

FREE TO PRISONERS

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS BULLETIN

Nº 2

Published by London Anarchist Black Cross

20p

STRANGWAYS SHOWTRIALS

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- TWO YEARS ON

SUPPORTING CLASS STRUGGLE PRISONERS

SUPPORT THE STRANGWAYS RESISTERS

On January 14th, nearly two years after the Strangeways Uprising, the Showtrial of nine men began. The state is throwing the book at them - all the men on trial have been charged with Riot (max. 10 years) and six men have been charged with murder, three with Riot and GBH. They are all pleading Not Guilty. The trial is expected to last 6-9 months. These nine men are only the first group of 3 that are being tried - the others will be tried when this trial is ended. The trial is being conducted under some of the highest security ever seen in British courts; the prisoners in the dock are kept behind specially reinforced glass and with their backs to the public gallery; anyone entering Court 3 is body-searched and given a security "trial pass". The whole atmosphere in the court is designed to alienate and demoralise the prisoners and also their families, friends and supporters. These men have not yet been convicted - yet they are being treated as guilty and dangerous.

The murder charge is regarding an inmate Derek White, who was allegedly beaten about the chest and died three days later in hospital from a blood clot on the lung. A pathologists' report has said that '...had it not been for medical complications the injuries themselves would not have caused [death]'. Despite this, the prosecution is still pressing for murder - 'because the injuries were inflicted with the intention of causing really serious harm, which meant those taking part were guilty of murder'.

At the start of the trial, two defendants - John Spencer and James Miller - turned Queen's Evidence. However, they have since retracted their statements and claimed they were forced out of them. John Spencer was also beaten up - he had his

nose and arm broken - by police in court, in full view of prisoners and visitors.

On the first day, the murder charge against Nick Webb was dropped when the State offered no evidence. He pleaded guilty to Riot and Conspiracy to Riot. However, a comrade in the court reported that he looked ill and could not walk without assistance. The State then went through 'who had started the Uprising and why' concentrating on the alleged treatment of other prisoners by the men in the dock. The second week has heard evidence from other prisoners against the defendants. However, the 300 prosecution witnesses initially offered has now been reduced to 182.

Many of the men are reportedly in poor psychological states and it is thought that this is due to them being drugged up. The defendants are being made scapegoats - they are being framed for something they haven't done, except for showing resistance to the system which is designed to crush and dehumanise them. We must support them. For the duration of the trial the men are being kept in a separate wing at the detention centre. There will be a picket in support of the Strangeways Prisoners outside the Court on April 1st - turn up if you can.

The men on trial are: Paul Taylor AN0564 - Alan Lord K80382 - Sydney Doran - Martin John McLatchie - Andrew Paul Nelson AK3869 - James William Miller - John Derek Spencer - Brian Parke - Nick Webb.

They can be sent letters: c/o Greater Manchester Police, Central Detention Centre, City Magistrates Court, Crown Square, Manchester.

Sources: *Taking Liberties* issues 4 & 5, *The Independent* 16/1/92

News from Greece

The last part of 1991 saw much activity in Greece. At the end of September, the Polytechnic in Athens was occupied by high school students - they had been demanding better conditions and these had not been met. The students held two demonstrations on the 18th and 24th October - both of which were heavily policed. The second demo was attacked by plain-clothes cops. 6 people were arrested. The following day, the police stormed the Polytechnic, arrested 28 and set fire to the deans office (!).

The newspapers and media of course blamed "hooligan anarchists" for these events. 34 people had been arrested and many injured. Within less than a week, the courts handed out sentences of between 18 months and 7 years in prison. The court tried to refuse medical aid to one defendant who collapsed in court due to injuries sustained in custody. 6 defendants (out of the 34) were acquitted, but the prosecutor is trying to add a charge of arson as a cover-up for the police.

The day after these kangaroo courts finished, 33 people were arrested for flyposting and distributing leaflets against the police. Most were beaten up and tortured in police custody and they now face sentences of up to 15 years. They are being denied medical care, legal representation and visits from friends.

For further details, contact London ABC or write to: *Athens ABC, 8 Aristidou St., 10559, Athens.*