive events and meetings to build support for City Group's demonstration.

All RCG branches are holding public meetings, showing videos featuring Moses Mayekiso, and street events to mobilise support. Members and supporters must organise now to win maximum support and sponsorship for the demonstration.

- Distribute posters and leaflets widely.
- Hold street events in the community, in heavily populated areas - speak to everyone you meet about the demonstration, sell them a copy of FRFI and ask them to join our events and come along to our meetings.
- Approach community organisations, anti-racist, anti-apartheid groups and all progressive organisations, trade unions, trade councils, local councils, councillors and MPs to support the demonstration.
- Organise speaking tours around your area for the March for Moses Mayekiso Mobilising Committee.
- Book transport to the demonstration NOW.

prove with real results that communist organisation and mobilisation cannot be defeated with petty rumours, gossip and dirty tricks.

RCG members and supporters are fighting at every level an unremitting campaign for the interests of the fighting masses of South Africa. We have responded to the heroic strike of the South African NUM with our national petition - Victory to the South African Miners! - to raise necessary funds for the striking miners and their families. We are responding to the appeal launched by Arthur Scargill and the NUM for a solidarity fund.

hear our message loud and clear - Viraj Mendis will stay. Hands off sanctuary. The VMDC London support group and City Group have responded to the campaign to defend sanctuary by organising 'Freedom Rides' to Manchester - joining the weekly marches to the church, defending sanctuary, extending solidarity to Viraj.

RCG members are proposing regular 'Freedom Rides' to their local VMDC support groups. We are also stepping up the new post-card campaign in defence of sanctuary - flood the Home Office with support for sanctuary.

Now is the time to maximise support for sanctuary - in the communities in the trade unions, around all genuine progressives and anti-racists. Fight for comrade Viraj. Join Us!

Lorna Reid

Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! supporters have collected £250 for the South African NUM. Using our petition - we have collected the money outside dole offices, on our street meetings and outside tube stations.

We have spoken to many people about the need to support the SANUM strike and new people have become involved in collecting the necessary solidarity funds. We are also exposing the role that British mining companies are playing in the oppression of black miners in South Africa. In Manchester two of our comrades had direct experience of British collaboration with apartheid. Terry and Sonia were arrested on Thursday 20 August and charged with Highway Obstruction.

FRFI will continue to collect solidarity funds for SANUM and build support for the miners' heroic struggle.

On Saturday 8 August nearly 2000 people marched through North London on the demonstration organised by the Irish Freedom Movement to commemorate the sixteenth anniversary of the introduction of internment in the Six Counties of Ireland.

Supporters of Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! supported the demonstration and rally which was addressed by the Stop Strip Searches Campaign, Republican Bands Alliance, the POW campaign, John McDonnell, former leader of the GLC, and the IFM.

We spoke to many people on the demonstration and on the route of the march about our work and our politics. We sold 113 copies of Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! and three copies of Ireland: the Key to the British Revolution.

We are holding daily collections in shopping centres, outside dole offices, tube stations, in the communities. Join Us!

Sanctuary for Viraj Mendis is under threat. Justice Mann's racist disregard for Viraj's right to stay in this country has given the Home Office a new confidence to renege on its assurance to respect sanctuary. Douglas Hurd has stated that he is reconsidering his earlier assurance not to enter sanctuary. The racist Home Office is using as its main justification for pursuing their deportation of Viraj the

★ The RCG places itself at the centre of the new fightback. To carry out the political work required to defend sanctuary for our comrade Viraj Mendis, to build wide support for the March for Mayekiso, to distribute our newspaper and literature as widely as possible we need many more resources.

★ We need money to fund RCG speaking tours for the VMDC and the March for Mayekiso Committee.

★ We need money to intervene effectively in colleges around the country this month.

★ We need money to fund every aspect of our political work.

★ This month we want to raise an extra £500. You can help.

★ Rush your donations to the FRFI fund. Encourage your friends and organisations to do the same.

Name _____
Address _____

I/we enclose a donation of £_____
I/we can help to raise money for the FRFI Fund (please tick)
Cheques/POs payable to Larkin Publications, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

Send letters to us at FRFI, BCM Box 5909, London WC1N 3XX

■ COLD-BLOODED RACIST MURDER

Dear FRFI,
The most horrific racist attack took place in the German town of Tübingen on 19 August and was only just reported in the newspapers on 24 August. A twenty-year-old Iranian who was married and had filed an application requesting asylum, was caught shoplifting in a food shop. Three employees from the shop followed the man and fell upon him in a courtyard. One held him down by the legs, another by the neck. In the meantime, a crowd of approximately twenty people gathered and became witness to the German literally throttling the Iranian to death.

Several of those standing round called out to stop as he was killing the man, to which he replied 'I'm not going to let go of this one.' A doctor was called but could not save the Iranian. He was already dead. Ten minutes later the police arrived (needless to say they took their time).

The most disgusting part of this story is yet to come. The two employees were allowed to go free shortly afterwards. The public prosecutors announced death by suffocation as a result of extreme use of violence. They are still 'investigating' and appear to be having a hard time deciding between a case of 'manslaughter through culpable negligence' or 'physical injury resulting in death'. They need investigate no further. This was sheer cold-blooded racist murder!

On Saturday a demonstration of several hundred people, followed by speeches in the market place in Tübingen, made its way through the city protesting at this disgraceful racist attack.

Liz
Germany

■ NO MORE STRIP SEARCHES

Dear FRFI,
After reading the article in the August issue of FRFI regarding the barbaric treatment of Ella O'Dwyer and Martina Anderson, I was very vexed and disgusted to learn the exact volume of how far these stripsearches are taken. Surely these barbaric acts are a violation to these ladies' human rights. The quote which appeared in the article, of Ella explaining the severity of these stripsearches, had my blood boiling and my gut churning. To think that a prison officer is immune from prosecution when they sexually assault (by probing or molesting) these girls is utterly unacceptable. These 'people' who carry out these stripsearches are nothing short of animals and beasts.

Yours in struggle
Jimmy Butler
HMP Frankland

LONDON RCG

FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT IMPERIALISM! DISCUSSION GROUPS

A series of discussions on 'The Revolutionary Road to Communism in Britain' Manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist Group FROM 13 SEPTEMBER TO 8 NOVEMBER 1987. Every Sunday 7-9pm CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, HOLBORN

FIRST MEETING -

- ★ 13 SEPTEMBER: INTRODUCTION TO MANIFESTO
- 20 September: Imperialism in Crisis
- 27 September: Roots of the Imperialist crisis
- 4 October: The crisis of British imperialism

■ PEACE IN NICARAGUA

Dear FRFI,
Having just heard the news that Reagan, that fascist war-mongering dog who governs the hate-filled USA is asking for a democratic solution to the problems of Central America. I am greatly surprised that he and all other right-wing pigs have the audacity to ask for democracy; the USA have caused all the problems in Nicaragua and the democracy Reagan wants is at the point of a gun. The Sandinistas are an elected body, for the people, by the people, with the people. They do not want war, hatred and bigotry. What they do want is the right to live in peace, to treat everyone as equal and to be left alone and not subjected to Yankee aggression. Is this so wrong?

Could we please have a campaign of letters being sent by the sackful to the American Embassy to ask for a halt to the evil influence the USA is having on democracy in Central America.
Yours in solidarity
Tommy Curliiss
HMP Maidstone

■ NO COMPROMISE ON IRELAND

Dear FRFI,
It's possible to look upon certain events in Republican circles in Ireland with a painfully jaundiced eye. The breathtaking experience of giving birth to a 'new' political departure has hastened the progress towards the broad front that encompasses people from totally different parts of the social political landscape. To imagine that there is anything 'new' or special about this tactic is to fly in the face of hard earned experience.

The glorious sight of our handful of sober-suited people prepared and too attuned to the rarified altitude of Leinster House will no doubt strike fear and terror into the hearts of our political enemies. The laughing and sniggering will of course be confined to the members' bar as they finally lay the ghost of unfinished revolution gently to rest. Can anyone who understands Ireland and its people believe that this is an answer or even part of?

It is to the eternal shame of people, that in their haste to participate in this silly game devised by their masters for their subjection, they pretend and portray it as revolutionary activity. I remember Cathal Goulding appearing on Irish TV in 1969 dressed in black and carrying a rifle, prepared to fight to the bitter end. Shape of tomorrow perhaps, who knows? Is there an alternative? Yes, I believe there is.

Our refusal to participate, to give credibility to any British imposed solution. To hold our heads high and refuse to compromise no matter the short term benefits. A long and bloody history of being outmanoeuvred by reactionary politicians both native and foreign has taught us little if we persist in making the same old mistakes.
Red Robin

IRISH POWs BIRTHDAYS

Please send messages of solidarity to:
MARTIN BRADY
22 September 119087, HMP Albany, Newport, Isle of Wight.
VINCE DONELLY
25 September HMP Wormwood Scrubs, PO Box 757, Du Cane Rd, London W12 OAE.

DUNDEE RCG

Fight Racism!
Fight Imperialism!
Supporters groups.
Every fortnight.
Next meeting: Thursday 17 September, 7.30pm.
For details write to Dundee FRFI, PO Box 27, Dundee, DD1 9ER



Steve Biko

■ RE-WRITING BIKO'S HISTORY

Dear Comrades,
Ten years ago this month, Steve Biko was taken into detention in a South African police cell where he was interrogated, beaten, tortured and killed. Biko, one of South Africa's greatest revolutionary leaders, was murdered by apartheid.

Biko was the main founder and inspiration of 'Black consciousness' which aimed to give black people a new dignity and self reliance in their struggle to overthrow apartheid. Biko died fighting for the cause of the oppressed people of Africa, and

fighting for Black consciousness. At this time we should be telling everyone in Britain about Steve Biko, what he lived for and what he died for. But all is not well in the Anti-Apartheid Movement. The AAM in Glasgow has decided to censor the voice of Black consciousness at their commemoration event for Biko. It seems that the Black Consciousness Movement are not to be given the support of the AAM, on the grounds that they are just 'a small group' and 'not leading the struggle.' What arrogance to dismiss a political trend which has large support in South Africa and is a legitimate part of the black movement for national liberation. The sectarians seem intent on imposing their own judgement over the movement in South Africa. They even go so far as to deny that Biko was the main founder and inspiration behind Black Consciousness.

But they cannot get away with their intention of trampling on the very ideals of Biko. His spirit lives on.

We remember Steve Biko, a martyr for the cause of freedom and justice.
Gareth Jenkins
Glasgow

■ HUNGERFORD - A SICK SOCIETY

Dear FRFI,
A debate is 'raging' in the press and media about violence on the television following the mass killings at Hungerford. It is being argued by the censorship lobby orchestrated by Mary Whitehouse that violence on television causes violence in real life. Both the killer Michael Ryan and society at large thereby escape any real examination of their behaviour.

Constantly they miss the point. The membership of gun clubs throughout Britain, and therefore the owners of lethal weapons, are almost exclusively politically right wing men vetted by the police. If you or I applied for a license for a pea-shooter we would be turned down.

Rambo/SAS fantasies are acted out in gun clubs and so-called 'Survival' groups. In the future these maniacs - as anyone who uses a sub-machine gun for pleasure must be described - will be used against any working class forces who seriously challenge the state. 'Survival' in that context is the survival of capitalism.

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The hypocrisy of the television censorship debate was laid bare when, two days after the Hungerford events, a late night horror was replaced on BBC1 by a 'harmless' Dick Emery film including murder by various means, extortion and blackmail. Women throughout were degraded as bird-witted with tattooed messages on their bums. None of this matters to Whitehouse, Thatcher or the BBC Governors. As long as nothing is too extreme - not too much tattooed bum revealed, not too much blood and gore on show - they are quite happy for the sick media to reflect the sick society we live in.

Carol Brickley
London

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■ BELIEF IN THE SYSTEM?

Dear FRFI,
I found the August edition of FRFI very interesting indeed and full of disturbing trends in the policing of our society - I found the Newman Report extremely worrying, especially the shoot to kill policy now in use by the Met.

But for me the most telling piece was that of Sharon Raghup and her battle to get her framed husband freed. Her realisation that not all you read in the papers and see on TV can be believed. Her realisation of the corruptness and deceit of the police and that justice is just a term bandied about by the powers that be - like freedom, democracy and free speech - purely cosmetic and dependent upon the wealth and power you hold.

This sort of story will do more to let 'ordinary' people know just what they are up against than any amount of 'ideologically correct' reporting. It was also very enlightening to learn that the likes of Diane Abbott, Bernie Grant and John Morris hadn't publicly supported the campaign. Sharon's response to this lack of support shows that she hasn't totally lost her belief in the system. She says: 'It just shows that people up there are not prepared to put their careers at risk.' Without wishing to appear too cynical, I would suggest that now they have joined the club, they are more concerned in playing by its rules - or as a woman-friend of mine so graphically puts it: 'They all pee in the same pot.'

The views of Norma Kitson and Carol Brickley also made very interesting reading. I was a bit surprised to see Norma talking about 'Labour's move to the right...' As far as I can see, the Labour Party had moved to the right long before Thatcher arrived at Number 10. I was more than a bit surprised to see Norma describe Arthur Scargill as a leader of the working class. How anyone who leads the comfortable, very middle class life he does can be so described is beyond me.

Carol got it right when she said that, if progress were to be made, it wouldn't be until 'that leadership is expelled, thrown out, destroyed...' Those sentiments can be extended to quite a few of the union leaders

because they are only concerned with those in work, not the poor, deprived and exploited.

In solidarity
George Moulson
HMP Wakefield

Reply
George Moulson is wrong to draw the distinction he does between my views on the Labour Party and those of Norma Kitson. While he is right to imply that the Labour Party has long played a pro-imperialist role, it would be wrong to ignore the fact that the early months of Thatcher's government were accompanied by much rhetoric from the Left of the Labour Party and promises of no more betrayals. As soon as Neil Kinnock was elected leader, however, he made it clear that the Labour Party would move further than ever to the right order to win the next Election. This is what Norma is referring to.

I would also like to take issue with George over his ultra-left stand on anything but a general sense. Arthur Scargill is a leader of the working class. Pure economics and material circumstances do not determine an individual's actions in anything but a general sense. Arthur Scargill may have a 'middle-class' income, but he proved his allegiance to the working class during the 1985 miners' strike, in stark contrast to the activities of other union leaders.

Sharon Raghup is quite right to look to the newly elected black MPs for support: some of them will, under pressure, give support which could be decisive. That pressure can only come from a determined campaign involving ordinary working class people, but every campaign, whether it is for Broadwater prisoners or Viraj Mendis needs all the support it can get, as long as it does not compromise its aims or principles. To spurn such support because it is not 'pure' would be very short sighted.
Carol Brickley

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READ FRFI—where the action is

WHY VIRAJ MUST STAY

Home Office manoeuvres to split Campaign

The Home Office is preparing to invade the Church of the Ascension to arrest and deport Viraj Mendis who has been in sanctuary there since 20 December 1986. With cynical disregard for Viraj's life, it has seized the opportunity presented by the 27 July judicial review verdict and the 29 July Indo/Sri Lankan Peace Agreement to launch a renewed offensive against the Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign (VMDC).

EDDIE ABRAHAMS/CHRIS PROCTOR

With High Court 'legal' backing and the false hopes of peace in Sri Lanka the Home Office is working to isolate the campaign from its mass support, and particularly from the Church - a bastion of Viraj's sanctuary. Besides its own plans, the Home Office is also remobilising reactionary and racist elements to attack the sanctuary.

Judicial review stitched up

The basis for its latest attacks was provided by Justice Mann, who presided over the judicial review on 15/16 July and announced his verdict on 28 July. In rejecting Viraj's appeal against the Home Office deportation order, this reactionary concluded by pointedly remarking that sanctuary had no legal basis and that:

'What is now to occur is not a matter for the court but for the Secretary of State.'

Thus he gave the green light for the Home Office to renege on its previous pledge not to forcibly enter the Church and arrest Viraj.

Immediately the Home Office declared it was 'reconsidering' its pledge and then announced:

'We made it quite clear before the Judicial Review, we would not remove him (Viraj), but as the court has fully endorsed our position we are keeping that option under consideration... the option of getting him from the Church.'

The judicial review was a political manoeuvre, a propaganda cover, to facilitate the Home Office attempt to deport Viraj. It exposed Mann and the High Court for what they are - instruments serving the state in pursuit of its reactionary and racist ends.

During the proceedings Justice Mann put some extremely damaging questions to the Home Office which indicated the justice of Viraj's case. Two weeks later in his summing up he did not even care to deal with his own questions, let alone the evidence from the VMDC legal team (see report on p5). Instead he chose to comment on the fact that 'sanctuary' has no basis in law and indicated that the Home Office was legally free to do whatever it wished.

Who leaned on Mann between the hearing and his summing up? No doubt the Home Office who were privy to the knowledge that a peace accord between the In-

dian and Sri Lankan governments was imminent. Indeed on 14 July, the day before the hearings began, Thatcher dined with fascist Sri Lankan Prime Minister Premadasa.

The Home Office was aware that wide sections of the Church support Viraj in sanctuary primarily because of concern for his safety should he be returned to Sri Lanka. It calculated that a rejection of Viraj's appeal coinciding with the talk of peace heralded by the 29 July Indo/Sri Lanka Agreement would serve to remove Church support and severely weaken the VMDC.

The Home Office was fully confident that it could manipulate the judicial review and stitch it up whatever legal arguments were put forward by the VMDC. They thought that they could then use the result to begin an irreversible process of isolating and defeating the campaign.

Sanctuary under siege

Mann's judgement and the Home Office declaration that it was 'reconsidering' its pledge not to raid the sanctuary inspired renewed racist attacks on the Church.

On 1 August, the *Manchester Evening News*, using 'information' supplied to it by elements of Manchester police, printed a bold banner headline 'Mendis Swaps Letters With IRA Thugs'. The following day the sanctuary received a bomb scare and on 3 August it was attacked by fascists hurling bricks and bottles. Since then RCG member and VMDC chair Chris Proctor has received a death threat letter.

The VMDC is aware that undercover Home Office agents have been sent to Manchester to 'deal with' the VMDC and that a 'Viraj Mendis squad' has been set up in Moss Side police station to 'handle' the VMDC. It appears that a decision has been made to send dirty tricks departments into operation to frighten away the popular support the VMDC enjoys. These dirty tricks, a danger to both life and property, have been activated since the Home Office decision to 'reconsider' its pledge not to invade the sanctuary.

The false promise of the Indo/Sri Lankan peace agreement

In defiance of all the known facts, the government has seized on the Indo/Sri Lanka

peace agreement to undermine support for the VMDC from the Church and other liberal and humanitarian supporters. Indeed some of the government's hopes are being realised. In a statement issued on 10 August, the Archbishop of York says:

'If as we all hope, we are seeing the beginning of a new constructive relationship between the Tamils and Sri Lankans and if, in consequence, the level of violence in Sri Lanka falls, then the main case for allowing Mr Mendis to remain in this country will look very different...'

Such optimism unfortunately has no basis in reality.

The 29 July Peace Agreement has been imposed on the Tamil people by threats of violence, by force of arms. It cannot resolve the fundamental causes which have given rise to the Tamil resistance.

The presence of 9,000 Indian troops in addition to Sri Lankan forces in Tamil Eelam shows that the class, social and political contradictions which have given birth to the Tamil resistance and the barbaric Sinhalese repression have not been removed. 'Order' is the bourgeois order of Gandhi and Jayewardene. As a result, since the peace agreement was signed the Tamils remain subject to vicious and bloody repression (see main article on Sri Lanka).

While failing to respond to any of the Tamil people's main demands, the agreement has sparked off a wave of Sinhala reaction. Assassinations and assassination attempts against top cabinet ministers and the president himself testify to the strength of the Sinhala opposition to the agreement (see main article on Sri Lanka). A revolutionary communist and supporter of the Tamil people like Viraj would have little chance against Sinhalese death squads who are prepared to try and assassinate their own Sinhalese president.

Since the Peace Agreement, Amnesty International has reiterated its conviction that Viraj's life remains in danger. The Director of the British Refugee Council has described as 'incomprehensible' the government's attempts to rush through the deportation of five Tamils during the last week of August. Other European governments have halted all deportation attempts against Tamils at least until April 1988.

The racist British government has no qualms about the lives of the Tamil refugees in Britain or that of Viraj Mendis. The VMDC solicitors, commenting on the Tamil cases, stated that they 'show a new ruthlessness by the government using the peace accord as an excuse.'

Should Viraj go to another country?

Since the judicial review and the Indo/Sri Lanka Agreement, sections of the press and the Church have advised Viraj to seek refuge in a third country.

This is no reasonable solution to Viraj's struggle. What justification is there to demand that Viraj go to a country where he has no home, no ties, no relatives, no friends and no means of living? He has lived all his adult life in Britain, and it is here that, by any standard of democracy or justice, he is entitled to live.

In fact those who are advancing the third country option admit that Sri Lanka cannot be a safe home for Viraj. They accept that the whole Home Office case about Sri Lanka being a 'democracy' was merely a convenient lie to deport Viraj. By arguing that Viraj should go to a third country they are letting the British government off the hook. It has the worst record on refugees in Europe. Under the Geneva Convention for Human Rights, the Home Office is obliged to grant refugee status if it is shown that Viraj has a genuine fear of persecution in Sri Lanka. This fear is an established fact, reinforced today by those arguing for a third country option.

The VMDC has always considered that Viraj's right to remain in Britain and his safety are connected. Those arguing for a third country option seek to take account of his safety but not of his right to remain in a country where he has lived all his adult life. Wittingly or unwittingly they are legitimising the inhumane, unjust and anti-democratic racist immigration controls. They are sanctioning the right of the British government to uproot, deport and destroy the lives of thousands of black people and black families. Neither the VMDC nor the RCG are prepared to accept the right of the British state to act in this way. Its immigration controls are a main instrument for dividing and weakening the whole British working class in its fight against imperialism.

The VMDC responds

The VMDC has responded with a campaign to expose the judiciary's and Home Office's cynical legal manoeuvres and the worthlessness of the Indo/Sri Lanka agreement. It has produced a dossier on the current situation in Sri Lanka and a detailed rebuttal of Justice Mann's summing up of the judicial review hearing. These, along with a pledge demanding that the government abide by its policy of not invading the church, are being circulated

to all supporters of the campaign. The results so far are already promising for the VMDC. 24 out of the 25 Churches which constitute the Hulme and Moss Side Fellowship have reaffirmed their support for Viraj. Father Phil Sumner, President of the Fellowship, stated:

'Because of our knowledge of the people, the oppressed people in this area... we see things in a different way... Here we have that solidarity (with Viraj) because we are all working with people in similar situations to Viraj...'

Both the Bishop of Manchester and the Bishop of Hulme have appealed to the Home Office to abide by its pledge not to invade the sanctuary.

Simultaneously, the VMDC is continuing to consolidate and expand its work where its support is most solid - among the working class community of Manchester and Hulme. It is this support that has most worried the Home Office and led it to comment that Viraj has 'a large support organisation and there has been a polarisation of opinion in Manchester.'

With the aim of broadening this support the RCG has proposed regular weekly demonstrations in Manchester to act as a focus for all groups, organisations and individuals in Manchester who support Viraj's right to stay and will act as a powerful force to defeat the Home Office's latest campaign.

The VMDC is the principal campaign against deportations in this country. It represents, with its broad support nationally and in Manchester, a major challenge to the Thatcher government and Britain's racist immigration controls. Upon its future rests a real possibility of building an effective anti-deportation movement in this country. Should Viraj win his fight to remain in Britain, it will mark a major victory against Britain's racist immigration controls and an enormous step forward for the British working class. It will also enormously aid those Tamils in Britain fighting to prevent the Home Office deporting them back to Sri Lanka.

Both the VMDC and the Home Office have recognised how central the campaign is to the struggle against the racist immigration laws and therefore to the rights of black people and the working class in Britain. It is the absolute duty and responsibility of all socialists in Britain, organisations and individuals to join the VMDC and ensure that it wins the battle.



VIRAJ MENDIS WILL STAY