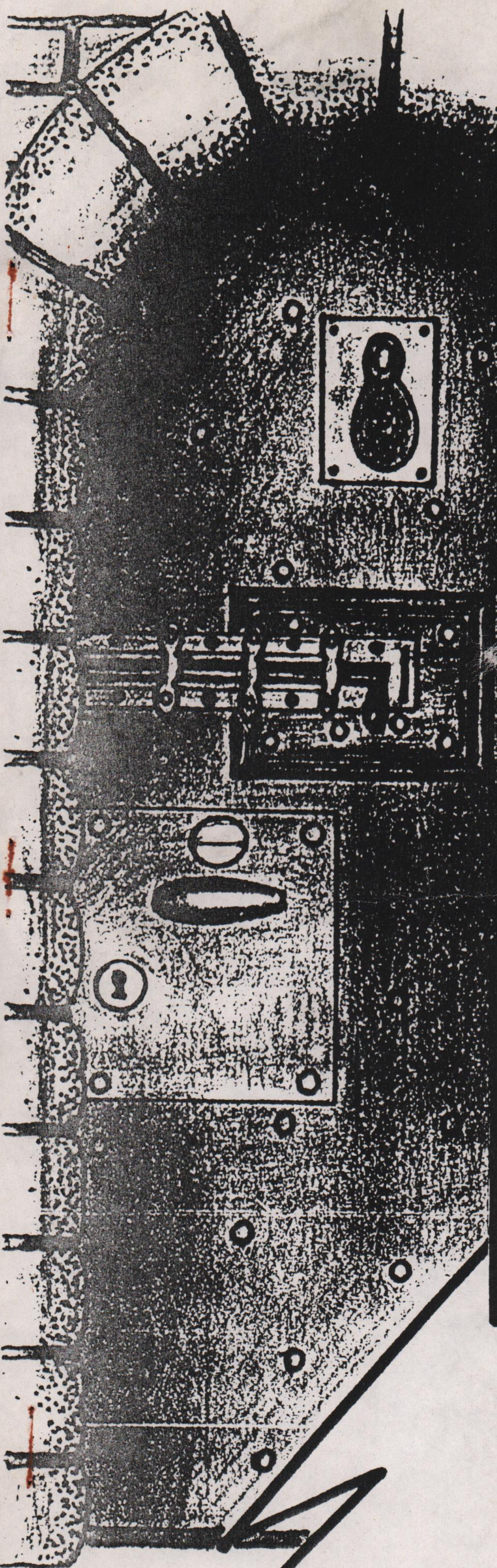
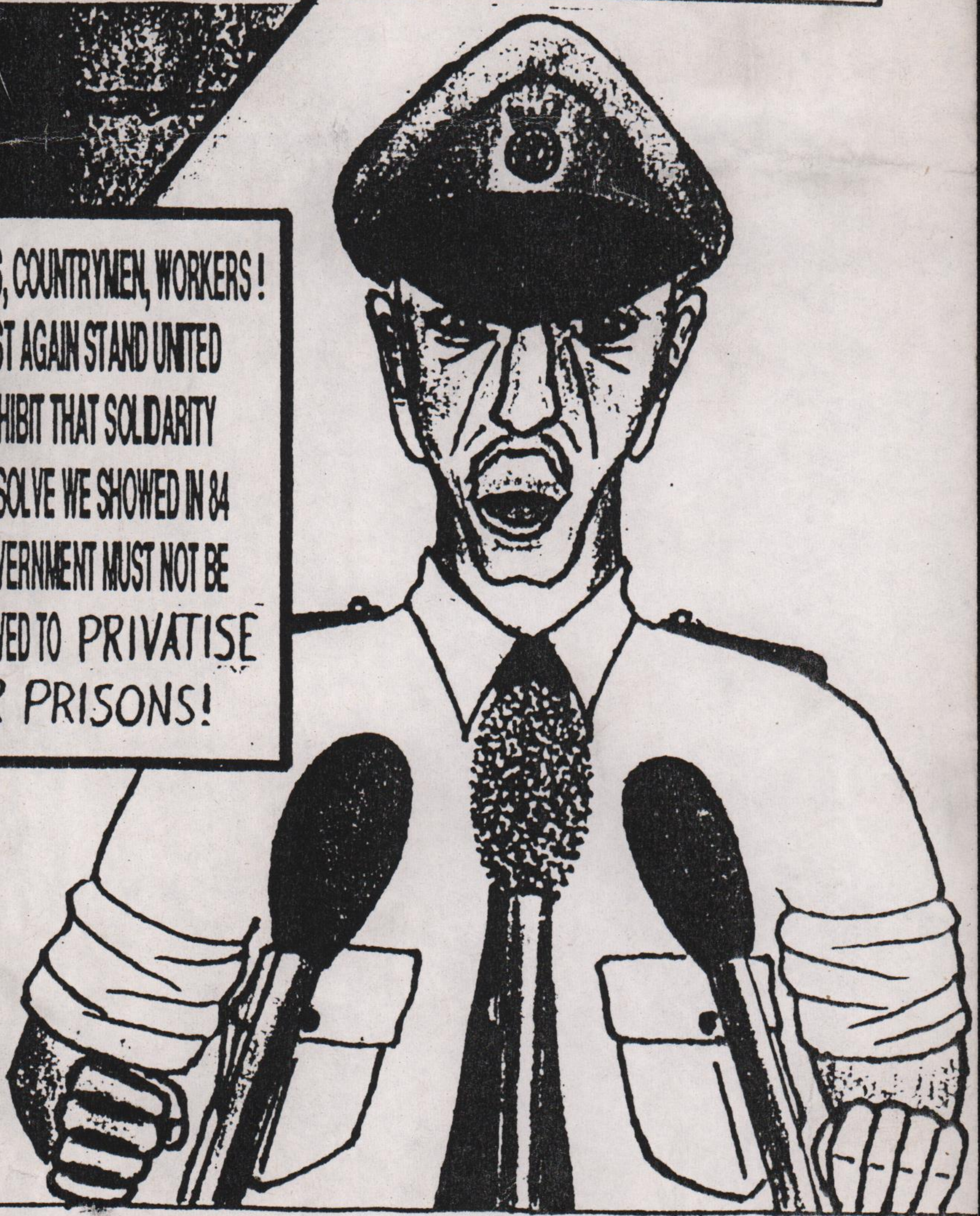


1984

John Picket  
Miner (NUM)  
6 Months

SOLIDARITY HYPOCRACY  
IN  
PERSPECTIVE

COMRADES, COUNTRYMEN, WORKERS!  
WE MUST AGAIN STAND UNITED  
AND EXHIBIT THAT SOLIDARITY  
AND RESOLVE WE SHOWED IN 84  
THE GOVERNMENT MUST NOT BE  
ALLOWED TO PRIVATISE  
OUR PRISONS!



1992

POA



## THE PRIVATISATION OF PRISONS - A STEP FORWARD OR BACKWARD IN THE STRUGGLE?

Many prisoners have welcomed the idea of privatisation. Not from the Tory government 'market values are best' perspective, but because they think that it will bring improvements in conditions and destroy the reign of terror of the Prison Officers' Association (POA). The issue has been debated by prisoners and ex-prisoners in the pages of Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!. This short pamphlet reproduces in full the contributions to the debate which appeared in edited form on the 'Prisoners' Fightback' page of FRFI between October 1992 and March 1993.

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## TAKING ON THE POA

Except for anarchists, for whom such institutions are anathema, the Left always has problems with the coercive organs of the state. Never more so than when staff in one of those organs is unionised and part of the trade union movement.

What should be the Left response when such a union becomes the target of government - as is the case now with the Prison Officers Association (POA)? Should Kenneth Clarke, fresh from other anti-union battles, be suddenly applauded for his stand on this one?

The question is purposely posed in terms of the *Left* rather than the Labour Party. The Labour Party leadership has never been sufficiently principled for such considerations to become real problems. Hence the dismal succession of Labour Home Secretaries, who could between them ring up gold, silver and bronze in any contest for the least democratic or accountable holder of that office.

Merlyn Rees for example, secretly and without reference to Parliament, not only set up but organised, trained and deployed the notorious MUFTI squads (the prison officers' SPG). Or take the man with the liberal reputation, Roy Jenkins, who slyly reopened the infamous Control Units after being forced, by widespread campaigning, to make a statement to the House, suspending them.

Are the present Labour lot any more principled? We doubt it. Two in high places made their names in the National Council of Civil Liberties, taking the issue of the Control Units to court. Although the case was lost, the judgement accepted that the Prison Department had broken its own rules, but went on to state that the rules were 'regulatory and not mandatory' and thus could be broken at will, 'like the rules of a boarding school'!

If ever a case screamed out for submission to the European Court of Human Rights, this was it. To the bafflement of many lawyers, including some concerned with the case, it was never submitted. It would of course have been a highly embarrassing case for Labour, then hoping to win a General Election.

The next we knew was that the two principals had resigned from NCCL to pop up immediately as Parliamentary candidates for the Labour Party in which both swiftly went on to higher things. Not surprisingly, we discount that lot from consideration of what a Left response should be to the question of the POA, and to the linking question of prison privatisation.

With regard to the latter, there has been a predictable knee-jerk reaction to the very suggestion that prisons should be run for profit. I am quite sure they shouldn't, but in this they are no different from hospitals or schools. I can't see why anyone on the Left should make prisons a special case in this context, though I am surprised that some Tories, with their liking for solemn imagery, haven't done so.

At present every prisoner has run the gauntlet of such imagery, with the royal coat of arms adorning the police station, the courts and ultimately the entrance to the jail itself. Such images, like the fancy dress worn by the judges, are supposed to impress and to intimidate. The renovated Strangeways is apparently to be let out to tender. If it goes private, what can



be over the entrance then? Presumably a Royal Warrant *By Appointment to Her Majesty the Queen*, like the label on a pot of marmalade. So much for solemnity - not that prisoners themselves have ever been impressed by uniforms, wigs and coats-of-arms.

The real issue for prisoners is whether private prisons will offer an improvement in conditions. There is absolutely no doubt that at present they do precisely that. Like opted out schools and hospitals they attract an unfair share of government resources. As showcases for the government's privatisation policy they have to be shown to be better.

Seeing that overall resources remain the same, this can only mean that each new private prison is denuding the rest of the system. It can be very good for the one prisoner in several hundred who is allocated there but it must be at the expense of the rest.

Experience at the Barlinnie Special Unit, Blantyre House and elsewhere suggests that, given a positive emphasis and proper resources, prison officers can be found who behave very differently from those manning Wandsworth, Strangeways or the rest of Barlinnie.

If new prisons are now being provided with built-in codes of conduct and showcase regimes, then it is not the nature of the uniform (POA or Securicor or whatever) that will make the difference, but the new sense of purpose.

Which brings me to the second consideration - the POA. It is as difficult for an ex-prisoner as it is for a serving prisoner to discuss the POA in an objective fashion. Yet it is important to recognise that prison officers themselves are a mixed bag. It is not so much a case of rotten apples in the barrel as of a pretty mouldy barrel in which a few decent ones surface from time to time.

The power base of the union executive rests in the big city prisons and it is there that prison officers are most obstructive to change and where provocation and brutality remain everyday experiences for prisoners.

Only this can explain the disjointed official statements of the POA leadership with its calls for professional standards, codes of minimum standards and substantial reductions in prison numbers. It is quite impossible to reconcile these with its apparent need to leap to the defence of prison officers whenever they are accused of brutality or unprofessional conduct.

If it meant what it said in its submission to the Woolf Inquiry, or what its spokesmen publicly stated, sitting alongside us in Woolf's open seminars, then the POA would need no prompting to take the lead in stamping out unprofessional conduct. Nor would it attempt the impossible task of justifying POA membership for *nurses* at special hospitals. They are either nurses or they are screws, and the fact that they opt for POA membership demonstrates quite clearly what they themselves think they are.

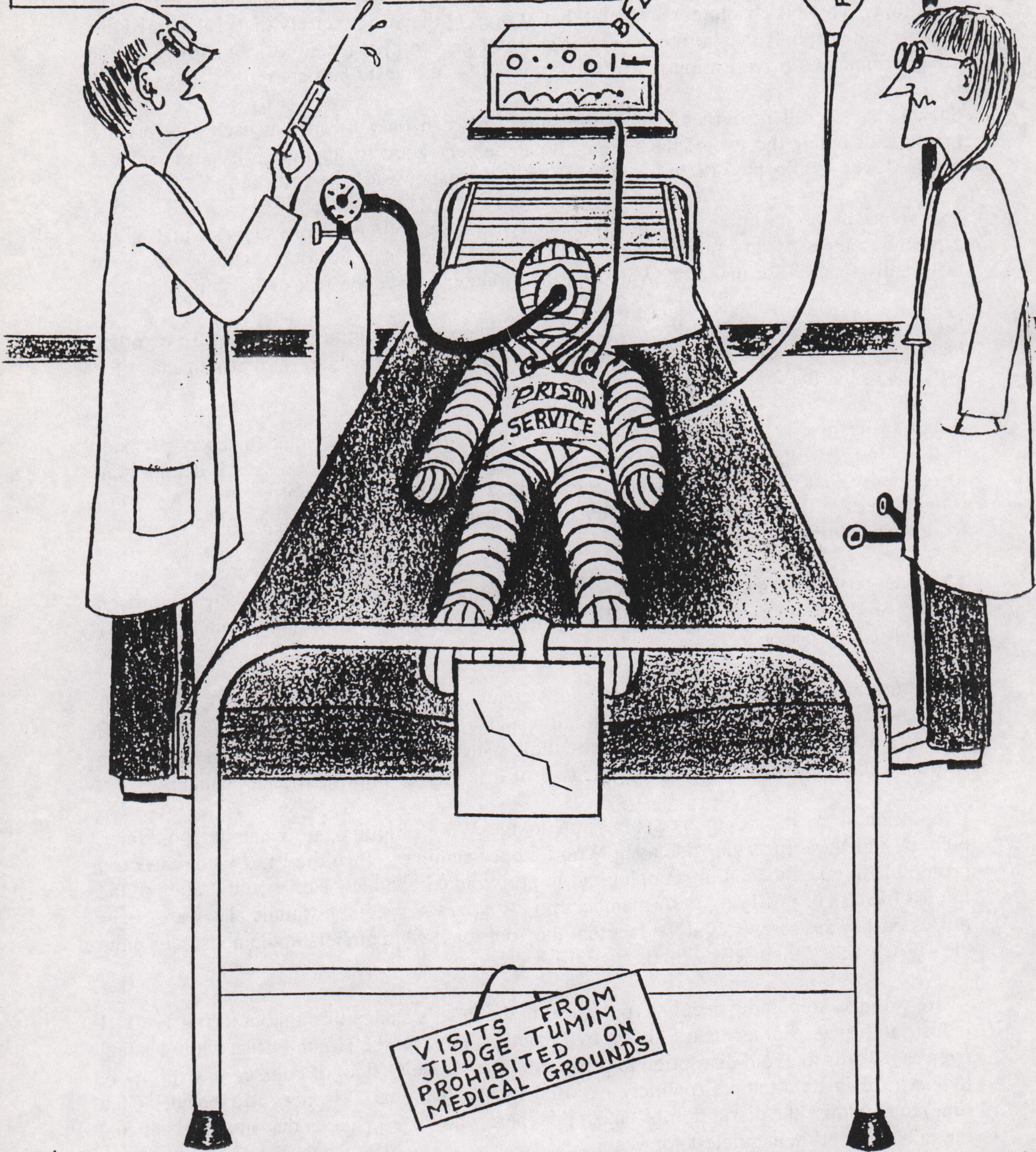
There was also something deeply hypocritical in the POA's stance throughout its big 1980/81 industrial dispute. Rather than fight on two fronts, it took on the Home Office while leaning over backwards to avoid disruption to prisoners. The Home Office, of course, was still more hypocritical in its attempts (publicly exposed by the National Prisoners Movement at the time) to maximise the disruption. As most prisoners who were inside at that time will concur, the jails were at their quietest for years.



# 'LAST RESORTS'

IN PERSPECTIVE

INTENSIVE CARE DEPT



"...IT'S A NEW DRUG 'PRIVATISATIONOL' ITS OUR LAST HOPE OF CONTAINING THIS P.OA VIRUS, WE'LL TRY 500mg..."

PAUL ROSS  
ANDRZY JAKUBCZYK



8,000 prisoners were diverted by the POA's refusal to accept new prisoners into jails which were already overcrowded. The courts were forced to back away from custodial sentences, and in this respect the POA achieved more in four months than the entire prison reform movement has achieved in forty years!

At the end of the dispute Tory Home Secretary William Whitelaw had this to say to Leicestershire magistrates:

*One of the things the dispute demonstrated was that it is possible for us to survive with a much lower custodial population than before. It is therefore inevitable, and indeed I think it is right, that henceforward we should regard the lower level of population attained during the dispute as a benchmark against which to measure the progress or otherwise which the criminal justice system is making in months to come. I shall continue to be held to account in Parliament for the way in which the criminal justice system develops in the new phase into which it is moving with the end of the dispute. Having been prepared to grant exceptional temporary powers for dealing with the consequences of that dispute, Parliament will be most reluctant to see the prison population return to the high levels of last year when much lower numbers were seen to be consistent with supporting and enforcing the law.*

What became of those fine sentiments? Within four months of the end of the dispute (the same length of time as the dispute itself) the prison population was back to what it had been before - and of course it has gone on rising since, with no complaint by Parliament.

And what of the POA's humanitarian concern at overcrowding? It became immediately obvious that it had served no other purpose than as a tactic to further its own ends. Government, Parliament, courts and prison officers quickly reverted to type.

Parliament (which in reality means the Tory Government as nobody else has had a look in for 13 years) has been perfectly willing to see the prison population rising. In view of its *law and order* pretensions, it can scarcely do otherwise. It has engineered an economic and social climate in the country which spawns antisocial behaviour. Without reversing its policies it can do nothing to stem this, yet the pretence of tackling crime has to be made, hence the emphasis on prisons despite their proven irrelevance to the crime rate.

As for the POA, it remains an impediment to progress in more senses than one. The prisoner naturally sees its influence as restrictive and selfish, holding back reforms which the Home Office says it wants to introduce. Prison officers are all of these things, and their not very intelligent leadership seems to be adept at upsetting everyone at the same time.

The second sense in which the POA is an impediment to progress, and which most embarrasses the Government, is the manner in which its obstructiveness prevents the Home Office presenting the veneer of reform which would disarm liberal critics while keeping the system on track for an ever larger prison population.

We are quite sure that with a wholly docile POA, prisons would, for the moment, be much calmer and less unpleasant places. Numbers would continue to climb but staff would do their utmost to contain a deteriorating situation, rather than exacerbate it. But at the end of the day



there can be only two consequences of such compliance; first, given a huge building program, a growing prison population kept reasonably quiet under just tolerable conditions; second a decline in these conditions and widespread demoralisation as the population outstretches resources until the eventual riots would make Strangeways seem like nothing more than high spirits. The consequences are not alternatives but phases in a predictable scenario.

A privatised prison system which sidelines the POA would only alter this scenario to the extent that it adds its own sinister pressures for growth. We would not have, as we do now, a POA calling for a reduction of 10,000 in prison numbers. Instead we will see a significant lobby of vested interests - security companies, building contractors, electronic surveillance manufacturers - campaigning politically for law-and-order policies which would maximise prison numbers, and doing so to a largely receptive Tory party and media.

Bearing in mind that we already have a prison population far in excess of anywhere else in Europe, and that all the needed changes are in precisely the opposite direction, the dangers for future generations of prisoners can scarcely be exaggerated.

Is this really what prisoners supporting privatisation want for the future? Admittedly, if I were in Wandsworth now, a move to a new privatised jail would be a luxury. Not only would a transfer bring with it a package of reforms which are elsewhere only talked and argued about, it would also give me the satisfaction of, in effect, thumbing my nose at the prison officers who have been responsible for so much of the misery around me. The temptation to openly support such changes might be irresistible.

Speaking with the greater detachment of an ex-prisoner, it is easier to look for the drawbacks and to wonder what might be the consequences of privatisation for prisoners in the future. Will it lead to more of them than there would otherwise have been? Will it eventually choke over growing gaps between resources and even greater *law and order* pressures? I am sure the answer to both questions is *Yes*.

If the POA is destroyed it will have only itself to blame, having alienated, by its opportunist tactics and lack of consistent humanitarian principles, any trade union allies, and spurned the hand repeatedly offered to it by much of the prison reform movement. Unless it quickly takes on board, and does something about, the issues discussed earlier - unprofessional conduct and special hospital membership - it will deserve its defeat.

Unfortunately, prisoners may then find there is after all something worse than the POA - and that is no POA.

GEOFF COGGAN (National Prisoners Movement) 30/8/92



## 'A FASCISTIC AND ANTI-WORKING CLASS UNION'

Geoff Coggan's article 'Taking on the POA' (FRFI 109) raised some important questions concerning the position of the left vis-à-vis the organised prison officers' movement at a time when preparations for the privatisation of prisons clearly includes a deliberate policy of undermining and ultimately breaking the unionisation of prison staff.

Suggesting that the left encounters a dilemma in terms of deciding whether or not to politically support and defend the prison Officers Association, Geoff Coggan himself makes the false assumption that despite its 'unintelligent' and reactionary leadership, the POA still nevertheless possesses the potential as part of the working class labour movement to assume a progressive role in the reform of prisons. Such an assumption is in fact contradicted by the role and history of the POA and its membership as an intrinsic and indispensable element in the oppression and brutalisation of prisoners. Far from being 'workers in uniform', prison officers and their representatives are by their very function part and parcel of the whole apparatus of social control and repression and possess neither the inclination nor independence from the system to be anything other than well-rewarded and willing helpers in the oppression of capitalist society's most marginalised and dispossessed. In the social and political struggle against state power and repression prison officers, like the police and army, represent conscious front-line troops in the defence of that power, and the military-type organisation and mentality of prison officers as a group confirms their function and role as very blunt instruments in the armour of state power and violence. Is it reasonable to suggest or assume that a group of people so imbued with a right wing mentality and a functional dependence on state repression can ever play anything other than a reactionary role in the struggle for or against prisoners' rights?

It is to the eternal disgrace of the TUC bureaucracy that such a fascistic and anti-working class organisation like the POA whose members have locked up and brutalised trade unionists and political prisoners, should ever have been accepted as an affiliate.

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One need only read Des Warren's account of his imprisonment following the building workers' strike in 1972 to discover how prison staff and POA members operate as just another arm of the state in attacking trade unionists engaged in struggle. The POA and its membership have lived well on the wages of repression and no-one should pay much heed to the progressive sounding noises of such an organisation following the introduction of the new 'fresh start' working contacts - an attempt by the Home Office and government to organisationally disempower a monster that it had long nurtured and nourished for its own ends.

The issue is not whether the POA and prison officers generally can ever play a progressive role in the reform of prisons, but  
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1. The key to my cell. New Park Publications.



rather how should the left support and assist prisoners themselves in furthering their rights and by doing so challenge the very existence of the prison system as an instrument of social control and repression.

Geoff Coggan is clearly right in his view that the injustice and maltreatment suffered by prisoners is a structural phenomenon and not exclusively the fault of prison officers, POA members or otherwise, but this is surely all the more reason to adopt a radical/revolutionary perspective on the prisoner struggle as opposed to a liberal/reformist one when seeking to formulate strategies of change.

Prisons are by their very nature coercive and oppressive institutions, intrinsically designed to disempower and destroy the resistance of those confined within them and so any discussion of 'reform' is largely meaningless and futile. Prisons, whether controlled and operated by the state or private companies, are weapons utilised by the powerful to keep the powerless in check and maintain an economic and social status quo beneficial to the former.

Geoff Coggan rightly points out that a docile POA, deprived of its ability and power to provoke prisoners into rebellion, might result in a largely acquiescent and pacified prison population; and then himself calls for the perpetration of 'good' prisons like Blantyre House and the Barlinnie Special Unit whose regimes are designed exactly for that purpose. Prisons, 'good' or bad, can have no 'positive emphasis' beyond controlling and disciplining prisoners, and in fact the so-called 'good' prison regimes are far more sinister in terms of the way that they seduce and brainwash prisoners into conformity. Living in a velvet-lined coffin is essentially no different from confinement in an obvious hate-factory like Wandsworth or Winson Green - either way one is controlled and imprisoned against one's will.

I would suggest that Geoff Coggan shifts his terms of reference when discussing how prisoners' rights might be extended, from a rather unrealistic and counter-productive paradigm of 'improved' prisons and 'caring' prison officers, to one that situates the struggle of prisoners clearly in the context of revolutionary class struggle and anti-capitalist politics.

John Bowden



## PRIVATISATION: WHY NOT?

The best news prisoners have heard for a long time was Douglas Hurd's announcement on 1 March 1989 to permit private companies to build and run prisons.

Predictably Mr Hurd's plans have come under fire from Roy Hattersley and penal reform groups such as the Howard League who argue such a move is 'morally indefensible'! Being a prisoner starting out on his eighth year of captivity, I think I can speak with some authority and in my view private prisons are easier to defend morally than what now exists as an excuse for a modern prison system.

Let us examine briefly the situation at one of Britain's untried penal wings, Barlinnie. Prisoners are allowed one 15-minute visit each day, Monday to Saturday. They are given exercise roughly once every three days in a squalid little yard that stinks with the smell of excrement. While on exercise you literally have to dodge the excrement jettisoned from cell windows by prisoners who are denied access to toilets on a regular basis at the whim of prison staff. The reason exercise is so infrequent nowadays is owing to the warders' ulterior motives in only allowing a certain ratio of prisoners to warders out of doors at any one time. This is designed to foment anger and unrest which in turn serves to justify the constant calls for more staff. On top of this, prisoners are locked up often three to a cell, being let out only to empty their pots and to wash when warders can find the time.

How can Labour opposition defend the present penal system? Our penal system is rotten from the top right down to the bottom with few exceptions. At least with private companies running prisons the POA would be neutralised, if not abolished, a prerequisite for bringing prisons into the 20th century.

I full well realise that there could be room in a private prison system for certain abuses, however these abuses are already widespread in the present system and will continue as they are. With privatisation should go a government inspectorate that would make sure certain standards were set and adhered to. If the company failed to meet these standards they would be heavily fined or the managers in charge even gaoled. Now there is a novel idea!

The POA and other self-interested parties will holler against any form of privatisation, rolling out their tongue in cheek platitudes about rehabilitation and prisoners' welfare. To be quite blunt these people have no interest in prisoners apart from what can be financially extracted from them. They are against privatisation only because they know that profit-orientated companies will de-rail the prisons gravy train that so many have enjoyed for so long and no more will they be able to invent situations out of thin air to milk more money from the tax-payer.

During my time in Shotts, the once central jewel in the crown of Scotland's penal system, I was refused exercise for 13 months.



The only time I left my cell was for a shower and a brief walk up and down a 30 foot corridor. I had not incurred any disciplinary punishments to merit such treatment. The longest period I was refused food was seven days: no food, no water. My conditions were no different to those of other prisoners in A Hall including the man who hanged himself. In fact, the only prisoners who were allowed out were the protections on the top flat - sundry sex offenders and informers! We were locked up under the pretext of a 'state of emergency' following a minor disturbance. At a later fatal accident inquiry the judge found that we were locked up so that the management could enforce a progressive regime and that no consideration was given to the psychological effect such a 'lock-down' would have on prisoners.

Another POA trick is to threaten to refuse to take any more prisoners because of purported concern at overcrowding, something that never bothered them in the past when conditions were far worse than they are today with prisoners sleeping in the gymnasium and numbers touching 2000. If Barlinnie's warders had carried out their threat this would have been seen in the light of Wandsworth and Holloway's unrest which were no more than industrial sabotage. The aim of the POA, in my opinion, is to force the government to capitulate over the Fresh Start scheme which since introduction has killed large amounts of cash overtime payments warders used to enjoy, as opposed to the new system (still open to large scale abuse) which gives them time off in lieu of cash. It would come as no surprise if the POA demand extra cash payments when prison numbers go above a certain level. If the government agrees to such a demand the warders won't complain if prisoners are held ten to a cell and we will see no more crocodile tears about overcrowding.

In America prisoners benefit greatly from private companies investing in training and employing prisoners with guarantee of employment upon release. Prisoners earn the minimum wage that a similar employee would earn on the outside with a fifth of his wage going to a victim support scheme; another fifth for his keep; another for his family and the rest is divided up between savings and a weekly allowance for the prisoner in question.

Stephen Windsor  
HMP Noranside



## PRISON PRIVATISATION: THE US EXPERIENCE

'Prisons are by their very nature coercive and oppressive institutions, intrinsically designed to disempower and destroy the resistance of those confined within them and so any discussion of 'reform' is largely meaningless and futile. Prisons, whether controlled and operated by the state or private companies, are weapons utilised by the powerful to keep the powerless in check and maintain an economic and social status quo beneficial to the former.' (John Bowden FRFI 109)

When approaching any political question on the inside of the nation's prisons, it is important for us to start from a radical rather than a liberal or reformist perspective. This is just as true when considering the growing issue of prison privatisation.

My starting point is that it is good and progressive to work to extend democracy as the ultimate realisation of that ideal will necessarily result in the complete abolition of prison slavery and the establishment of a social order in which economic justice is an integral element of what today's rulers cynically call freedom. In other words, struggling to extend democracy is a battle that will extend all the way to the gates of power.

The struggle to merely change prison conditions, on the other hand, is one that can be readily granted. Indeed, reform is the state's second response to demands for cosmetic change (the first response, of course, being the iron fist of repression). But more comfortable prisons are not what we seek. As John Bowden noted in FRFI 110: 'Living in a velvet-lined coffin is essentially no different from confinement in an obvious hate-factory - either way one is controlled and imprisoned against his will.'

He goes on to say that our terms of reference must be shifted when discussing prisoners' rights from 'a rather unrealistic and counter-productive paradigm of 'improved' prisons and 'caring' prison officers' to one that situates the struggle of prisoners clearly in the context of revolutionary class struggle and anti-capitalist politics.'

It is from within this context that we examine the privatisation question. It should be clear from the foregoing that privatising prisons would in no way diminish the fundamental nature of these institutions. But will bringing in corporate management make conditions better? This is an important consideration for our many liberal readers whose vision of the future fails to extend beyond the issue of more comfortable cages. I'm writing on this subject because it is an important topic of discussion in Great Britain where large-scale plans are underway to implement a prison privatisation campaign, and because many prisoners in this country believe private corporations would do a substantially better job of running the various prison systems.

One argument put forward in support of privatisation, (Stephen Windsor FRFI 110) is that the programme has worked so well in the US that it should be implemented in Britain. A closer look at



the reality of private prisons in the US reveals a somewhat different picture. For example, as we reported in the January issue of Prisoners' Legal News, prisoners from a privately-run joint in Louisville, Kentucky have been used as scabs in the strike by UFCW Local 227 against Fischer Packing Company. The prisoners were brought into the plant after the strikers rejected the company's 'best and final offer' by a margin of 402 to 2. Fischer was demanding large concessions. The union objected to the local government and was forced to call for a boycott of Fischer products. So far from being well paid workers by our corporate masters, we can easily end up being underpaid scabs who bolster capitalist profits at the expense of the working class.

The concept of private prisons is not some new wave of the future but rather a holdover from mediaeval England that was litigated out of existence in the US 25 years ago because of dark and devil practices. As one trial judge put it, a practice 'of physically abusing inmates and profiting from their labour'. The revival of this push to return to the barbaric practices of the past, where prison labour was farmed out for personal profit, is the brain-child of the most reactionary element of the ruling class. In this country these backward notions attained a sense of legitimacy from the likes of former president Reagan, who wanted to 'privatise' all sorts of government services. And also by former Chief Justice Warren Burger's campaign to make prisons into 'factories with fences' where prisoners would be forced to work to offset the cost of their incarceration.

As for vocational training from any privatised prisons, I am not aware of a single example where such teaching takes place. Nor have I ever heard of any prisoners having guaranteed employment upon release, except in the case of the former Soviet Union. Every prison industry I've ever worked in had one goal and that was to make a profit. We are not even given vacations, paid or otherwise. While wages sometimes appear to approach the minimum wage, when taxes and mandatory payments for the cost of imprisonment are factored in, the prisoners often wind up making more money by working in some non-industrial area of the prison. In any event virtually all prison industries are jobs long ago shipped to Mexico and the so-called Third World, or which are done by illegal migrant labour (ie sweat shops) or at best on the outside making minimum wages labour, like telemarketing (the boiler room). These are not the kind of jobs through which one is able to acquire meaningful employment skills or likely to result into a decent paying job on the outside. If they were, they would not be in prison to begin with. What we are talking about is more low paying, dead-end shit jobs.

The argument is sometimes raised that nobody could do a worse job of running the prisons than the people who are doing it now, that any change at all would necessarily be an improvement. Even if true, the logic of such reasoning would be short-lived. At the moment the corporation must make a decision between the quality of your food, education or medical care, on the one hand, and company profits on the other, you will not need a calculator to figure out which priority will come first. Just look at their track record now, when they are trying to put their best foot forward. In 1988 Rosalyn Bradford, a black woman prisoner at the



Silverdale Work Farm, Tennessee which is run by the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) died of complications from a tubal pregnancy after guards, believing she was faking, let her scream in her cell for 18 hours before taking her to a hospital. The CCA prospectus, in language repeated almost verbatim in the contracts, pledges that 'employees must undergo at least 160 hours of training by the company before being allowed to work in a position that will bring them in contact with inmates'. But the guard who attended Ms Bradford says she, like many others, was put to work a few hours after being hired and that she did not receive first aid training until a week after Bradford died.

Stephen Windsor believes incidents such as this will not happen because 'a government inspectorate...would make certain standards were set and adhered to.' Yeah! Just like the government regulates the industrialists around today's feeble environmental, health and safety laws; like they regulated our savings and loan institutions. In fact private prisons are essentially unregulated. This is because few state or local governments are willing to establish strict standards for fear of creating a set of entitlements that would encourage inmate lawsuits. Moreover, even modest standards, whether or not they were implemented, would work to discourage corporate investment in this area.

David Wechts, writing in the March 1987 issue of The Yale Law Journal, cautions that standards would be hard to enforce, especially 'several years after the life of the [privatisation] contract, when corporate control of the state's penal system may have reached the point that the government no longer has the expertise, personnel, facilities or fiscal resources to run the prisons.' Also, according to the August 1988 issue of In These Times, 'More than one local government, after contracting out its prison or jail, has later asked about how it is being run only to be told that such information is "proprietary".'

Capitalists are driven to seek higher profit margins, it's the nature of the beast. When you go to a disciplinary hearing in a prison that is operated by a private company, you can bet you will lose good time credits. Terms will be extended to ensure there is never an empty bed. The existing system is already capacity driven; putting direct profit into the picture would only mean there would never be the lost revenue represented by an empty prison bed.

I for one have no desire to see this budding trend carried to its logical extreme: where we are treated to the sight of a multinational corporation like General Electric pulling the switch on some poor sap strapped into an electric chair, while airing the event on its NBC television network to the theme music of 'GE brings good things to life'. If the ruling class wishes to continue their enslavement of a segment of society, they should not be permitted to do it directly, for the purpose of profit. Their intermediary instrument of repression, the bourgeois state is quite well suited for that task.

Ed Mead  
US political prisoner